



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities

Integration Area Programme: Community Ambassadors Evaluation

Strand Report



© Crown copyright, 2021

Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

This document/publication is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/DLUHC

If you have any enquiries regarding this document/publication, email Correspondence@communities.gov.uk or write to us at:

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF
Telephone: 030 3444 0000

For all our latest news and updates follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DLUHC>

August 2022

Contents

Glossary of terms	5
Executive summary	7
Introduction	7
Evaluation limitations	8
Key findings	8
Conclusions	10
1. Introduction	12
1.1 Integrated Communities Strategy and the Integration Area Programme	12
1.2 IAP national evaluation	13
1.3 Evaluation approach	16
1.4 Evaluation limitations	19
1.5 Reading this report	20
2. Programme delivery	21
2.1 Blackburn with Darwen	21
2.2 Bradford	22
2.3 Peterborough	22
2.4 Across all areas	23
2.5 Project experiences	24
3. Programme impact	30
3.1 Meaningful social mixing	32
3.2 Understanding, respecting, and trusting others from different backgrounds	37

3.3 Increased stake in the community	39
3.4 Empowerment to make positive change in the community	44
3.5 Other personal benefits	50
4. Conclusions	54
4.1 Practice implications	54
4.2 Policy implications	56
4.3 Evaluation implications	56
Appendix	58
A. Profile of Ambassadors	58
B. Surveys	61
C. Counterfactual impact assessment	62

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
DLUHC	The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The government department responsible for creating great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area.
IAP	Integration Area Programme. A DLUHC programme aiming to improve community cohesion involving various interventions including Community Ambassadors, Community Conversations and Schools Linking.
Ambassadors	The name of the individuals taking part in training in participating local areas to help support community integration goals within their communities.
Wider community	Individuals contacted/ recruited by Ambassadors to take part in local events or activities to support integration goals within the community.
[BwD] Community Ambassadors	The name of the Community Ambassadors intervention in Blackburn with Darwen. Organised by Spring North.
Spring North	The organisation responsible for the Ambassador training in Blackburn with Darwen.
Bradford For Everyone Ambassadors	The name of the Community Ambassadors intervention in Bradford. Organised by Bradford Council.
The ABCD Programme	The name of the Community Ambassadors intervention in Peterborough. Organised by Nurture Development.

Nurture Development	The organisation responsible for the Ambassador training in Peterborough.
Counterfactual / comparison survey	Commissioned by IFF and fielded by YouGov among its online panel members with the aim of measuring outcomes with a comparison group of non-IAP participants.
Baseline survey	Questionnaire completed by Ambassadors at the beginning of their training.
End-training survey	Questionnaire completed by Ambassadors at the end or towards the end of their training or preparation to work as a Community Ambassador.
Follow-up survey	Questionnaire completed by Ambassadors three months after the end of their training or preparation to work as a Community Ambassador.

Executive summary

Introduction

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC, formerly the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government), launched the Integration Area Programme (IAP) in 2019, trialling a new localised approach to social integration in five local authorities. This programme was borne out of the Integrated Communities Strategy green paper, published in March 2018, which outlined the government's vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.

For three out of five of these local authorities (Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford and Peterborough) a common goal was to put in place volunteers to support community integration goals, including assisting both existing volunteer organisations and the establishment of new ones; representing community views to decision-makers; advocating integration values with communities; and conducting outreach work to those on the margins. Activities run by the three local authorities under this umbrella were collectively referred to as Community Ambassadors, with the volunteers being the 'Ambassadors'.

The Community Ambassadors programme was tailored to the local context in each of the three local authorities, and the impact of COVID-19 meant that the reach and format of activities had to be somewhat modified.

- In Blackburn with Darwen, '[BwD] Community Ambassadors'¹ focused on developing local community leaders to support community integration by designing and running social action projects.
- In Bradford, 'Bradford for Everyone' aimed to improve social mixing in the area which was in turn intended to help break down barriers, build resilience and confidence within the community.
- In Peterborough, the 'ABCD Programme' took an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. This was focused on assessing the resources, skills, and experience available in the community and helped the participants to organise the community around issues that would inspire the community into action. In Peterborough, the programme recruited individuals with previous experience of working within the community in a professional capacity, as the impact of the pandemic necessitated in the area. This meant that in practice the intervention in Peterborough was substantially different from those in the other two areas.

Evaluation approach

DLUHC (then MHCLG) commissioned IFF Research to carry out an independent evaluation of the implementation and impact of the Integration Area Programme, and as

¹ The Community Ambassadors programme in Blackburn with Darwen has been renamed as '[BwD] Community Ambassadors', as opposed to simply 'Community Ambassadors', to differentiate between programmes for the purpose of this report.

part of this, the Community Ambassadors, between 2019 and 2021. The research involved baseline, end of training and 3-month follow-up surveys amongst individuals participating as Ambassadors, qualitative interviews amongst project co-ordinators and participants, and analysis of management information.

Evaluation limitations

This evaluation was subject to some important limitations which must be taken into account when reading this report.

The interventions, and therefore the evaluation, were conducted in challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic:

- Changes were made to the interventions during the evaluation, as some of the original plans were no longer feasible.
- The Ambassadors' ability to work within their local communities was impacted by lockdown restrictions.
- In some areas, the pandemic caused delays to the intervention.

The evaluation encountered obstacles to data collection and analysis, in part due to the challenges the interventions faced from the COVID-19 pandemic. The most important of these to note were:

- Small numbers of Ambassadors participating in the local programmes limited the amount of quantitative data that could be collected.
- Obstacles to data collection from the wider community prevented the inclusion of data from this group in the evaluation. Combined with the limited interactions between Ambassadors and the wider community due to COVID-19, this led to a fundamental change to the evaluation, which as a result is focussed on the impact of the interventions on the Ambassadors themselves.

To mitigate against the impact of smaller numbers of Ambassadors, resulting in a limited amount of quantitative data, the decision was taken to also collect qualitative data from Ambassadors through one-to-one depth interviews. This ensured the evaluation was able to collect insights into the experience and perceptions of Ambassadors, even if the quantitative data on impacts of the intervention on Ambassadors was limited by the smaller than expected sample size.

Key findings

Programme delivery

The evaluation has been able to identify the following key learning points for successful delivery of a Community Ambassadors model:

- Recruiting from the community (as in Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) resulted in better representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds than recruiting from a pool of individuals with previous experience of working in the community in a

professional capacity² (as the pandemic necessitated in Peterborough). This in turn made for a more diverse group of participants, that Ambassadors felt was beneficial for improving their cultural awareness and comfort levels when engaging with people from different backgrounds. However, the relative absence of White British low-income participants was perceived as a hindrance to breaking down barriers more fully, as it underrepresented a group that was perceived, by programme leaders and some Ambassadors, to typically not mix with other social groups.

- Programme staff structured the training to encourage discussions on stimulating topics and encouraged Ambassadors to participate in community activities. Both approaches were effective in encouraging social mixing among the diverse (particularly in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen) Ambassador groups, as they engaged in meaningful discussions and community activities with their fellow Ambassadors.
- Being allowed to discuss challenging topics in a safe space; and being taught techniques such as critical thinking and working with community members rather than ‘pushing solutions onto them’, resulted in Ambassadors feeling equipped to engage with people with different views.
- A combination of increased exposure to community activities/ events, and the support of their fellow Ambassadors, inspired Ambassadors to become more involved in community action. Being taught skills such as observation, listening, evaluating proposals, and engaging people in developing solutions to problems, resulted in Ambassadors feeling empowered to drive positive change in their communities. Including some Ambassadors with more previous experience of community engagement could benefit the group overall, as the more experienced Ambassadors encouraged others by example and drove the conversation forward.
- The awareness of the efforts that other community members were making in the community also increased Ambassadors’ sense of pride in their local area, and this was enhanced where the programmes made training content as ‘place specific’ as possible.

Programme impact

- The Community Ambassadors evaluation measured outcomes of the programme on the participating Ambassadors in seven key areas: social mixing, ability to engage with those with challenging views/ behaviours, respecting differences, being motivated to improve the neighbourhood, empowerment, increased belonging, and being involved in local activities.
- The evaluation has identified several outcomes for which the counterfactual impact assessment findings suggest the Community Ambassadors programme did have a statistically significant impact. Although starting from a relatively high baseline position, Ambassadors were significantly more likely to report improvements in the

² These Ambassadors came to the programme with a background in professional occupations involving community work with significant community engagement and development component.

extent to which they felt comfortable talking to people from different backgrounds; their motivation to work with others to improve the neighbourhood; and their perceived ability to influence decisions affecting the local area. In each case, this is by comparison with a group of non-participants.

- Findings from the qualitative interviews also indicated that Ambassadors have gained a better awareness and understanding of other cultures, been inspired to become more involved in community action and become more empowered to drive change. Some spoke of new connections or friendships they had made, others of increased self-esteem and confidence or reduced social isolation through participation in social events.
- The programme impact was weaker, however, in its effects on Ambassadors' perceived ability to engage with local officials. There was no detectable effect on confidence in representing the views of fellow local people to officials; and no change in confidence in ability to follow up with a local official subsequently (although Ambassadors did begin with a high baseline in both: 82% and 84% respectively). From the qualitative interviews it did not appear that the training had focused on how to communicate or follow-up with local officials which may provide an indication as to why no differences could be seen.
- Additionally, Ambassadors' increased feeling that they could personally influence decisions in the local area did not translate into them believing there are wider opportunities for local people to get involved in making changes. Nor was there any increase in levels of Ambassador involvement in local activities. However, it is worth noting that the interventions operated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted Ambassadors' abilities to run and be involved in community-based activities.
- Although qualitatively there were a few examples of Ambassadors being supported into employment as a result of the programme, overall levels of paid employment among Ambassadors were similar at the start and the end. A few Ambassadors suggested providing something concrete, such as an accreditation or opportunity at the programme's conclusion.

Conclusions

There is evidence from this evaluation that suggests that the Community Ambassadors model has had several positive impacts on participants – improving Ambassadors' comfort engaging with individuals from different backgrounds and both their motivation and empowerment to effect local improvements.

While this is very promising, the overall concept has yet to be proven. These positive impacts are to the Ambassadors as individuals; there is as yet no conclusive evidence that the shifts in personal attitudes and motivations will or will not translate into Ambassadors becoming more involved in local activities or galvanising other local people to make changes.

It's clear that the encouragement and support from programme staff created safe spaces for participants to stretch themselves, in terms of social engagement and understanding of

others; and the teaching of skills such as observation, listening and co-developing solutions with others left Ambassadors feeling empowered to make positive changes in their communities. The participant mix was a further important ingredient: including some participants with more experience of community engagement seems to have inspired others by example. These ingredients are worth replicating in future programmes.

On the other hand, underrepresentation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds or White British from low-income backgrounds was felt, by programme leaders and some Ambassadors, to be a hindrance to encouraging people from different groups within the area to interact and engage; and the programme seems not to have improved participants' confidence that they could represent the views of local people to officials or hold those officials to account. These aspects should be remedied if the programme is to achieve its full potential in future.

From an evaluation perspective, future iterations of the programme would ideally capture evidence of the Ambassadors' effects on members of the wider community, which was not possible in the delivery of these interventions. To achieve this will require collecting evidence from the wider community to be designed-in to the interventions themselves, with contractual commitments given by providers, alongside careful positioning of the research to maximise audience engagement.

There are some limitations to the research which have impacted the ability of this evaluation to find conclusive evidence. The evaluation was conducted in challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interventions were also small scale in nature which limited the amount of quantitative data which could be collected. As a result, the evaluation continued with a more limited focus, and it may be helpful to corroborate the impacts that were found by gathering further evidence in future.

1. Introduction

1.1 Integrated Communities Strategy and the Integration Area Programme

The Integrated Communities Strategy green paper³, published in March 2018, outlined the government's vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. The Government highlights that integration is the responsibility of all communities and leads to improved health, education and employment outcomes. The paper outlined eight themes for achieving this vision and the government's Action Plan⁴, published in February 2019, updated on progress for delivering this vision.

As part of the strategy, DLUHC (then MHCLG) launched the Integration Area Programme (IAP)⁵, trialling a new localised approach to integration in five local authorities (Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest). In addition to using an evidence-based approach to identifying areas likely to benefit from the programme, DLUHC chose to work with these local authorities because they had already demonstrated a keen grasp of the challenges they face and had used evidence to inform how to address local needs. IFF Research was commissioned to undertake a national evaluation of the IAP, to gather learning and to gauge the impact of the interventions implemented in the participating areas.

IFF and DLUHC reviewed local strategies then collated and mapped the interventions to identify some common interventions across local areas; these became the focus of evaluation. Three local authorities - Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford and Peterborough – proposed a similar intervention with a common aim to develop local leadership to support community integration. All three local authorities proposed to put in place volunteers (Community Ambassadors) to support community integration goals, including assisting both existing volunteer organisations and the establishment of new ones; representing community views to decision-makers; advocating integration values with communities; and conducting outreach work to those on the margins.

Within this report, the intervention is collectively referred to as **Community Ambassadors**. However, within each area a different name for the initiative is used, and each area tailored their interventions in line with local need:

- *Blackburn with Darwen*⁶ – Their 2018-2021 strategy states there are people of different ethnicities and religions living in segregated areas of the borough, and this can hinder building positive relationships within their community. This segregation (groups of people existing separately and not mixing) is reflected in some schools

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf

⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778045/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Govt_Action_Plan.pdf

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integration-area-programme>

⁶ <https://theshuttle.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Blackburn-with-Darwen-Integration-Area-Strategy-Final-1.pdf>

and sections of their local economy. The programme in Blackburn with Darwen is called **[BwD] Community Ambassadors**⁷ and it focuses on developing local community leaders to support community integration by designing and running social action projects.

- *Bradford*⁸ – Their 2018-2023 strategy states local schools are not as mixed or diverse as the Council knows it can be to bring about benefits of social mixing; the local authority has the third highest level of residential segregation in England; economic participation is lower than the average, with women’s participation a particular challenge; lack of English proficiency; low democratic participation in parts of the district; and a lack of meaningful social mixing across the District. The programme in Bradford is referred to as **Bradford for Everyone** (formerly known as People Together) and its key focus is to improve social mixing in the area which will hopefully in turn help to break down barriers and build resilience and confidence within the community.
- *Peterborough*⁹ – Their 2019 strategy describes a rapidly growing city due to migration which has brought unique challenges, as well as opportunities. Challenges include widening gaps in life expectancy between the least and most deprived parts of the area and net international immigration higher than the regional or national average. Peterborough has the fourth highest increase in England in the proportion of non-British pupils and its pupils are more than twice as likely to speak English as an additional language compared to the national average. Social exclusion has also persisted for some ethnic minority groups and poorer White British communities. The programme in Peterborough is referred to as **The ABCD Programme** and is taking the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to sustainable community driven development. The programme is therefore focused on assessing the resources, skills, and experience available in a community and helps participants to organise the community around issues that will inspire the community into action. In Peterborough, the programme focused more on recruiting individuals with previous experience of working within the community in a professional capacity.

1.2 IAP national evaluation

Funding for the five Integration Areas was accompanied by a national evaluation designed to assess ‘what works’. The overarching Integration Area Programme (IAP) Evaluation aimed to understand the impact of the interventions across areas and share transferable learning about what works to improve integration. Specifically, the national evaluation aims to:

- Measure the profile of locally delivered events or activities and their participants

⁷ The Community Ambassadors programme in Blackburn with Darwen has been renamed as ‘[BwD] Community Ambassadors’, as opposed to simply ‘Community Ambassadors’, to differentiate between programmes for the purpose of this report.

⁸ <https://bdp.bradford.gov.uk/media/1363/stronger-communities-together-strategy.pdf>

⁹ <https://democracy.peterborough.gov.uk/documents/s39328/6.%20Appendix%201%20-%20Interim%20Integrated%20Communities%20Strategy%20-%20Belonging%20Together.pdf>

- Measure outcomes of local intervention approaches; and to a lesser extent
- Learn lessons about factors influencing local event delivery.

There are three strands to the overall IAP evaluation, linked to three interventions: Community Conversations, Community Ambassadors and Schools Linking. Common outcomes were identified across the IAP interventions, although not all are relevant (and therefore measured) for every intervention in terms of what they aim to achieve and plan to deliver.

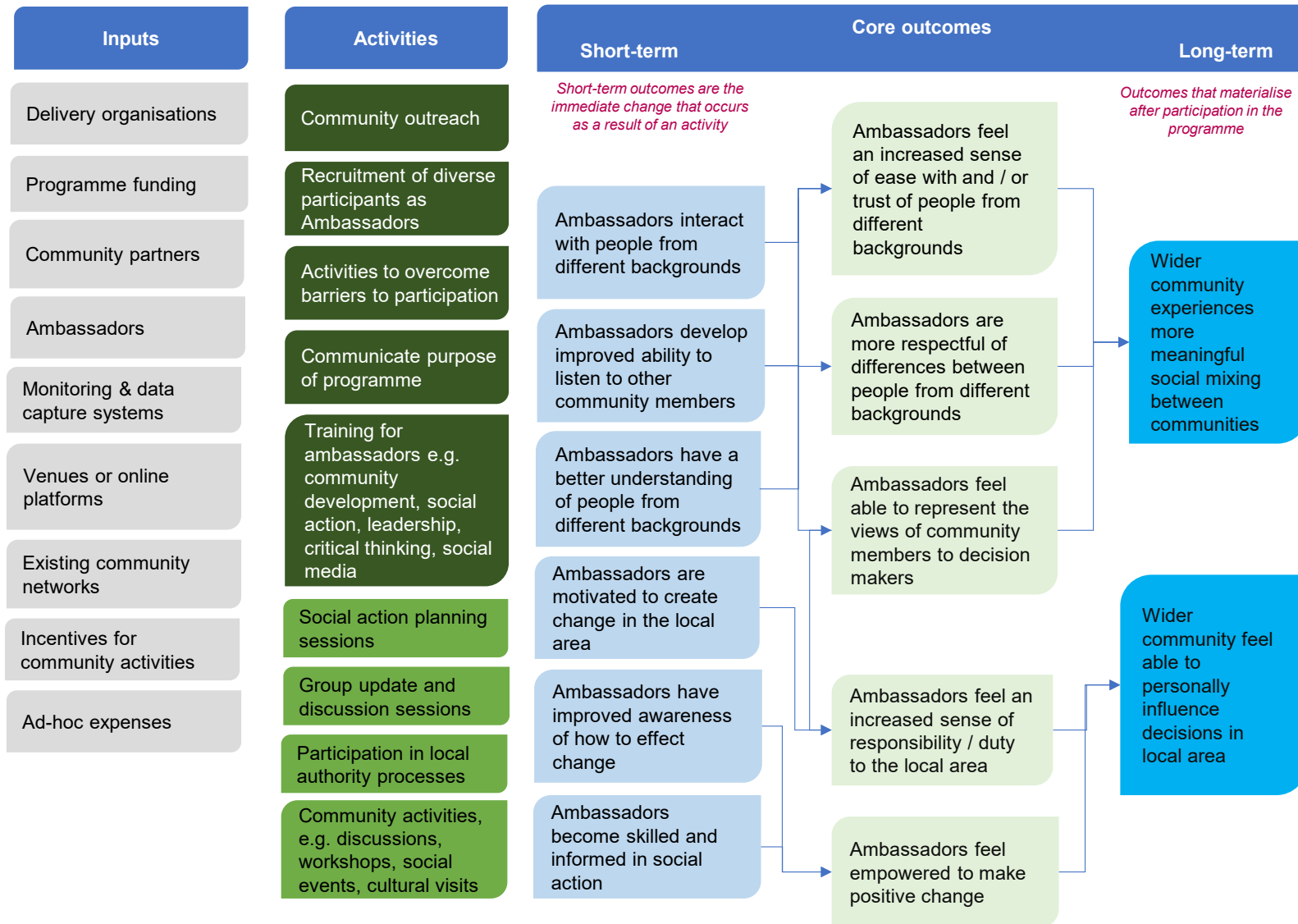
The outcomes that all evaluated IAP interventions are intended to achieve, and thus what the national evaluation aims to measure are as follows. Those applicable to Community Ambassadors are in bold:

- 1. Increased levels of meaningful social mixing between communities**
- 2. Reduced isolation / loneliness**
- 3. Feeling more at ease with and / or trusting people from different backgrounds**
- 4. Understanding and respecting differences between people from other backgrounds**
5. Improved sense of safety in the community
- 6. Increased feeling of empowerment to make positive change in the community**
7. Reduced indicators of prejudicial views
- 8. Increased sense of comfort communicating with different groups**
9. Identifying shared values and vision
10. Increase in spaces seen as shared
- 11. Improved perception that people from different backgrounds get along well in your area**
12. Reduced levels of anti-social behaviour in the areas targeted by the interventions
13. Improved perception of whether hate crime/community tensions are a problem in the local area
- 14. Improved appreciation of the need to respect differences in the local area**

The logic model below summarises how the activities undertaken within the Community Ambassadors intervention are expected to lead to the outcomes listed above i.e. the expected routes to impact. The logic model sets out how the programme is intended to work, including the resources used (inputs), programme activities, and anticipated outcomes for the target groups. It includes:

- Inputs – the resources that will be used, including time, money and infrastructure
- Activities – what will be done as part of the programme
- Outcomes – the changes seen as a result of the programme activities; short-term outcomes relate to those stemming directly from participating in Community Ambassadors and longer-term outcomes expected to materialise over time.

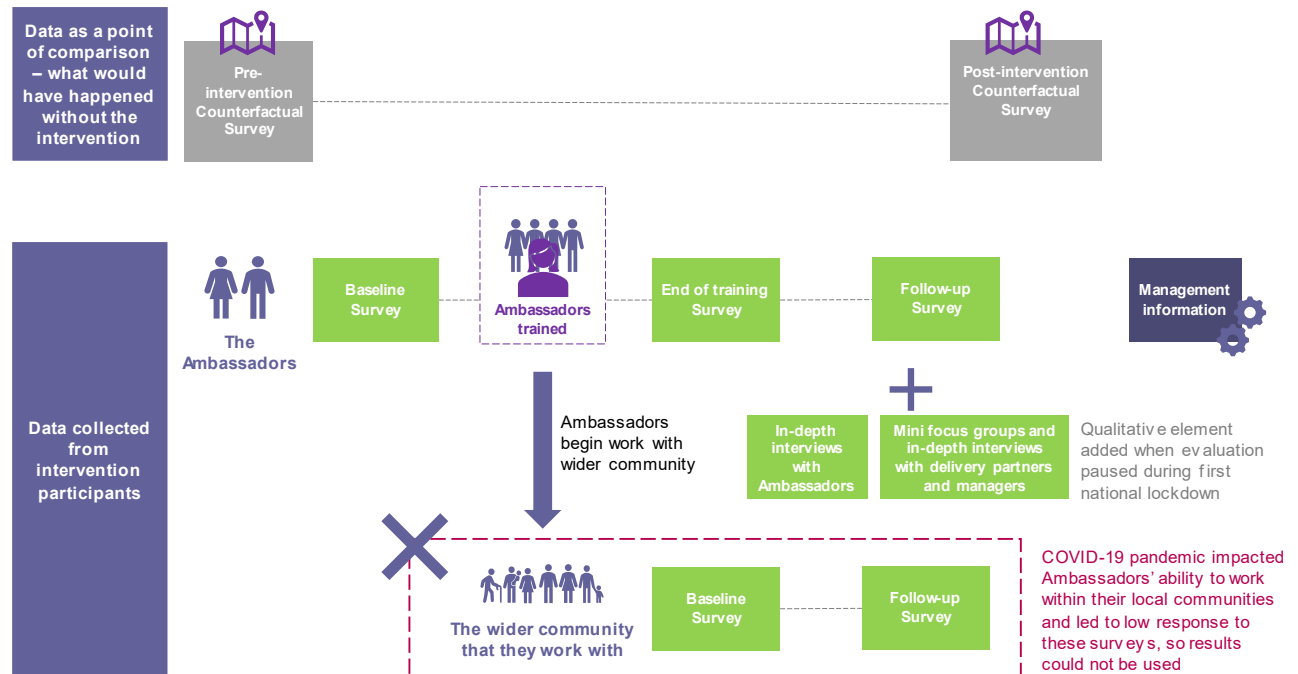
Figure 1. Community Ambassadors Logic Model



1.3 Evaluation approach

The evaluation methodology is summarised in the diagram below and described in more detail in the text that follows.

Figure 2. IAP Ambassadors Evaluation methodology



Baseline and post intervention surveys

To measure the individual-level attitudinal and behavioural impact of the interventions on those taking part, we undertook pre (baseline) and post (end) intervention surveys. Surveys included demographic questions and, to measure the impact on Community Ambassadors, questions covering target outcomes were asked in the same way in both the pre and post intervention surveys, usually using a Likert scale. This allowed a direct comparison in opinion to be made. Community Ambassadors took part in three surveys, a baseline/ start-of-training survey (referred to as the 'baseline'), end of training survey (referred to as the 'end-training survey') and a further survey three months later (referred to as the 'follow-up survey').

Depending on the area, surveys were administered online or by paper and were intended to take on average 15 minutes to complete. A census approach (i.e. collecting data from all of the approximately 130 participants¹⁰) was attempted for all surveys in all areas but due to lower than anticipated participation, base sizes are low (see Table 1 Table 2 for number of responses to Ambassador surveys).

¹⁰ We can only estimate total numbers of participants due to incomplete management information received from one area.

Table 1: Base of Ambassador surveys

	Baseline survey	End of training	Follow-up survey
All answering the surveys	104	49	20

A further set of surveys was designed to reach members of the wider community, those individuals contacted or recruited by Community Ambassadors to take part in local events or activities to support integration goals within the community. The intention was to measure the outcomes and impacts of the programme beyond the Ambassadors themselves, by looking at how the Ambassadors' work influenced community members. However, the opportunity to reach wider community members through Community Ambassador-led initiatives was limited (as outlined in the 1.4 Evaluation limitations section) and therefore responses to the surveys were very low. This meant that the results of these surveys could not be used. This report therefore focuses primarily on the impact on Community Ambassadors themselves.

Qualitative research

Project and evaluation delivery was paused during the first national lockdown which provided an opportunity to rescope the evaluation. As part of this process a qualitative element was agreed which took place in all three areas. In each area qualitative research involved up to 12 interviews with Community Ambassadors to explore their stories of what changed for them, when, and why; and what they valued in the intervention. In each area, there were also 1-2 depth interviews with delivery partner managers and 1 mini-group discussion with delivery partners playing back participants' stories and identifying any additional self-reported impacts, and exploring how they think the impacts were achieved.

Performance and Management Information

In addition to surveys and qualitative interviews, the evaluation draws on a range of locally collected management information (MI) describing the scope and reach of the interventions and measuring the profile of audiences that engaged with the interventions. The list of measures was developed in collaboration with DLUHC and the local areas and differs by evaluation strand and local area. MI data was collected at an LA level (e.g. the demographic breakdown of Ambassadors who completed the training sessions) and at an individual level (e.g. the demographic profile of, and training sessions attended by, individual Ambassadors). An Excel template was produced, and areas were asked to complete it at two time points: midway through their intervention and towards the end of the intervention.

Counterfactual Impact Assessment

The baseline and post-activity surveys provide a measure of *change* in the attitudes and beliefs of people who became Ambassadors. What we cannot do with these findings alone is say how far any changes in attitudes and beliefs are as a result of becoming an Ambassador, and how far people's views may have changed naturally or because of other factors (e.g. other events or things being reported in the press). Fieldwork for the

counterfactual survey took place between May and July 2021, coinciding as far as possible with fieldwork for one or both of the end-training and follow-up surveys in each area.¹¹

To isolate the effect of taking up the Ambassador role, a number of the same survey questions were asked as part of a longitudinal two-wave 'comparison' survey commissioned by IFF and fielded by YouGov among its online panel members. By comparing the change in attitudes and beliefs of Ambassadors against those of the YouGov comparison group, we can test whether being an Ambassador has an effect on people's attitudes and beliefs that would not have happened if they had not participated. Seven outcomes relevant to Ambassadors were measured in the comparison survey:

- How comfortable they feel talking to people from different backgrounds;
- How comfortable they feel talking to people who express attitudes and behaviours they disagree with;
- How far they feel that local residents respect differences with people from other backgrounds;
- How far they are personally motivated to work with others to improve the neighbourhood;
- How far they feel they can personally influence decisions affecting their local area;
- Involvement in local activities;
- Strength of belonging to their local area.

However, the feasibility of measuring the impact of the Ambassador role is limited due to the small amount of usable longitudinal intervention data for the purpose. Firstly, the impact assessment relies on having longitudinal data from Ambassadors collected over a same time interval to the comparison survey respondents. The comparison interval was three months, and so Ambassadors were included if they had completed a baseline and one follow-up survey with an interval of between one and five months. Unfortunately, this gives a sample of just 26 Ambassadors (out of approximately 130 total Ambassadors).¹²

Secondly, the analysis potential was restricted further by the fact that the analysis requires that the outcomes were asked at baseline and follow up, in both Ambassador and comparison surveys. Seven outcomes metrics were asked of both groups of individuals in both waves.

The comparison group has been weighted so that it matches the Ambassador sample in terms of gender, broad age-groups, ethnic group, and religion. The impact of being an Ambassador has then been measured by comparing the average (mean) change scores of Ambassadors and the comparison group (after controlling for any baseline differences between the two groups). The full breakdown of responses and mean scores, as well as

¹¹ An exact alignment of the timing of the counterfactual and participant surveys was not possible due to differences in timings of intervention activities between the local areas and delays caused by the pandemic.

¹² The sample consists of 25 Ambassadors who completed one follow-up survey within the time window and one Ambassador completed both follow-up surveys within the time window, providing 26 data points for comparison. As such, this provides an analysis sample of 26. The analysis takes into account the non-independence of the records for the ambassador with two follow-ups within the relevant time period. A sensitivity analysis that takes out the record furthest in time from the three-month target suggests that the findings are very similar whether the record is included or excluded. For the analysis presented in this report the record is included.

tests for statistical significance can be found in the appendix. The statistical methods used are also covered there. The impact assessment was carried out by Bryson Purdon Social Research.

Further details on evaluation methods are contained in the appendix.

1.4 Evaluation limitations

There are some important limitations to the evaluation which must be taken into account when reading this report.

Programme implications

The interventions, and therefore the evaluation, were conducted in challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the interventions in the following ways:

- Changes were made to the interventions during the evaluation, as some of the original plans were no longer feasible.
- The Ambassadors' ability to work within their local communities was impacted, as face-to-face interactions and gatherings of large groups were not possible at certain times due to the lockdown restrictions.
- In some areas, the pandemic caused delays, which meant that Ambassadors did not become active until after the evaluation was concluded. This in turn meant smaller than optimal sample sizes for intervention participants in some areas.

Data collection and analysis implications

Largely down to the impact of the pandemic on the programmes, there were relatively small numbers of Ambassadors participating in the local programmes which limited the amount of quantitative data that could be collected. As such, when interpreting survey results, there are two points to consider:

- Firstly, findings should be interpreted with some caution, particularly in respect of the follow-up survey which is based on just 20 respondents with practically all these respondents being in the Bradford programme. With this in mind, the discussion in the Programme impact chapter focusses on differences between the baseline and end training surveys.
- Secondly, the composition of those completing the survey within each local area changed across the survey intervals. This was largely down to the pandemic affecting the area programmes in different ways, including: Ambassadors being unable to complete their training once the March 2020 lockdown began (the first cohort of the Blackburn with Darwen programme); delays to the programme meaning Ambassadors completed training too late to have reached the three month post programme point for the follow-up survey (the second cohort of the Blackburn with Darwen programme); and limited Ambassador engagement with the programme subsequent to completing training (Peterborough). This means that the sample profiles are not matched across the surveys and therefore not fully comparable.

It is worth noting that there is scope for the data collected in the end training and follow-up surveys to be influenced by the possibility that individuals with positive or negative

experiences of the programme were more or less likely to respond. It is not possible to assess whether respondents who completed multiple surveys were more or less likely to be those who with positive or negative experiences of the programme, than those who completed only the baseline. As such, we cannot determine how, or indeed if, any bias in the respondent group affected the end training and follow-up survey data compared to the baseline.

The initial design of this evaluation included data collection from the wider community, to capture the impact of Ambassador activities on the communities they operated in. However, the evaluation encountered insurmountable obstacles to this data collection that prevented the inclusion of any wider community data in the final reporting. The challenges the evaluation faced in this regard were:

- The COVID-19 pandemic curtailing face-to-face interactions between Ambassadors and community members.
- Local programmes lacked mechanisms to disseminate surveys to wider community members that the Ambassadors had engaged with.
- Local programmes were concerned about survey dissemination jeopardising Ambassadors' ability to engage with local community members.

Ultimately, these obstacles resulted in base sizes so low that data from the wider community could not be included in the evaluation. Combined with the limited interactions between Ambassadors and the wider community due to COVID-19, the focus of the evaluation was shifted to be on the impact of the interventions on the Ambassadors themselves.

1.5 Reading this report

Findings in this report draw upon a wide range of evidence sources and we signpost to the source as relevant.

Significance tests indicate how likely it is that a pattern seen in data is due to chance, and therefore how likely it is that this is a genuine difference between the groups being compared. All differences noted are significant to a 95 per cent confidence level; this means we can be 95% confident that the observed differences reported are genuine and not an error caused by randomness.

Charts presented in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding and exclusion of responses under one per cent.

2. Programme delivery

This chapter discusses the profile of locally delivered events and their participants captured over the course of the evaluation. It provides an overview of the defining features of the three areas including their demographic makeup and their integration needs. It also seeks to describe the three Community Ambassador interventions in more detail and experiences of delivery from the perspective of the participants and those involved in delivery.

2.1 Blackburn with Darwen

Between 1991 and 2011 the ethnic minority population in Blackburn with Darwen increased from 15% to 31%. In 2011, 31% of residents were from Black and minority ethnic groups. Asian/Asian British was the largest of these groups, with more than one in four people in this group (28%).¹³ Eighty-seven percent of Blackburn with Darwen's population reported having English as their main language in 2011, and over 70 languages are spoken there.

The 2019 Indices of Deprivation revealed Blackburn with Darwen was ranked as the 14th most deprived area out of 317 districts and unitary authorities in England, when measured by the rank of average LSOA rank.¹⁴ The local authority identified that geographical segregation based on ethnicity and religion can work against social integration, which is also reflected in school populations and sections of the local economy.¹⁵

[BwD] Community Ambassadors

The intervention in Blackburn with Darwen aimed to develop a local leadership programme to support community integration by designing and running social action projects. The intervention involved a 12-week training programme for Ambassadors. The training involved 3 elements: theory (local demographic data, applying for funding, local policy), practice (local initiatives, best practice, project planning) and experience (delivering social action projects in groups). The training was delivered by an existing local organisation called Spring North. Once Ambassadors completed their training, they were encouraged to volunteer for a minimum of three hours per week delivering social action projects. The training was originally designed to run over three cohorts and each cohort would contain 30 individuals. However, the COVID-19 pandemic started at the end of the first cohort and led to this cohort finishing training early. The second cohort started the programme (beginning with the 12-week training programme) in spring 2021 and two further cohorts will be running later this year (2021).

¹³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>

¹⁴ <https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/area-profiles/local-authority-profiles/blackburn-with-darwen-unitary/>

¹⁵ <https://www.belongnetwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Blackburn-with-Darwen-Integration-Area-Strategy-Final.pdf>

2.2 Bradford

The 2011 census showed that 33% of Bradford's population were from Black and minority ethnic groups. Twenty percent of Bradford residents were Pakistani and a further 7% identified from other Asian or Asian British backgrounds.¹⁶ Bradford is also highly segregated, having ranked third on residential segregation in England on the Index of Dissimilarity.

Nearly three quarters (73%) of Bradford's population were religiously affiliated, according to the 2011 census. The largest religious group in Bradford was Christian (46%) and the second largest was Muslim (25%), the fourth highest Muslim population of all the Local Authorities in England.

Bradford is ranked 254/324 on the Social Mobility Index (Social Mobility Commission, 2017)¹⁷ and the 13th most deprived local authority in England – its position has worsened by six places since 2015.¹⁸

Bradford for Everyone

The key focus of the Bradford intervention, which was called 'Bradford for Everyone' (formerly known as 'People Together'), was to improve social mixing in the area which would in turn help to break down barriers and build resilience, and confidence. The intervention recruited 34 individuals overall, but not all of these individuals were involved for the duration of the programme. The training focused on the individuals being social researchers within their communities, being representatives of community views to decision-makers and advocates for Bradford Council's integration aims and values. The training was delivered over two years. It was originally planned to be 12 months, but the COVID-19 pandemic changed the original approach.

2.3 Peterborough

Peterborough saw a large population increase between 1981 and 2011 (according to Census data). The population increased by over a third (38%), which is more than three times the British average over this period (12%).

The ethnic minority population also more than doubled between 1991 and 2011 (from 7% to 17%). The 2011 census showed that just over one in ten (12%) of Peterborough's residents identified as being from an Asian or Asian British ethnic origin.¹⁹

Just over two thirds (69%) of Peterborough's population were religiously affiliated, according to the 2011 census. The majority identified as being Christian (57%). The second largest religious group was Muslim (9%).

¹⁶ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>

¹⁷ Local authorities are ranked 1 – high social mobility, to 324 – low social mobility

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>

¹⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata>

Peterborough is also subject to residential segregation, having ranked 38th on residential segregation in England on the Index of Dissimilarity. Peterborough is ranked 191 of 324 on the Social Mobility Index (Social Mobility Commission, 2017).²⁰ This indicates that children from disadvantaged backgrounds in Peterborough will have less of a chance to do well in later life than in if they had lived in 190 other local authorities. Peterborough is also the 58th most deprived Local Authority in England according to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation.²¹ On the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), Peterborough is ranked 43rd most deprived of all local authorities in England.²²

The ABCD Programme

The intervention in Peterborough, called ‘the ABCD Programme’, aimed to address social integration issues by encouraging social mixing and helping to increase confidence in engaging with people from different backgrounds. The intervention in Peterborough used the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to sustainable community-driven development. The training was therefore focused on assessing the resources, skills, and experience available in a community and organising the community around issues that would move its members into action. This method uses the community's own assets and resources as the basis for development; it empowers the people of the community to utilise the assets they already possess. The programme involved Community Connectors and Community Builders. The Community Connectors were paid staff who would recruit and support the Community Builders. Originally the Community Connectors were going to recruit the Community Builders face-to-face by running coffee mornings, going out to libraries and other public spaces. However, once the COVID-19 pandemic started the recruitment approach needed to be tailored. They reached out to some community organisations and groups to assist with the recruitment, but unfortunately due to lockdown the community organisations/ groups were having less contact with local residents. The community organisations/ groups instead suggested that staff within their own organisations may be better placed in the current climate to attend the training. Therefore, the definition of the individuals to be trained was revised, and the programme drew individuals from community organisations and groups rather than from within the community. The Peterborough Ambassadors are therefore a more ‘professionally-experienced’ group than in the other two areas. Twenty individuals were trained as Community Builders. The intervention involved eight training sessions.

2.4 Across all areas

Outlined below is the profile of all the Ambassadors across all the areas. This data has been taken from the start of training (‘baseline’) survey in each area. It is based on 104 responses.

Again, the Ambassadors’ profile shows a skew towards female participants, encompasses a spread of ages, and includes representation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds that is above-average for the areas overall.

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-mobility-index>

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

Profile of Ambassadors

Table 7. Profile of Ambassadors across all areas

Description		% of Ambassadors ²³
Gender	Female	62%
	Male	38%
Age	Under 18	4%
	18-24	13%
	25-34	14%
	35-44	18%
	45-54	26%
	55-64	13%
	65+	10%
	Not known	3%
Ethnicity	White	47%
	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds	49%
	Not known	4%
Religion	Islam	29%
	Christianity	35%
	Buddhism	2%
	Hinduism	1%
	Sikhism	1%
	Another religion	3%
	No religion	23%
	Not known	7%

2.5 Project experiences

Recruitment to the programme

The Community Ambassadors were recruited to the programme through a range of channels. Some had received direct communications about the programme, whereas others had discovered the programme through online advertising or word of mouth.

“[An] email, advertising to apply for it, and it’s a great opportunity.”

Ambassador, Bradford

Ambassadors were either: recruited directly to the programme, through direct conversations with members of the team running the programme or through email communication from the Council; or found out about the programme online or through word of mouth, from work colleagues, friends or teachers.

²³ Some figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding

The original recruitment approach in Peterborough was closer to the approach taken in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen, but the approach changed after the COVID-19 pandemic started. Peterborough were unable to take the face-to-face approach of engaging local residents in public spaces such as libraries, and by running some coffee mornings, that they had originally planned. Instead, they got in touch with some community organisations/ groups to reach residents, but those organisations/ groups were having less contact with residents due to the local lockdowns and recommended that individuals from their own organisations attend the training instead.

“We did approach community groups to try and reach residents, but they said they did not have contact through lockdown and suggested taking the training themselves.”

Programme Manager, Peterborough

Motivations for taking part

Ambassadors in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen had varied motivations, and they commonly mentioned multiple reasons for taking part in the programme. These motivations generally fell into three categories:

- The desire to build on existing work within the community
- Improving the local community
- Meeting new people and bringing different people together

Due to the nature of the recruitment within Peterborough, the Ambassadors there were generally motivated to take part for the first reason – a desire to build on existing work within the community. This motivation was slightly different for this group, as they typically worked professionally within the community already and had been asked to take part by their employer. As such, Ambassadors in Peterborough primarily viewed the programme as a source of professional development training, to enable them to become more effective in their existing line of work.

Building on existing work within the community

For those that came to the programme with an existing high level of engagement and activity within the local community, including almost all Ambassadors in Peterborough, it seemed that building on this work was at the heart of their motivation to become a Community Ambassador.

For a few Ambassadors in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen who were already involved in community projects and organisations in their local area, [BwD] Community Ambassadors was a chance to extend their network and enhance their understanding of the challenges facing the local area. One of the Ambassadors in particular felt the impact of their own work previously had been limited to their local community and that the programme offered a chance to reach out across the districts within their area.

“We’ve got a huge area, as well as the city and I felt that the kind of things I’ve been doing up until then were all local in my own area, and I felt it was a bit parochial, I felt I needed...a wider involvement in the city.”

Ambassador, Bradford

Another Ambassador in Bradford felt it was an opportunity to continue the work they began as a Youth Ambassador²⁴, acting as a voice for equality within their community.

The Ambassadors in Peterborough were very focused on building on their knowledge of the best approaches to working within the community in a professional capacity. They hoped that taking part would help them to learn about the most effective approaches to empower individuals in the community to make change from within.

improving the local community

As previously noted, the Ambassadors were generally positive about their area from the outset. They commonly felt the community was friendly and diverse, which generally led them to feel proud of the area they lived in.

Despite this positivity, there was a sense that their communities or the surrounding areas were facing ongoing issues and they wanted to help address these issues to make the local area a better place to live. The issues or concerns were varied in their scale and severity, from integration, deprivation, drug and substance misuse, and health inequality through to littering, lighting, traffic and parking issues. However, all had the common thread of bringing people in the Ambassadors' communities together or tackling common issues or points of difference (e.g., health inequality).

"I wanted to try and do what I could to improve health inequalities in Bradford which are significant."

Ambassador, Bradford

"If I could understand what was making people worried or concerned, I could maybe help people and be there as a catalyst between the different ethnic groups and the White British groups."

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

Meeting new people and bringing different people together

Some of the Ambassadors in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen saw the programme as an opportunity to meet new people, understand the lived experience and perspectives of other groups and to help bridge the divide within groups within their local community.

"One of the things that is really interesting about Bradford is its diversity, there is people from all over the world and it's quite an interesting space and I can also see how people [mixing], or [not mixing], can be a real challenge... I wanted to build relationships with people and explore how to do that and to create space for other people to do that."

Ambassador, Bradford

²⁴ This project is funded by IAP but not being evaluated within the national IAP Evaluation.

“I wanted to learn and find out why people didn’t meet up and integrate with each other. I wanted to meet up with people who found it difficult to meet people from different backgrounds and understand why.”

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

A few Ambassadors in Bradford came into the programme having experienced isolation and loneliness. The reasons underpinning this varied (bereavement, physical and mental health difficulties, long working hours and language barriers). These Ambassadors saw the programme as an opportunity to engage with their community and meet new people, which they did not feel they had the opportunity to do before the programme.

Experience of training sessions

In all three areas, Community Ambassadors took part in training to become an Ambassador, however there was some variation in the timing of this training between the areas. In Bradford, all of the participants had been involved with the Bradford For Everyone Ambassadors programme since its outset in early 2019 and had taken part in some sessions two years ago. However, in Blackburn with Darwen and Peterborough Ambassadors had all joined the programme and completed the training in 2021. While this did give Ambassadors in Bradford a full breadth of experience across the programme’s lifespan, it meant that they struggled on occasion to recall the finer details of early training sessions. The Bradford Ambassadors also fed back on taking part in group updates and discussions.

Training sessions

The approach to the training sessions appeared to have some consistency across Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen. Each session would mostly focus on a specific topic which the Ambassadors would learn about and then discuss as a group or within break-out groups. Community Ambassadors attended a wide variety of training sessions through the programme, although there were some recurring topic areas within Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen:

- Integration
- Social media (e.g., how to engage with the wider community; understanding and challenging bias in information on social media)
- Leadership training
- Challenging misconceptions/ anti-rumour training

Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen Ambassadors were very positive about the training sessions they had attended. They commonly felt that the sessions had helped them to challenge their own ways of thinking and preconceptions. Additionally, they felt they had learnt a lot about the local area and communities or backgrounds that were different to their own.

“I was absolutely amazed by some of the people I talked to on their journey and where they’ve come from and how difficult it was.”

Ambassador, Bradford

“Everything was interesting, useful and enjoyable... Even coming straight from work after 3 or 4pm, I enjoyed the sessions.”

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

The programme in Peterborough was a little different as it had a set structure, as they were using the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach to sustainable community driven development. The Ambassadors particularly recalled the following elements of their training sessions:

- Different ways of working with people
- Asking the ‘right’ questions
- How to listen
- How to respond effectively

The Ambassadors in Peterborough had mixed feelings about the training. They generally felt the theory element of the sessions was helpful, but the format could have been more engaging, visual and varied.

“It was all the same format, so it was repetitive. For something happening so frequently, it could have been more varied.”

Ambassador, Peterborough

They suggested the following improvements to the sessions: using shorter breakout sessions, have more individuals in the breakout rooms, staging the course over a few consecutive days rather than at weekly sessions, more case study examples, a greater emphasis on Ambassadors exchanging ideas and generally more interactive sessions. It was felt these changes would have made the training more engaging and directly applicable to their community work.

Group updates and discussions in Bradford

The group updates and discussion sessions were an opportunity for the Ambassadors to come together to discuss the work they had been doing and any upcoming opportunities. Before the COVID-19 pandemic these meetings were occurring quarterly but became more frequent, every six weeks, after the pandemic began. Alongside the change in the frequency of the meetings, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that these meetings moved online rather than face-to-face.

Ambassadors were broadly positive about these meetings. They were seen as an opportunity to get to know the other Ambassadors (particularly pre-pandemic) and a helpful forum to share their work with their peers and keep updated on what others were doing.

Ambassadors were understanding of the necessity of moving sessions online during the COVID-19 pandemic but there was some disappointment that the new format afforded less room to network with other Ambassadors than the in-person meetings pre-pandemic.

3. Programme impact

The section presents findings on the impact of the Community Ambassadors programme on the individual Ambassadors participating in it. Findings draw on the surveys conducted amongst Ambassadors, counterfactual impact assessment, and the depth interviews conducted amongst Ambassadors and Programme Managers.

The survey amongst Ambassadors was conducted at three intervals: start of training (referred to as the baseline), at the end of the training (referred to as the end-training survey) and three months after the training (referred to as the follow-up survey).

Table 2: Survey bases and response rates²⁵, by local authority

	Baseline		End-training survey		Follow-up survey	
Total	(104)		(49) ²⁶		(20) ^{27,28}	
Bradford	29	97%	23	79%	16	70%
Blackburn with Darwen	56	67%	13	23%	0	0%
Peterborough	19	95%	13	68%	4	31%

As explained in the previous chapter, the impact of being an Ambassador has also been measured against a matched comparison group of non-participants in similar areas. The aim of the impact assessment was to identify the extent to which any changes in

²⁵ Response rates, in the cells shaded grey, are in each case calculated as a percentage of all participating Community Ambassadors thought to be currently active in the programmes in each area, at the time of the survey.

²⁶ Of the 49 Ambassadors who completed the end-training survey, 28 can confidently be matched to a baseline survey response using their local authority and date of birth. In addition to this, when asked for their date of birth 11 respondents gave a 'do not wish to say' response, accounting for the 11 respondents not matched to the baseline. This suggests all Ambassadors who completed the end-training survey also completed the baseline. The two surveys are broadly consistent by the proportional breakdown of respondents according to age, religion, ethnicity and gender.


²⁷ Of the 20 Ambassadors who completed the follow-up survey, 15 can be confidently matched to a baseline or end-training survey response. Three gave a 'prefer not to say' response when asked for their date of birth. This suggests most Ambassadors who completed the follow-up survey also completed one or both of the baseline or end training survey. The follow-up survey was broadly in line with the baseline by the proportional breakdown of respondents according to age and ethnicity. However, the follow-up included a greater proportion of Christian respondents and male respondents than the baseline.


²⁸ It is not possible to assess whether respondents who completed multiple surveys were more or less likely to be those who with positive or negative experiences of the programme than those who only completed only the baseline. As such, we cannot determine how the bias of the respondent group affected the end of training and follow up survey data compared to the baseline.

Ambassadors' attitudes and beliefs could be attributed to their Ambassador role, rather than other factors (e.g. other events or things being reported in the press). The small sample size of Ambassadors in this analysis (just 26), together with the fact that there is longitudinal data for just seven outcomes, limit the conclusions we can draw. A full table of the results can be found in the appendix.

Aside from the improvement recorded for 'confidence listening to other people to understand what they want from the local area', none of the differences reported in this section of the report withstand statistical testing at the 95% confidence level. That said, there are indicative uplifts in some of the views and opinions which, together with the qualitative depth insight, show that Community Ambassadors has been well received and made a difference to confidence and motivation levels. Some of the more marked changes (mostly indicative) are seen on the following metrics:

Table 3: Metrics showing the greatest change

	Baseline survey	End of training	Follow-up survey ²⁹
(Base: All answering the surveys)	(104)	(49)	(20)
Local area has places or activities that are good at bringing people from different backgrounds together - % agree	51%	61%	60%
When people in this area get involved in their local community, they can really change the way that their area is run - % agree	85%	94%	95%
Personally motivated to work with other people in your neighbourhood to improve your neighbourhood - % agree	78%	88%	90%
I feel proud of my local area - % agree	60%	76%	85% 
Listen to other local people to understand what they want your local area to be like in the future - % confident	88%	98%	90%
Personally can influence decisions affected your local area - % agree	53%	67%	70%
Identify the right person or organisation to contact, to influence decisions in your local area - % confident	73%	78%	80%
I've been feeling optimistic about the future - % all of the time or often	53%	65%	55%
I've been feeling useful - % all of the time or often (Only asked in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen)	59% (85)	67% (36)	-

 Indicates a significant increase from the baseline survey data.

²⁹ Please note the low sample size for these results, with most responses based on Bradford Ambassadors

3.1 Meaningful social mixing

Three survey measures were used to indicate meaningful social mixing: ‘comfort talking to people from different backgrounds’, ‘comfort talking to people who express attitudes or behaviours you disagree with’ and the extent to which Ambassadors felt their friends were in the same ethnic group, religious group, age group and level of education as them.

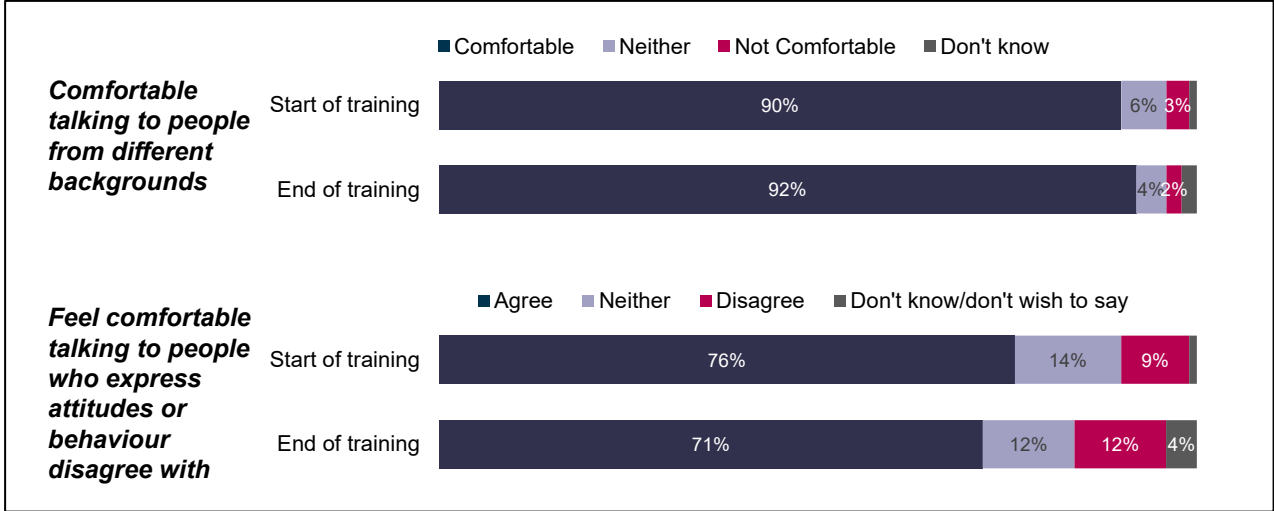
Levels of comfort talking to people with different backgrounds

There is evidence that the programme improved the extent to which Ambassadors felt comfortable talking to people from different backgrounds.

Prior to the training, it was evident that the vast majority of Ambassadors felt comfortable talking to people with different backgrounds; 90% felt comfortable, and only 3% felt uncomfortable with this.

Likewise, Ambassadors also generally felt comfortable talking with people who had attitudes or behaviours they disagreed with, but they were slightly less comfortable with this; three-quarters (76%) agreed that they were comfortable talking to people with attitudes or behaviours they disagreed with, with feelings slanting towards the ‘tend to agree’ (48%) rather than the ‘definitely agree’ option (28%), and one in every ten (9%) disagreeing with this statement.

Figure 3: Levels of comfort talking with people from different backgrounds and with different views



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). How comfortable do you feel talking to people from different backgrounds to you? To what extent do you agree with the statement: ‘I feel comfortable talking to people who express attitudes or behaviours I disagree with’ Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

At an absolute level, the training has not impacted on these already high baseline levels, with levels of comfort talking to people from different backgrounds remaining high at 92% after training and levels of comfort talking to people with attitudes / behaviours they disagreed with at 71% after training. However, when asked about the direct impact of the training on comfort levels, there is a suggestion that the training has been beneficial, with 68% (out of 22 answering this question) saying they felt ‘more’ comfortable talking to people with different backgrounds compared to before taking part in the programmes, and 59% saying they felt more comfortable talking to people with different views.

This is corroborated by the counterfactual impact findings. When we compare the responses of the 26 Ambassadors for whom we have baseline and follow up data at a suitable interval to the YouGov comparison group (see section on 'Counterfactual Impact Assessment'), Ambassadors were statistically significantly more likely to report improvements in the extent to which they felt comfortable talking to people from different backgrounds than their matched comparison group. On a scale of one to five, where a higher score denotes feeling more comfortable, Ambassadors' mean scores increased from 4.50 at the start to 4.54 at follow up, compared to a significant decrease from 4.10 to 4.06 among the matched comparison group (a test of the difference between the two mean change scores gives a p-value=0.020). The difference between Ambassadors and the matched comparison was also close to statistical significance in relation to the change in the extent to which they felt comfortable talking to people who express attitudes or behaviours they disagree with (p-value=0.050). **Counterfactual Impact Assessment Approach** for the full figures.

By area, and both before and after training, Ambassadors in Blackburn with Darwen were a little less comfortable with these scenarios, opting for the more muted option of 'fairly' rather than 'very' comfortable. For example, prior to training 46% said they were 'very' comfortable talking to those with different backgrounds and 38% were after training. For Bradford and Peterborough combined the respective figures were 63% and 56%.

Mixing with people who are different to you

There was no significant change in meaningful social mixing, for the Ambassadors after the training.

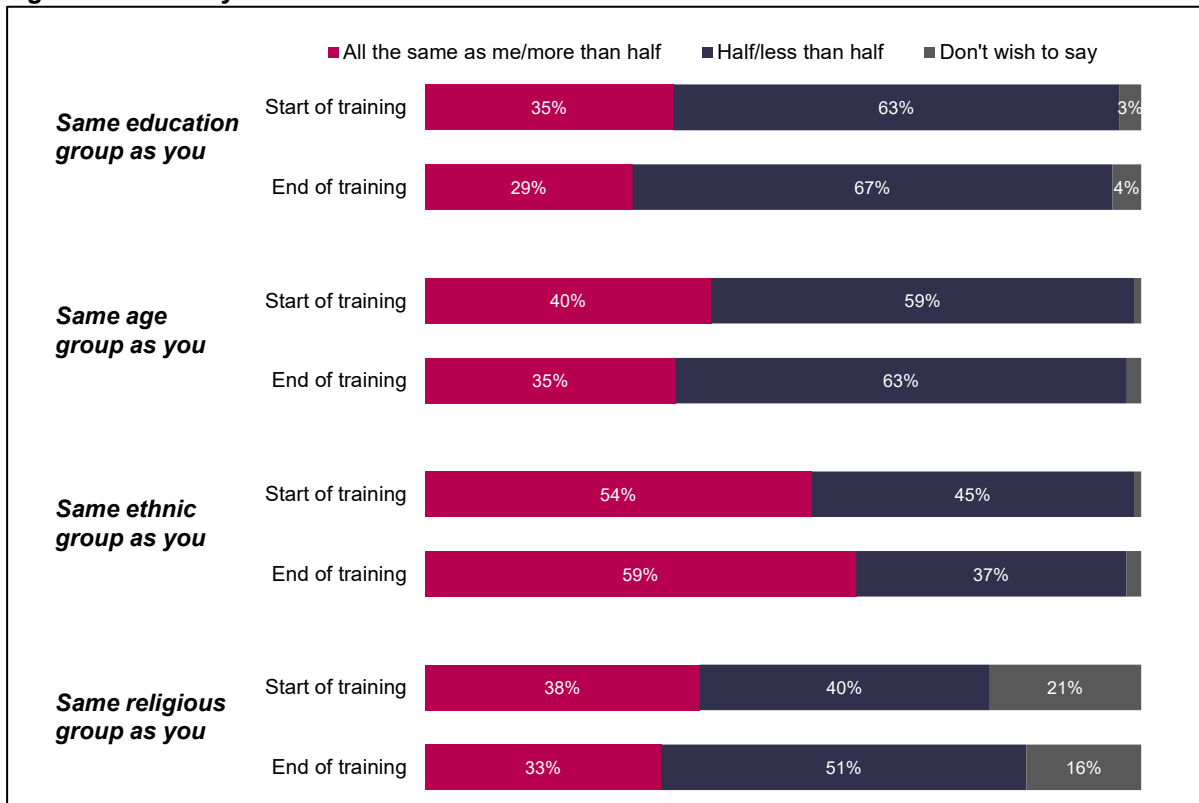
Diversity of friends by ethnicity, religion, age and level of education

In all the surveys, Ambassadors were asked the proportion of their friends in the same ethnic group, religious group, age group and level of education as them. This was to understand whether the training process helped to increase the diversity of Ambassadors' friendship groups.

No marked change was evidenced in these diversity measures after the training. However, Ambassadors were starting from a relatively high baseline: as with the high comfort levels recorded for talking to people from different backgrounds, even before training Ambassadors had a reasonable level of diversity in their friendship base. Diversity was more pronounced in terms of level of education, where two-thirds (63%) said that only a half or less of their friendship group were the same education level as them.

That said, Ambassadors perceived the training to have improved their mixing opportunities: by the end of training, three-fifths (59%, 13 of 22 Ambassadors answering this question) felt they now have 'more' opportunities to mix with people from different backgrounds. Nine claimed the training made no difference.

Figure 4: Diversity of friends



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). What proportion of your friends... are of the same ethnic group as you? / of the same religious group as you? / of the same age group as you? / have a similar level of education to you? Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

Local area has places or activities that are good at bringing people from different backgrounds together

There has been a positive, albeit indicative, increase in awareness of places or activities in the local area that help bring people from different backgrounds together. Prior to the training only half (51%) agreed that the local area has these types of places, but this increased to 61% by the end of training.

Qualitative findings on meaningful social mixing

In the qualitative data there is evidence that Ambassadors in all areas engaged in meaningful social mixing as a result of their participation in the programme. Several reported making connections within the group that became lasting friendships, beyond the training programme.

In Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen the diversity of the group meant that Ambassadors were able to mix within the group with people from different ages, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds to their own. As a result of this, many said that they now felt they had improved cultural awareness and were more comfortable engaging with people from different backgrounds.

“There are clear signs that it was having a positive impact from within the group. They were becoming more aware, there was more cultural understanding.”

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

In Peterborough, the programme focused more on recruiting individuals with experience of working within the community in a professional capacity. Here, the mixing within the group allowed this more 'professional' group to share learnings about how to most effectively work in the communities they served. Through this professional networking and discussion Ambassadors felt more equipped to serve their own communities after the programme.

"What I liked the most was that I got to meet other people from the local area that do community work as well."

Ambassador, Peterborough

Factors behind meaningful social mixing

The qualitative data suggests that the success of social mixing within the Ambassadors group and wider community appears to be driven by two factors: the training structure and content; and the support of the programme staff.

Across all three areas the programme was structured to encourage discussion between Ambassadors. The use of breakout rooms, when online, and opportunities for face-to-face discussion, both formal and informal, were highlighted as particularly effective opportunities for mixing. For example, in Blackburn with Darwen, sessions were often structured around content designed to provoke discussion (e.g. visits to points of cultural significance within the community or a BBC Panorama video on division within the area) followed by open conversation on the content. This approach allowed Ambassadors to discuss challenging issues in a safe environment. Programme staff in both Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford felt that creating this safe space for challenging discussions was at the heart of effective mixing within the group.

"It's about a creation of a space and atmosphere where people feel that they can be themselves, where they can risk difficult or potentially controversial questions and providing them with multiple opportunities to talk... about issues that relate to equality and diversity... we've created this space for social mixing for these relationships to be built, and to grow and thrive."

Programme Manager, Bradford

Training content afforded Ambassadors the tools for meaningful mixing within the group and the wider community. In Peterborough, Ambassadors found the content challenged them to engage the wider community in a different way, to work with them rather than push solutions on to them; in Bradford Ambassadors were given training on critical thinking so they could engage with and, if necessary, challenge people with different views; and in Blackburn with Darwen, training included sessions focussed on explaining why people hold different views and prejudices. All of this content was seen by Ambassadors and managers as enabling them to engage with people from backgrounds different to their own.

"Critical thinking really made me think. Why do I think that way, where does that come from?"

Ambassador, Bradford

The programme staff often drove mixing both within the Ambassadors groups and with the wider community. In Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen they actively encouraged Ambassadors to mix, including supporting some with lower confidence who might have found this more challenging. In all areas they supported Ambassadors to secure opportunities to engage in and encourage social mixing within the wider community, both by directing them to existing activities and events but also to establish their own community groups and events.

Factors limiting meaningful social mixing

There were, however, some factors limiting the capacity for Ambassadors to engage in meaningful social mixing. Some of these were direct impacts of the pandemic.

In terms of mixing with other Ambassadors, virtual delivery was seen as a hinderance. While some efforts were made to mitigate this impact, such as by using breakout rooms on videoconferencing platforms, Ambassadors felt, understandably, that they were not able to mix as effectively with their peers as they would be face-to-face.

"You can't just do exactly what you did face-to-face and do it online and put people in [a] breakout room."

Ambassador, Peterborough

The COVID-19 pandemic also limited the ability of Ambassadors to engage with the wider community. For Ambassadors in all areas, the opportunity to work in the wider community was inhibited by COVID restrictions. Some efforts were made to mitigate this effect, for example, Ambassadors in Bradford were encouraged to engage with people online while those in Blackburn with Darwen became 'COVID-19 champions' tasked with disseminating accurate public health messages to the wider community. However, there was an acknowledgement among both programme staff and Ambassadors that, understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic reduced Ambassadors' ability to engage in, and encourage, mixing within the wider community.

"[COVID-19 support champions have been] getting messages out about COVID support, how they can get the vaccine, how they can get support with self-isolating."

Programme Manager, Bradford

There was also some suggestion from a few Ambassadors in Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford that British White, low-income individuals were under-represented in the group. For these Ambassadors, the exclusion of this group was a hindrance to meaningful social mixing between communities in the area.

"When I signed up for the [BwD] Community Ambassadors' group, I thought I would meet a lot of people from the underprivileged areas but they weren't there...so you didn't get the views from the underprivileged White communities."

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

Programme managers in both these areas had identified this as a potential recruitment challenge and had actively targeted this group. In both areas they felt there had been some limited success in reaching this group, but felt they remained under-represented. There was an acknowledgement that this group had been challenging to engage on other, similar projects, with some speculation that perhaps community inclusion projects were viewed as not being 'for them'.

“From the outset we have been aware of this sense amongst some people in poorer White communities that they are forgotten and left behind, and that within itself can be a cause of some of the problems and division within communities... but ironically that same group has been one of the hardest to engage with, perhaps because of this perception.”

Programme Manager, Bradford

3.2 Understanding, respecting, and trusting others from different backgrounds

Four survey measures were used to explore understanding, respect and trust of others from different backgrounds: 'agreeing that residents in the local area respect differences between people in the local area', 'agreeing the local area is a place where different ethnic groups get on well together', 'agreeing the local area is a place where people from different religions or beliefs get on well together', and 'agreeing the local area is a place where people of different ages get on well together'.

Levels of respect and togetherness in local area

The Ambassadors programme made no significant difference to Ambassadors' perceptions of whether residents in their local area respect differences between people in the local area, or of whether people from different ethnic, age and religious groups in the local area 'get on well together'.

Residents in the local area respect differences between people

Ambassadors did not especially feel that residents in the local area respected differences between people, with only two-fifths (42%) agreeing with this stance before training. Around one-fifth (22%) disagreed, and this left a sizeable proportion who were either unsure or took a middle ground position.

This belief was relatively unchanged at the end of the training, where 41% continued to agree with the statement and 24% disagreed.

This is corroborated by the counterfactual impact assessment findings. When we compare the responses of the 26 Ambassadors for whom we have baseline and follow up data at a suitable interval to match to the comparison group (see section on 'Counterfactual Impact Assessment'), we find no discernible impact on the extent to which they agree that residents in their local area respect differences. On a scale of 1 to 5, where a higher score denotes a more positive response, Ambassadors saw their mean score move from 3.30 to 3.48, compared to a mean score change of 3.48 to 3.58 among the comparison group (a

test of the difference between the two mean change scores gives a p-value=0.958. See **Counterfactual Impact Assessment Approach**.

Both before and after the training, it should be noted that Ambassadors from Blackburn with Darwen were more positive about respect and were more likely to say they 'definitely agreed' with the statement (20% in the baseline compared with 4% for Bradford and Peterborough combined).

The follow-up survey (conducted 3 months after the end of training) showed a very high level of agreement with the respect statement – 70% agreeing that residents in the local area respect differences. The base size for this survey is just 20 which means firm conclusions cannot be drawn. However, with the results primarily based on Bradford Ambassadors, this could be suggestive of an improvement in perceptions within Bradford (3% 'definitely' agreeing in the baseline, rising to 25% in the follow-up survey³⁰).

Different ethnic, age and religious backgrounds get on well together in the local area

Compared with the scores recorded for 'respecting differences', the findings for whether Ambassadors think people from different ethnic, age and religious groups in the local area 'get on well together' were slightly more positive.

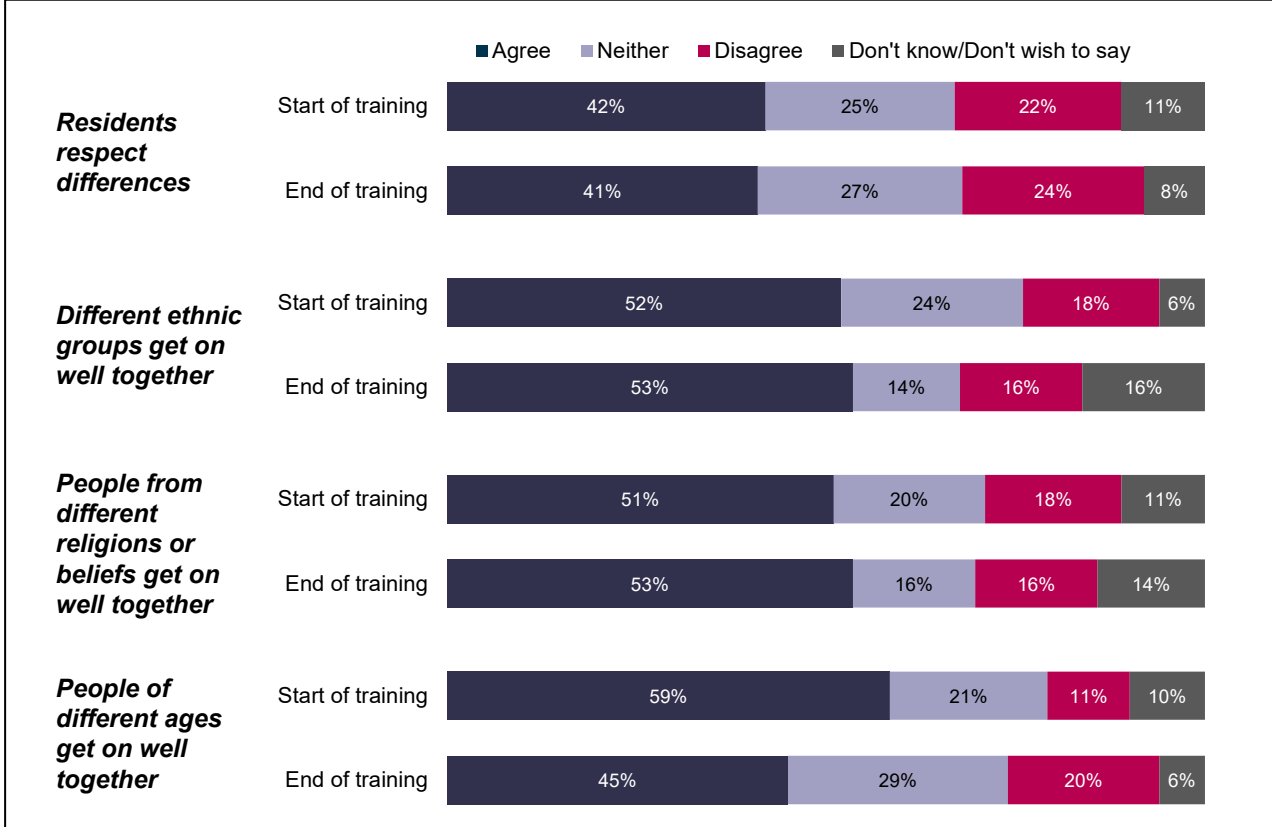
Ambassadors were most likely to feel that it was different age groups that mix well, with three-fifths (59%) claiming the local area is a place where people of different ages get on well together. Views dropped just slightly for different ethnic groups (52% agreed) and different religious groups (51% agreed).

In line with opinions recorded for 'respecting differences', Ambassadors in Blackburn with Darwen were once again a little more upbeat in their views, being more likely to opt for the 'definitely agree' option for all three areas of age, ethnicity and religion.

By the end of the training there has been no change in perceptions for ethnicity and religion, but a small indicative drop in agreement for age togetherness (from 59% agreement in the baseline, down to 45% in the end-training surveys). All three local authorities saw this drop in their scores, potentially suggesting the training has raised awareness of times when people of different ages do not get on so well together.

³⁰ The sample for Bradford is 29 in the baseline survey and 16 in the follow-up survey, and as such very low to draw any firm 'measured' conclusions.

Figure 5: Levels of respect and togetherness change



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). To what extent do you agree or disagree that ... residents in this local area respect differences between other people in the area? / Your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together? / your local area is a place where people from different religions or beliefs get on well together? / Your local area is a place where people of different ages get on well together?
 Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

3.3 Increased stake in the community

Six survey measures were used to indicate an increased stake in the community: 'agreeing that when local people get involved in their local community, they can change the way the area is run', 'agreeing that it's important for local people to get involved in local events', 'feeling personally motivated to work with others to improve the neighbourhood', 'feeling it is important to be able to influence decisions in the local area', 'agreeing you should help to make your local area better if you can', and 'feeling proud of the local area'.

Giving time to the community

Ambassadors displayed a strong sense of having a stake in the community even before the training, but even so there is evidence that the programme improved Ambassadors' levels of motivation to work with other people in neighbourhood to improve the neighbourhood.

Giving time to the community can change the way the area is run

Even before the training there was a strong sense amongst Ambassadors that there was value in people giving time to their local community. Over eight in every ten (85%) agreed with the statement that 'when people in this area get involved in their local community, they can really change the way that their area is run'. Only 4% disagreed.

Positively and despite a high baseline measure, by the end of training there was an indicative uplift in opinion, increasing by 9 percentage points to 94% agreement. In part, this could be reflective of the fact that Bradford Ambassadors had high initial agreement levels with this statement and formed a bigger segment within the end-training survey. That said, it is worth noting that Bradford Ambassadors agreement levels did indicatively improve from 90% in the baseline to 96% in the end-training survey. Blackburn with Darwen recorded lower levels of agreement in the baseline standing at just 77%, but this had increased to 92% in the end-training survey.

Important to be able to influence decisions in the local area

As well as seeing the value of giving time to the community, Ambassadors also placed importance on being able to influence decisions in the local area, with nine in every ten (87%) believing this to be the case even before they took part in the training. Showing a strength of feeling for this topic, two in five (40%) of these Ambassadors selected the top box of 'very' important.

Whilst after training there was no change in these scores, perceived importance remained at a high level of 90% (and 95% in the follow-up survey), with around two in five (39%) of these Ambassadors continuing to think the ability to influence decisions is 'very important'.

Important for people in the local area to get involved in events

In line with the above findings, nearly all Ambassadors (92% baseline survey) agreed that it was important for people in the local area to get involved in local events.

Levels of agreement remained unchanged after training (96% in the end-training survey and 95% in the follow-up survey), although there is some indication that strength of agreement has risen. Prior to training 68% 'definitely agreed' that it was important for people to get involved in events, and this increased to 78% after training, with an uplift evident across all three local authority areas.

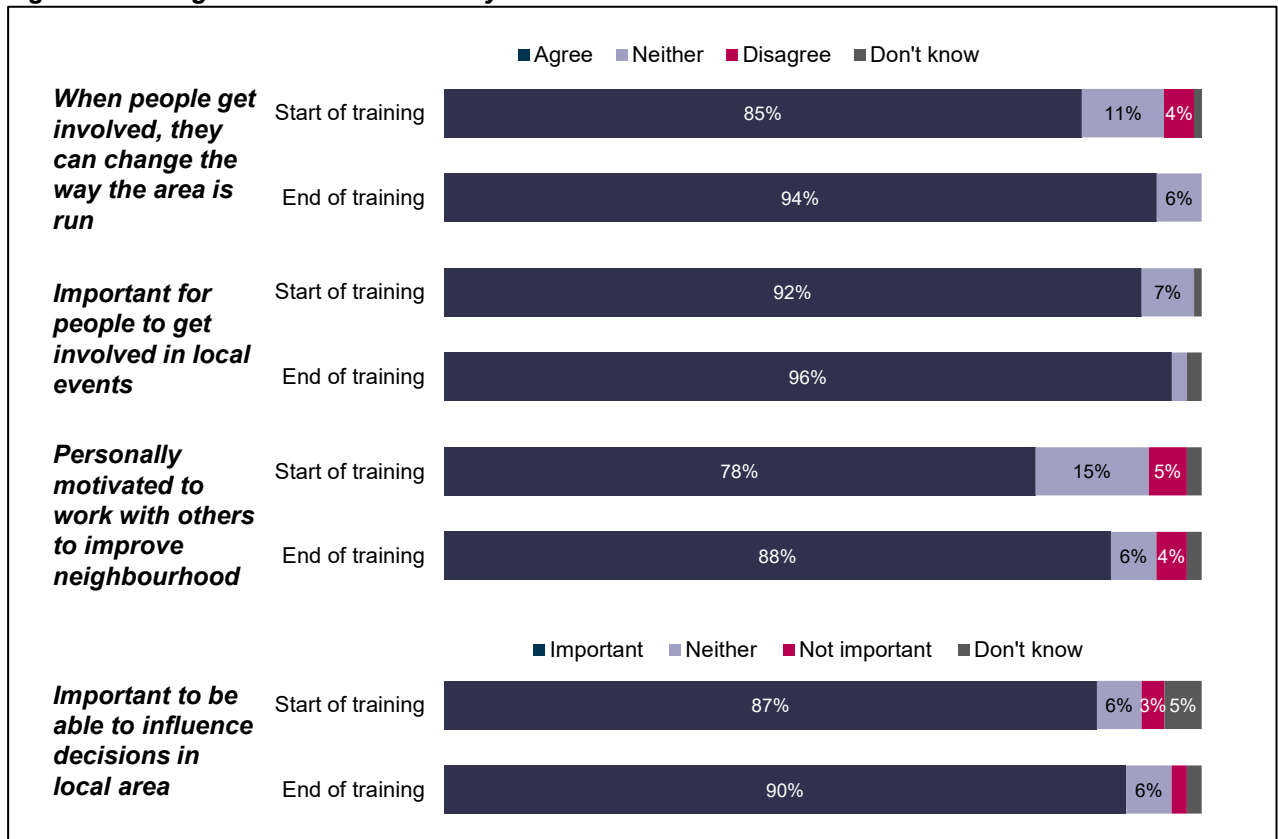
Motivated to work with other people in neighbourhood to improve the neighbourhood

A core goal of the Community Ambassadors is for Ambassadors to initiate change in the local area after the training. As such, it is positive that there is an indicative uplift at the end of training in the proportion of Ambassadors motivated to work with other people in the neighbourhood to improve the neighbourhood.

At the start of the training, just over three-quarters (78%) of Ambassadors agreed that they were personally motivated to work to improve the neighbourhood, but this rose by 10 percentage points to 88% by the end of the training. The indicative uplift was only recorded for Blackburn with Darwen and Peterborough, not for Bradford.

This rise is further reinforced when Ambassadors were asked more directly after the training whether they now felt more (or less) motivated to work with others to improve the neighbourhood. Of those asked and answering this question (22 Ambassadors), practically all (91%) said they felt 'more' motivated. The remaining 2 Ambassadors said they felt no different.

Figure 6: Giving time to the community



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...when people in the area get involved in their local community, they can really change the way the area is run / I feel it is important for people in my local area to get involved in local events / you are personally motivated to work with other people in your neighbourhood to improve the neighbourhood? How important is it for you personally to feel that you can influence decisions in your local area? Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

The finding in relation to personal motivation is corroborated in the counterfactual impact assessment findings which suggest that the Ambassador role had a statistically significant positive impact among the 26 Ambassadors for whom we have baseline and follow up data at a suitable interval to match to the comparison group. On a scale of one to five, where a higher score denotes a more positive attitude, Ambassadors scored 4.28 at the start (much higher than their matched comparison group whose mean score was 3.44). By the follow up, Ambassadors' mean scores on the extent to which they were motivated to work with others to improve their neighbourhood had risen to 4.32, in comparison with a drop to 3.41 among the comparison group (p-value for the difference=0.035*). See C. Counterfactual impact assessment for detail on how the counterfactual impact assessment was conducted.

In line with the quantitative data, the qualitative research indicated high levels of motivation among Ambassadors to work in the community. Many outlined a belief in the value of working in the community and several outlined activities they had become involved in since starting the programme, such as restoration of public spaces (e.g., parks and canals) and litter picking groups, and some activities that they had set up themselves, such as support groups for refugees or international cultural events.

The extent to which this motivation to work in the community already existed was varied. For some Ambassadors, this programme was a way to develop skills used to influence the communities they lived and worked in. As such, these people came in with a significant

belief in the importance of community work, already operating in prominent professional or voluntary community support roles.

However, others came in with a lower baseline and therefore described a more substantial change. This group typically had done little or no community work and, in some more extreme cases, had faced significant barriers to social engagement (including physical disabilities, mental health issues and domestic abuse). By the end of the programme, many in this group reported a strong belief in the value of community engagement and action, a considerable growth from the limited levels of social engagement some exhibited at the beginning of the programme.

"You have to engage, you have to participate because once you are participating you can make changes, you can influence decision-making. Things happen through participation but if you remain passive, nothing happens."

Ambassador, Bradford

The qualitative interviews suggest that exposure to community engagement is at the heart of this development. Exposure to activities and events, put on by both other Ambassadors and other members of the community, encouraged Ambassadors to be more active and take more of a stake in their own community. Alongside this, the support of the group motivated some Ambassadors to become more involved in community action.

"[One Ambassador] took it upon himself to lead a bid for some money that we'd put out with one of the local area teams, that we're not managing, so they're now re-purposing the little green telephone connection boxes with art. That wouldn't be happening without the information about the opportunity or the positive support, that these people can lead on these opportunities."

Programme Manager, Bradford

Responsibility, duty, and pride in the local area

The Ambassadors programme made only an indicative difference to Ambassadors' pride in their local area; while their levels of responsibility and duty were high before the training and remained unchanged.

Should help to make the local area better, if I can

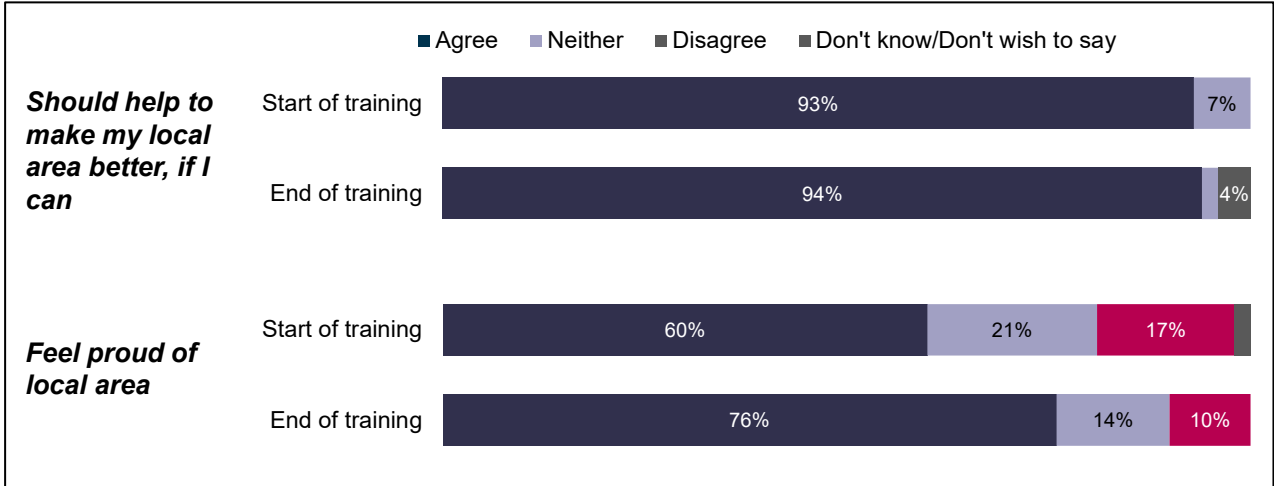
No doubt a reflection of their decision to participate in Community Ambassadors, Ambassadors showed a high level of responsibility and duty both at the start and the end of the training. Just over nine in every ten (93%) agreed prior to training that they should help their local community, if they can – and this stood at 94% at the end of training (and 95% amongst those completing the follow-up survey).

Both before and after the training, Ambassadors from Peterborough showed slightly less strength of responsibility/duty, with a slight bias towards selecting the 'tend to agree' rather than the 'definitely agree' option, in comparison to Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen Ambassadors.

Feel proud of the local area

The training looks to have improved perceptions of the local area, with an indicative uplift in the proportion of Ambassadors who feel proud of their local area; 60% felt proud prior to the training, with this rising to 76% after training (and 85% of those completing the follow-up survey). Reflecting well on the training, this indicative uplift was recorded in all three local authority areas, with Blackburn with Darwen recording a 26 percentage point increase, Peterborough a 14 percentage point increase and Bradford a 11 percentage point increase.

Figure 5: Responsibility and pride in local area



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...I feel I should help to make my local area better, if I can / I feel proud of my local area
Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

In line with the quantitative findings, the qualitative data outlined high levels of responsibility and pride in the local area, but also suggested an increase in pride for some Ambassadors as a result of their time on the programme. This was most prominent for the Ambassadors recruited from community members, in Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford.

Where Ambassadors displayed an increase in pride it appears to be driven by two factors, the first of which is the exposure to a diverse group of people from across their community. This left some Ambassadors with the sense that their community was a place where people from a wider range of backgrounds could come together. Others displayed an increased pride in the area as they became more aware of the work that members of the community, including their fellow Ambassadors, were engaging in to improve their community.

"[In Bradford] it doesn't matter where you come from, what's your background, what colour you are, if you have a disability or not, people can come together and get on as one."

Ambassador, Bradford

The second factor is an emphasis in programme training on increasing understanding of the local area. Training content had a focus on the local area, with programme managers in all areas looking to make it as 'place specific' as possible, for example by ensuring case studies were drawn from the local area. In Blackburn with Darwen, the pre-COVID cohort of Ambassadors were taken on regular trips around the area to explore their community

and see parts of it they were perhaps not aware of, which many Ambassadors highlighted as increasing their pride in the area and desire to work to improve it.

"I went to an area of Blackburn I've never been to... it was a complete eye opener."

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

3.4 Empowerment to make positive change in the community

Six survey measures were used to indicate increased empowerment to make a positive change in the community: 'feeling personally able to influence decisions affecting the local area', 'feeling there are opportunities for local people to get involved in making the area better', 'confidence in being able to listen to other local people to understand what they want the local area to be like in future', 'confidence in being able to explain what other local people want, to a local official', 'confidence in being able to identify the right person or organisation to contact, to influence local decisions', and 'confidence in being able to follow-up with a local official to find out what they have done about what you've told them'. In addition, to understand Ambassadors' awareness of ways of getting involved locally, Ambassadors were asked what community activities they'd been personally involved in, in the past 12 months; and what community activities they were aware of other local people engaging in.

Listening to others and representing their views

There is evidence that the programme improved Ambassadors' confidence in listening to other local people to understand what they want from the local area, but not their confidence in representing these views to local officials.

Confidence listening to other local people to understand what they want from the local area

Even before the training Ambassadors had a relatively high level of confidence in their ability to listen to local people and understand what they would like their area to be like in the future. Even though the baseline position was already strong, there was an improvement in confidence levels by the end of training (with this change proving to be statistically significant). Confidence levels increased from 88% in the baseline to 98% at the end of training, with an uplift mirrored in all three areas of Bradford, Blackburn with Darwen and Peterborough.

Reflecting the earlier findings recorded in the meaningful social mixing section, Ambassadors from Blackburn with Darwen had slightly lower confidence levels prior to the training; 46% claimed to be 'very' confident in the baseline against 60% for the other two areas combined.

Confidence explaining what other local people want to a local official

Although there was a good impact from the training on the ability of Ambassadors to listen and understand others, there was no real change for confidence in their ability to represent these views to local officials. That said, confidence levels were still shown to be high both before and after the training, standing at 82% and 84% respectively. Please see Figure *Figure* for the findings. During the qualitative discussions Ambassadors, it did not appear

that the training had specifically focused on communicating with local officials, which may provide an indication as to why no differences could be seen.

Perceived ability to change the local area

There is evidence that the programme improved Ambassadors' perceived ability to influence decisions affecting the local area, but not their perceptions of there being wider opportunities for local people to get involved in making changes.

Ability to influence decisions affecting local area

After the Community Ambassadors' training, there is a strong (albeit not statistically significant) uplift in Ambassadors' perceived ability to influence decisions affecting the local area. Prior to training, around half (53%) felt that they could influence decisions, but this increased to two-thirds (67%) at the end of training (and 70% amongst the small number completing the follow-up survey). Again, this is corroborated by the counterfactual impact findings, where the Ambassadors' improvement in their mean scores from 3.43 to 3.71 out of 5, from baseline to follow up contrasted with a reduction in mean scores from 2.56 to 2.43 out of 5 among the matched comparison group (p-value for the difference=0.003*) (see **Counterfactual Impact Assessment Approach**). This suggests that, even though Ambassadors started with a stronger belief than the matched comparison group that they could influence what happens locally, their role as Ambassador further increased this belief.

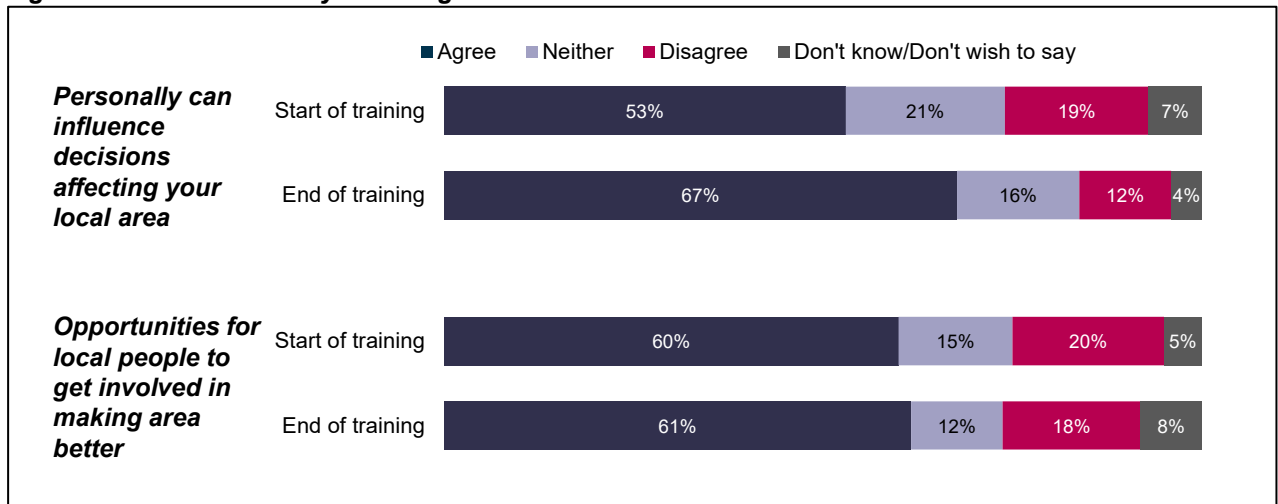
Again, and although the change is only indicative, it is positive to see this uplift in all three local authorities, with Blackburn with Darwen recording a 22 percentage point increase, Peterborough a 17 percentage point increase, and Bradford an 11 percentage point increase.

As further evidence that the training has met its goals, when a sub-group of Ambassadors were asked after the training about the impact of the training, three-quarters (77%, 17 of the 22 Ambassadors answering the question) said they now felt they had 'more' influence on decisions affecting their local area; 5 of them said the training had not made a difference.

Opportunities in the local area for people to get involved in making the area better

The increase in feelings that they could personally influence decisions in the local area, however, did not translate into any change in Ambassadors believing that there are wider opportunities for local people to get involved in making changes to the area.

Figure 6: Perceived ability to change local area



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). Do you agree or disagree that you can ... personally influence decisions affecting your local area / there are opportunities in my local area for local people to get involved in making the area better. Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

Awareness of pathways to effect change and holding service Commissioners to account

The Ambassadors programme made no significant difference to Ambassadors’ awareness of pathways to effect change and hold service commissioners to account, their involvement in local activities or awareness of ways of getting involved locally.

Confidence in identifying the right person or organisation to contact to influence decisions in local area

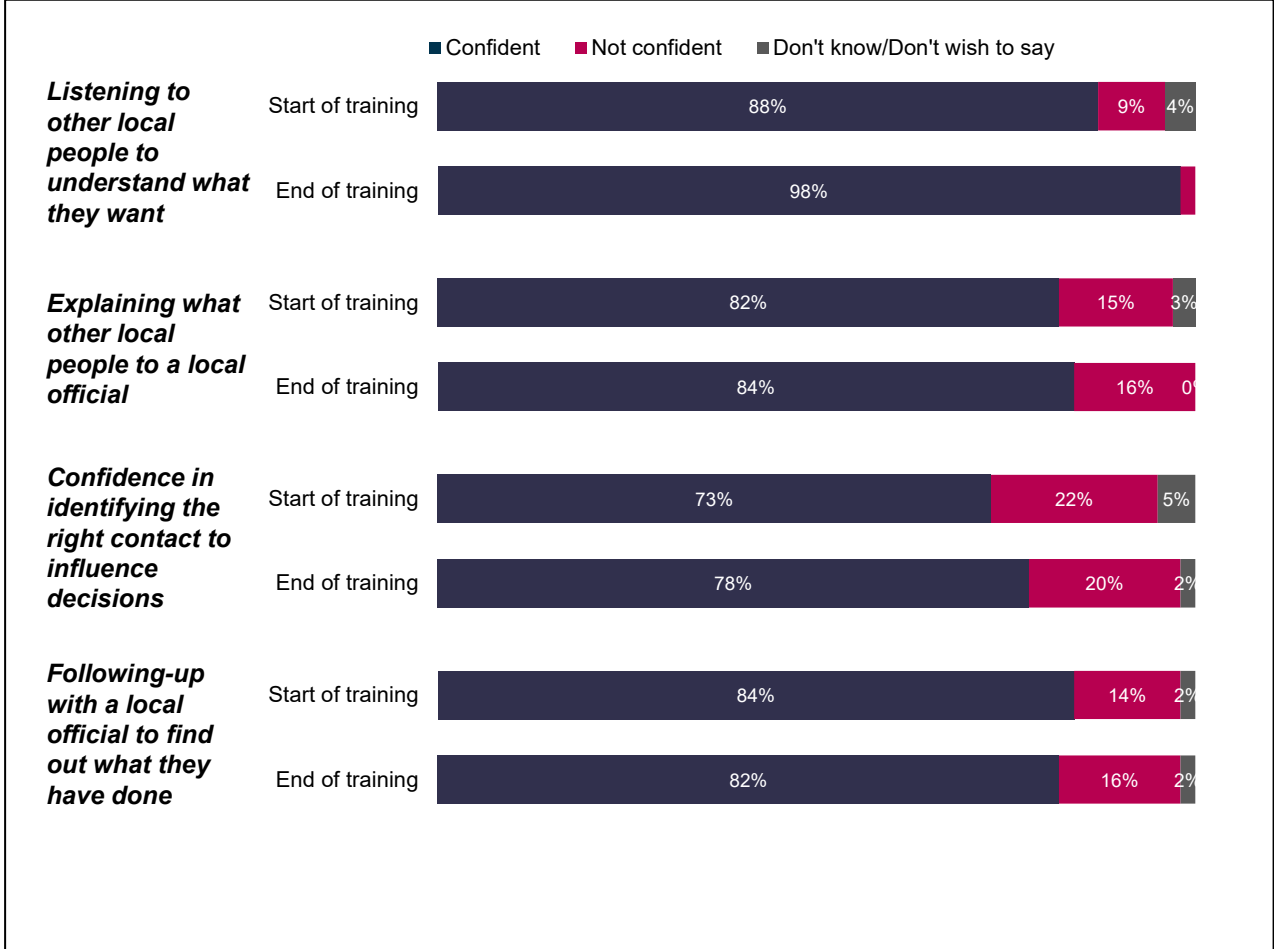
There is an indicative, but very small, increase in the proportion of Ambassadors who felt they could identify the right person or organisation to contact to influence decisions in the local area. Three quarters (73%) were already confident of this before the training, and this increased by 5 percentage points to 78% by the end of training.

As already noted with some other similar measures, the baseline survey found that Blackburn with Darwen Ambassadors were slightly less confident in this respect, recording a 64% confidence rate against 83% for the two other areas combined.

Confidence in following-up with a local official to find out what they have done

Once Ambassadors have identified the right person to speak to, they have more confidence in their ability to follow-up with the local official, with 84% claiming to be confident in this respect prior to the training. No change on this was evident, with 82% confident at the close of the training.

Figure 7: Confidence in effecting change



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49). How confident are you that you could do the following? ... Listen to other local people to understand what they want your local area to be like in the future / Explain what other people want, to a local official (such as a local councillors, MP, or public official working for the local council) / Identify the right person or organisation to contact, to influence decisions in your local area / Follow-up with a local official (such as a councillor, MP, or public official working for the local council) to find out what they've done about what you told them. Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

Awareness of other local people being involved in activities

Ambassador awareness of other local people engaging in community activities was used as a proxy to indicate Ambassadors’ own awareness of ways of getting involved locally. Overall, there has been no real change in awareness based on the activity descriptions prompted in the survey³¹, with 75% of Ambassadors being aware of one or more activity before training, and this standing at 78% at the end of training.

The most common activities that Ambassadors were aware of before training were the running of local services on a voluntary basis (47%), organising a community event (44%) and trying to set-up a new service/amenity for local residents (30%).

³¹ These included running local services on a voluntary basis, organising a community event, trying to set-up a new service for local residents, trying to stop the closure of a service/amenity or something else in the local area.

Activities Ambassadors were personally involved in within last 12 months

Turning to the activities that Ambassadors had personally been involved in within the last 12 months, there are some indicative uplifts although it would be fair to say that Ambassadors were already reasonably active in community events prior to the training. In the baseline measure only 29% said they had not been involved in any activities, with around a third saying they had been involved in running local services on a voluntary basis (35%), trying to set-up a new service (31%), and organising a community event (31%). Shifts are not statistically significant, but the proportions involved in running local services or trying to set-up a new service stood at 41% for each of these activities at the end of training.

This is corroborated by the counterfactual impact findings. The Ambassadors were much more likely than the matched comparison to be involved in activities from the start. However, there was no statistically significant evidence that being an Ambassador further increased their level of activity. Neither they nor the comparison group increased their activity levels very much over the period (see **Counterfactual Impact Assessment Approach**).

Qualitative findings on empowerment to make a positive change

In the qualitative interviews, Ambassadors in all areas described feeling more empowered to effect change in their communities.

Ambassadors in all areas showed improved confidence listening to other local people to see what they want, so as to work with others in their community to improve it. The course content was one element of the programme behind this change. The focus of training sessions, on things such as observation skills and engaging people in developing solutions to problems they faced, left Ambassadors feeling empowered to effect change.

"[A key learning was] making every contact count and discovering more about the community, what wellbeing means for them and not necessarily for myself and the organisation I work for."

Ambassador, Peterborough

Ambassadors also displayed an increased awareness of other local people being involved in activities, thus increasing their awareness of the opportunities around them. For this group, being exposed to the work that other Ambassadors and the council were doing in the community motivated them to want to do more themselves. Seeing community projects or hearing from other Ambassadors about the work they had done, inspired them to take greater ownership of improving their own communities.

"I'm astonished by how much some people do and how much is happening...and I realise there's some really good people doing good things."

Ambassador, Bradford

Much of this awareness came from the structured training elements of the programme, rather than Ambassadors own work in the community, albeit in different ways across each area. In Peterborough there was networking within the professional group in videoconferencing platform breakout rooms during the online training sessions. This

opportunity to meet others engaged in community work was singled out by a few Peterborough Ambassadors as a core strength of the programme.

In Bradford, while Ambassadors also cited inspiration from the work of other participants, they were given training and responsibility to assess and then evaluate bids for innovation funds. This gave them an insight into the ways in which community programmes work, and a critical role as evaluators. As a result of this, many Ambassadors had developed a wider base of knowledge about community support projects but also the 'soft' listening skills involved in observing and evaluating them.

"They opened new avenues. If you think about it, you never really think you need training for just observing something until you actually do the training and then you realise 'woah, I didn't realise it was that deep'. You realise that there's more to everything."

Ambassador, Bradford

In Blackburn with Darwen, the emphasis of the programme was on connecting Ambassadors with existing opportunities, alongside developing their own activities. Ambassadors there were routinely directed to existing groups and opportunities, in line with their own interests. As a result of this, several Ambassadors talked about groups they had become involved with through the programme (ranging from local gardening groups to one sending toys and supplies to families in Lebanon), which they remained involved with at the time of interview.

"We already have a lot of these groups in Blackburn with Darwen, so it was more about joining them up with something that was already happening. Sometimes it would be about creating something new, but the option [of being joined up something already-existing] was always there."

Programme Manager, Blackburn with Darwen

There was some variation among Ambassadors in the extent to which their empowerment to make a positive change in the community was a new change as a result of the programme or was something that existed before they started the programme. Some Ambassadors came on to the programme with high levels of activity in the community already either in a professional capacity, as was the case in Peterborough, or in a voluntary role, for some in both Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen. For this group the programme built on an already strong motivation and level of work in the community.

However, other Ambassadors came in with much more limited experience of working in the community. Some had not worked on any similar projects and a few also came with additional barriers to any social interaction such as low confidence and self-esteem. For this group, the change was more substantial.

"It's been life-transforming and it's given me a direction in terms of what I want to do in the future that I didn't have that before."

Ambassador, Bradford

The programme managers in Blackburn with Darwen felt that this varied level of prior community engagement among the Ambassadors group was key to increasing

participation within the group. It was their assessment that those with a higher level of engagement could encourage others by their example and by driving conversations forward at training events. This diversity of ability was also cited by a few Ambassadors in Bradford, who found the example of others motivated them to progress their own community work. The social mixing within the group appears to have aided this further, giving Ambassadors opportunity to learn from, and be inspired by, others in the group.

3.5 Other personal benefits

Other personal benefits experienced by the Community Ambassadors were also explored to gain a sense of if, and how, participation in the programme impacted upon the Ambassadors personally. These included changes to their personal confidence, mood and sense of purpose; their sense of belonging to the community; and perceptions of their own employability.

Personal confidence, social isolation and sense of belonging

Mood, attitudes, and confidence

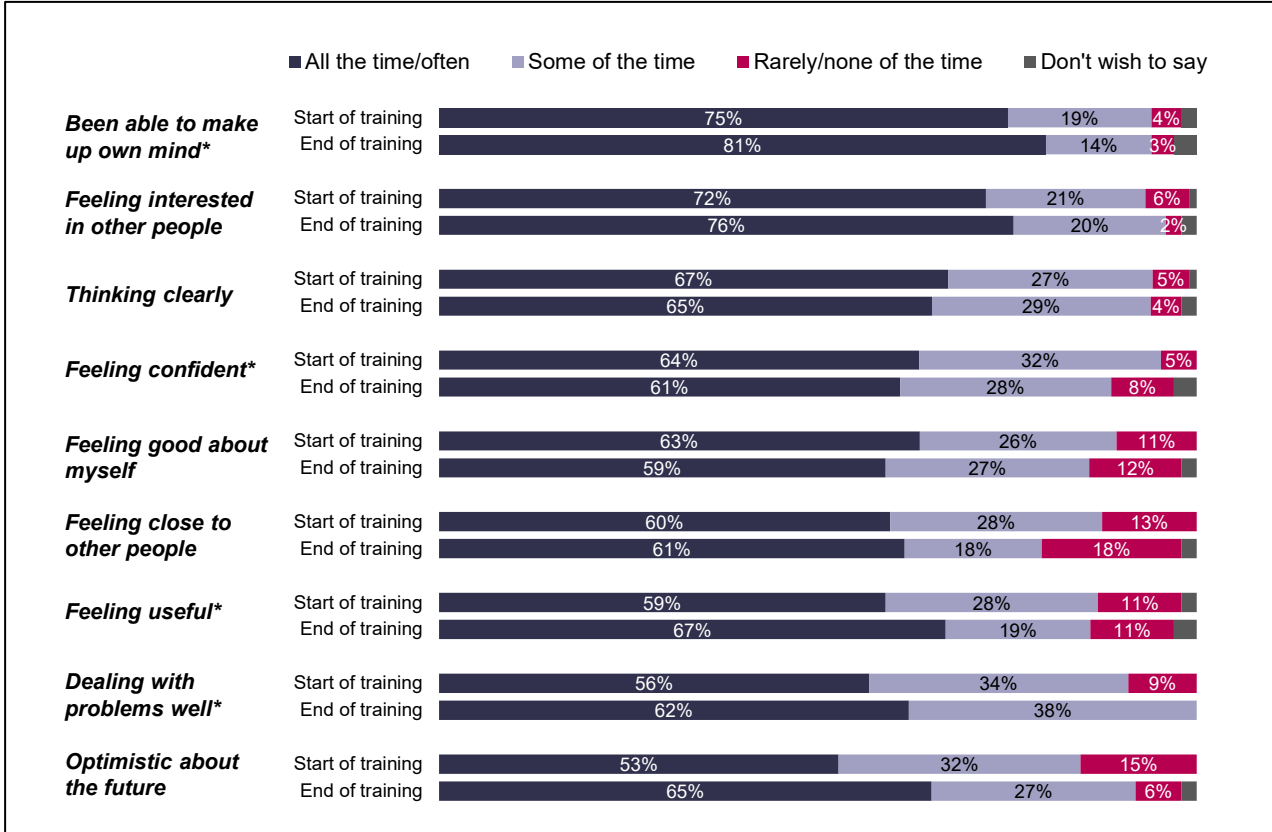
Ambassadors' mood and confidence prior to the training generally erred towards the positive, but there were still aspects where feelings were less upbeat. This was most notable in terms of optimism for the future – prior to the training only a half (53%) claimed to feel optimistic 'all of the time' or 'often' in the previous two weeks, leaving 32% who only felt optimistic 'some of the time' and 15% who 'rarely or never' felt this.

Although none of the ratings recorded a significant change in their scores at the end of the training, there is an indicative uplift on the future optimism, with a 12 percentage point change up to 65% feeling confident about the future 'all of the time' or 'often'³². There was also a small improvement (up by 8 percentage points) in Ambassadors 'feeling useful' which links closely to the core objectives of the Community Ambassador training.

Both before and after the training, Ambassadors tended to be positive about being able to make up their mind and being interested in others.

³² As the baseline for this study was conducted just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and many completed the end-training survey during the COVID-19 pandemic, the fact that Ambassadors felt optimism for the future is a good testament to the training.

Figure 8: Mood, attitudes and confidence in last 2 weeks



Base: Start of training survey (104). End of training survey (49), excepting statement with a * which were not asked in Peterborough and the base size drops to 85 and 36 respectively. Please tick the box that best describes you experience of each statement over the last 2 weeks ... I've been feeling optimistic about the future / I've been feeling useful* / I've been feeling interested in other people / I've been dealing with problems well* / I've been thinking clearly / I've been feeling good about myself / I've been feeling close to other people / I've been feeling confident* / I've been able to make up my own mind about things* Any percentages that are less than 3% are not displayed on the chart

Qualitative findings on personal confidence, social isolation and sense of belonging

In the qualitative interviews, some of the strongest changes among Ambassadors in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen were the personal changes to confidence, self-esteem and social isolation.

Some Ambassadors in these areas came to the programme with limited confidence, self-esteem and a history of social isolation. This group had faced issues related to physical and mental health, domestic abuse, bereavements and being a recent migrant to the country. These people outlined strong stories of improved personal confidence, leading to them making a diverse group of friends and engaging socially in a way that they would not otherwise have done.

"I am talking to you today and that for me is a fantastic achievement because I am the same person who could never speak to anybody; my voice would come to my neck and then it would stop, it would not come out but today I am talking to you."

Ambassador, Bradford

Underpinning these stories of progression is the opportunity for social interaction in a safe space, and the support of programme staff. This group of Ambassadors found that engaging with others, in a safe environment, encouraged them to engage more socially, raising their personal confidence. Alongside this, the programme staff were cited as a supportive presence, aiding them with specific issues (for example, university applications) and offering more holistic personal support.

"I feel like I got a lot of support from the Bradford for Everyone network of ambassadors and staff in a way that I wasn't expecting, and I really, really appreciated, and [it] was so valuable to feel [they] really cared!"

Ambassador, Bradford

In Peterborough, there was more limited evidence of these personal journeys. However, this is likely a reflection on the higher baseline across this more professionally-experienced group of Ambassadors.

Belonging to the community

The training has had limited impact on sense of belonging. Before training, three quarters (75%) felt either 'very' or 'fairly' strongly that they belonged to the local area, and this stood at 78% at the end of the training. Again, this is corroborated by the counterfactual impact findings, where no statistically significant evidence was found that being an Ambassador increased a sense of belonging. From the start, Ambassadors were more likely than the matched comparison group to feel a sense of belonging to their local community (with a mean score of 3.22 of 4, compared to 2.84 among the comparison group). The Ambassadors' mean scores remained the same after the follow up, and the mean score of the matched comparison group shifting slightly to 2.82 out of 4 (p-value for the difference=0.297) (see **Counterfactual Impact Assessment Approach**).

Whilst there is no absolute change in this measure, when directly asked about their sense of belonging compared to before the Community Ambassador programme, there is some suggestion that the training has improved perceptions of community belonging. Most (82%, 18 of the 22 Ambassadors answering the question) said they now felt 'more' of a sense of belonging to the local area. Four said the training had not made a difference.

Continuing the theme of community belonging, most Ambassadors felt that they had someone they could count on to listen to them when they needed to talk (94% before training, 90% at the end of training). However, despite this, around three-fifths cited an element of feeling lonely at times, with no change on this mindset at the close of the training - 62% in the baseline and 60% in the end-training survey said they 'occasionally', 'sometimes' or 'often/always' felt lonely.

Employment and employability

Paid work

Around half of Ambassadors were in paid work at the start of training, with this rising to three-quarters for Peterborough where the Community Ambassador initiative was targeted more to working professionals. These levels of paid employment were similar at the end of the training programme.

Amongst Ambassadors who were not in paid work, there was a mix of views in terms of how they viewed their employment opportunities and no clear impact of the training changing these views. In part this is because of the low number of respondents answering these questions, but also the COVID-19 pandemic was impacting the employment market at the time of the research and could have had an influence on perceptions. Clearly at the end of the training there were still concerns amongst some Ambassadors about employment, with 22% (five out of 23 Ambassadors in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen) stating that they were worried that people would not employ them, and 17% (four out of 23) stating that the idea of work makes them anxious.

Qualitative findings on employment and employability

The qualitative data offers insight into a few examples of improved employment and some perceptions of improved employability.

There were a few examples of Ambassadors being supported into employment or education from their involvement with the programme. One Bradford Ambassador was given support by programme staff with their university application, while one Blackburn with Darwen Ambassador secured employment with the Blackburn Rovers Trust from their interaction on the programme. Both of these examples were underpinned by improved personal confidence from the Ambassador programme driving them to apply for these opportunities.

“It [the Ambassadors programme] was life-changing especially after graduating.”

Ambassador, Blackburn with Darwen

Ambassadors also described a perception that the other skills they had developed through the programme had given them improved employability. Here Ambassadors pointed to their improved confidence, skills engaging others and their experience of organising and evaluating community activities.

“Bradford for everyone really challenged me to give good presentations and speak to people in a crowd.”

Ambassador, Bradford

In Blackburn with Darwen, Ambassadors received an accreditation for their involvement with the programme, giving them something more tangible that could go on their CV. A few Ambassadors in other areas suggested that providing something concrete, such as an accreditation or opportunity, at the end of the programme was a potential improvement.

“It’s not just 12 weeks with nothing to show for it.”

Programme Managers, Blackburn with Darwen

4. Conclusions

The Community Ambassadors programme has been very well received by the programme participants and there is evidence from this evaluation that the programme has had a positive impact on Ambassadors' personal attitudes and motivations. Even starting from a relatively high baseline position, by the end of their participation, Ambassadors were left with improved comfort levels talking to people from different backgrounds; improved motivation to work with others to improve the neighbourhood; and an improved sense of empowerment to influence decisions affecting their local area. These impacts were statistically significant against a matched comparison group of non-participants.

Anecdotal evidence also suggested that participants had gained a better awareness and understanding of other cultures and had been inspired to become more involved in community action. This was accompanied by qualitative evidence of new connections and friendships, improved self-esteem and reduced social isolation.

While this is very promising, the overall concept is not fully proven. There is as yet no conclusive evidence that the positive shifts in Ambassadors' attitudes and motivations will translate into them becoming more involved in local activities or galvanising other local people to make changes. This is largely down to COVID-19 limiting the extent to which work with the wider community could take place and therefore the amount of evidence the evaluation could gather on this subject.

To improve the likelihood of these positive personal changes translating into wider action, future iterations of the programme should seek to improve Ambassadors' confidence in engaging with local officials, raise their awareness of how their fellow local people can get involved in making changes and ensure there are tools in place to gather evidence of the nature and extent of Ambassadors' subsequent activities, and how these activities impact on other local people.

If improved employability is to remain a focus, then in future the programme might need to more systematically design-in elements intended to lead to employment outcomes.

There are some limitations to the research which have impacted the ability of this evaluation to find conclusive evidence. The small-scale nature of the interventions has led to small base sizes within the quantitative data and the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a number of disruptions to the intervention approach and data collection. As a result, it may be helpful to corroborate these apparent impacts of the intervention by gathering further evidence in future.

4.1 Practice implications

This section outlines key learnings on what conditions are needed for implementing and supporting the delivery of interventions similar to Community Ambassadors in the future i.e., running a project which aims to train individuals to become leaders in their community and encourage the community to undertake social action projects which encourage social mixing.

Drivers of positive outcomes:

- **A well-structured training programme which encourages discussion between participants in a 'safe' environment.** Ambassadors were particularly positive about the training when it covered a range of stimulating or challenging subjects, which enabled them to think differently and have discussions with people who were different to them. Some practical elements which helped to aid these discussions were break-out rooms online and showing videos to prompt discussions.
- **Recruiting a diverse range of individuals onto the programme.** Ambassadors discussed how mixing with a wider variety of individuals helped them to see how diverse their community was and that it was a place where different people could come together.
- **Recruit a mix of individuals who are more and less experienced in community activities.** Including some participants with more previous experience of community engagement could benefit the group overall, as the more experienced Ambassadors encouraged those with less experience by example and drove the conversation forward.
- **Tailoring the training to the local area.** Programme Managers discussed the importance of making the training as 'place specific' as possible so the participants can learn new things about their local area and increase their understanding of the local area. This increase in understanding will help to increase individuals' pride in the area.
- **Training should include content to develop practical skills, such as in listening, observation, and co-developing solutions.** Ambassadors discussed how undertaking training in observation and listening skills, evaluating proposals or ideas, and engaging local people to co-develop solutions left them feeling empowered to effect change in their local community.
- **Build in networking opportunities within the training.** Ambassadors felt the approach to the training sessions had enabled discussions to take place between the group members and raise awareness of activities happening within the community.

Aspects to consider in future designs:

- **A mix of online and face-to-face delivery.** Ambassadors appreciated that the training had been forced online due to the COVID-19 pandemic but ideally a more mixed approach to delivery would be included to enable more effective and meaningful social mixing and networking between the Ambassadors. They felt a predominantly face-to-face approach with some online elements would be most effective.
- **Ensuring that all groups are represented, so the participants reflect the local area.** There was some suggestion from a few Ambassadors and programme leaders in Bradford and Blackburn with Darwen that White British, low-income individuals were under-represented in the group and therefore the exclusion of this group was preventing meaningful social mixing with all groups within the local area, as the perspective of one group was missing.

4.2 Policy implications

The evidence suggests that the Community Ambassadors model has had several positive impacts on participants, improving Ambassadors' comfort in engaging with others from different backgrounds and both their motivation and empowerment to effect local improvements. The key implications for any future model include:

- To improve the likelihood of these positive personal changes translating into wider action, future iterations of the programme need to explore how best to build Ambassadors' confidence that they can engage local officials and bring other local people along with them in instigating change. This may also be a question of time: that is, ensuring that the future local programmes run for long enough for the observed shifts in attitudes and motivation to bear fruit in working within the community. There is also a need to ensure there are tools in place to gather evidence of Ambassadors' subsequent activities, and their impacts on other local people.
- A key assumption underpinning the expected outcomes is that diverse people participate in the programme. This was mostly borne out in this version of delivery. However, there was some concern that low-income White British people were under-represented and that this might prevent the programme from reaching its full potential in breaking down barriers. Future iterations of the programme might need to explore how low-income White British people could be included in the diversity mix while still creating a safe space for others.
- Drawing on the above, whilst recognising the need for local tailoring and flexibility, for any future model DLUHC should consider providing a clearer framework for intervention design (e.g., minimum duration, multiple recruitment channels, deliberately mixing individuals with more / less previous experience of community action, building in some 'taught skills' aspects and elements to improve confidence in engaging local officials) to be adopted across areas. Key areas of local interpretation would then be the target profile of participants, balance of in person and online, and the specifics of programme content.

4.3 Evaluation implications

Due to the disparate nature of the initiatives within Community Ambassadors and the lack of any centralised database of participants, combined with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has not been possible to measure the absolute impact of the Community Ambassadors programme in this evaluation. That said, the research has provided evidence of impacts on the Ambassadors personally; along with valuable feedback on how the initiative has been received, and stories about how it has helped to change attitudes, motivation and personal confidence.

Most constraints that applied to this evaluation were not known at the start of designing the Community Ambassadors evaluation. Equally none of this undermines the value of conducting an impact assessment, although it raises some considerations for future evaluations of a similar type:

- Ensuring the evaluation tools are a central part of, and designed into, the Community Ambassadors package. It needs to be clear to organisers how survey materials should

be introduced and distributed, and it needs to be made explicit to participants that feedback through the surveys (and disseminating these surveys to wider community members) is part of their commitment to taking part in Community Ambassadors.

- Careful positioning of the research, explaining its purpose and how it will be beneficial. This is particularly necessary given the target audience; who may have had previous negative experiences with government institutions (e.g. HMRC and the Home Office) and any reference to government bodies in the research might limit their willingness to engage.
- Where possible set and enforce firm deadlines for finalising interventions, so that there is sufficient time to tailor evaluation approaches to the local interventions, to ensure a robust evaluation can be achieved.
- It will be important to measure the impact on the wider community by conducting a baseline and follow-up survey. For the surveys of Ambassadors, there is value in conducting a baseline, end-training and a third follow-up survey conducted sometime later. This third follow-up survey could add particular value in demonstrating whether or not the Ambassadors are active among their community.
- Where budget allows, translating questionnaires into the main languages spoken by participants offering both online and offline completion methods.
- Conducting a blend of qualitative discussions and surveys combine well to create a rounded view of impact.

Appendix

A. Profile of Ambassadors

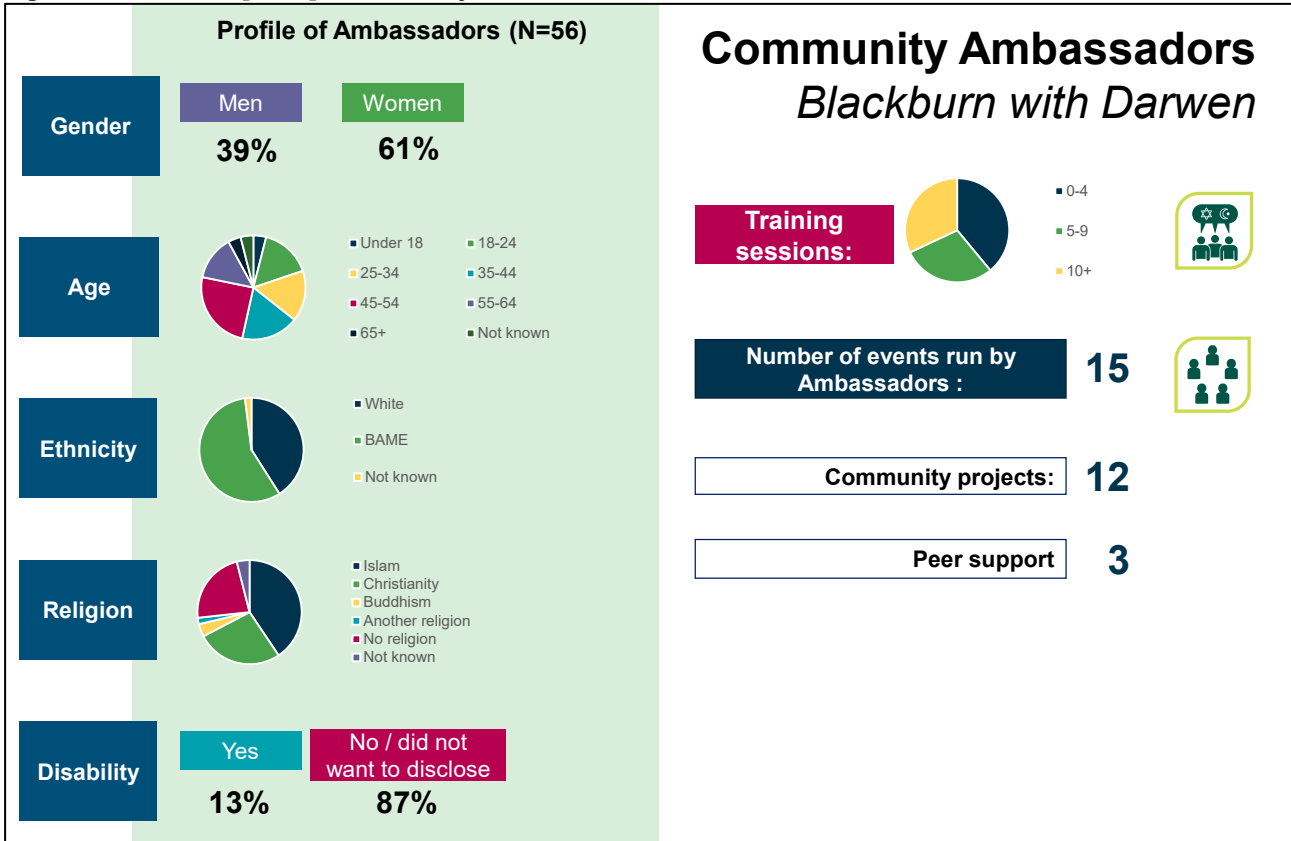
This annex presents the profile of locally delivered events and their participants as captured over the course of the evaluation. Management information was drawn at a particular date, after which further events may have taken place across areas, reaching further participants.

Blackburn with Darwen

The profile information for the Blackburn with Darwen Ambassadors has been collated from the start of training ('baseline') survey data and some management information that has been provided by Blackburn with Darwen Council. Gender, age, ethnicity, and religious information has been provided through the survey and is based on 56 responses. Disability information, training session information and event information was provided by Blackburn with Darwen Council and is based on 27 Ambassadors that were part of the second cohort of the programme and were involved in the programme between April and September 2021.

The Ambassadors profile shows a skew towards female participants, includes a spread of ages, and includes representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds that is above average for the area.

Figure 7. Profile of [BwD] Community Ambassadors and activities run in Blackburn with Darwen

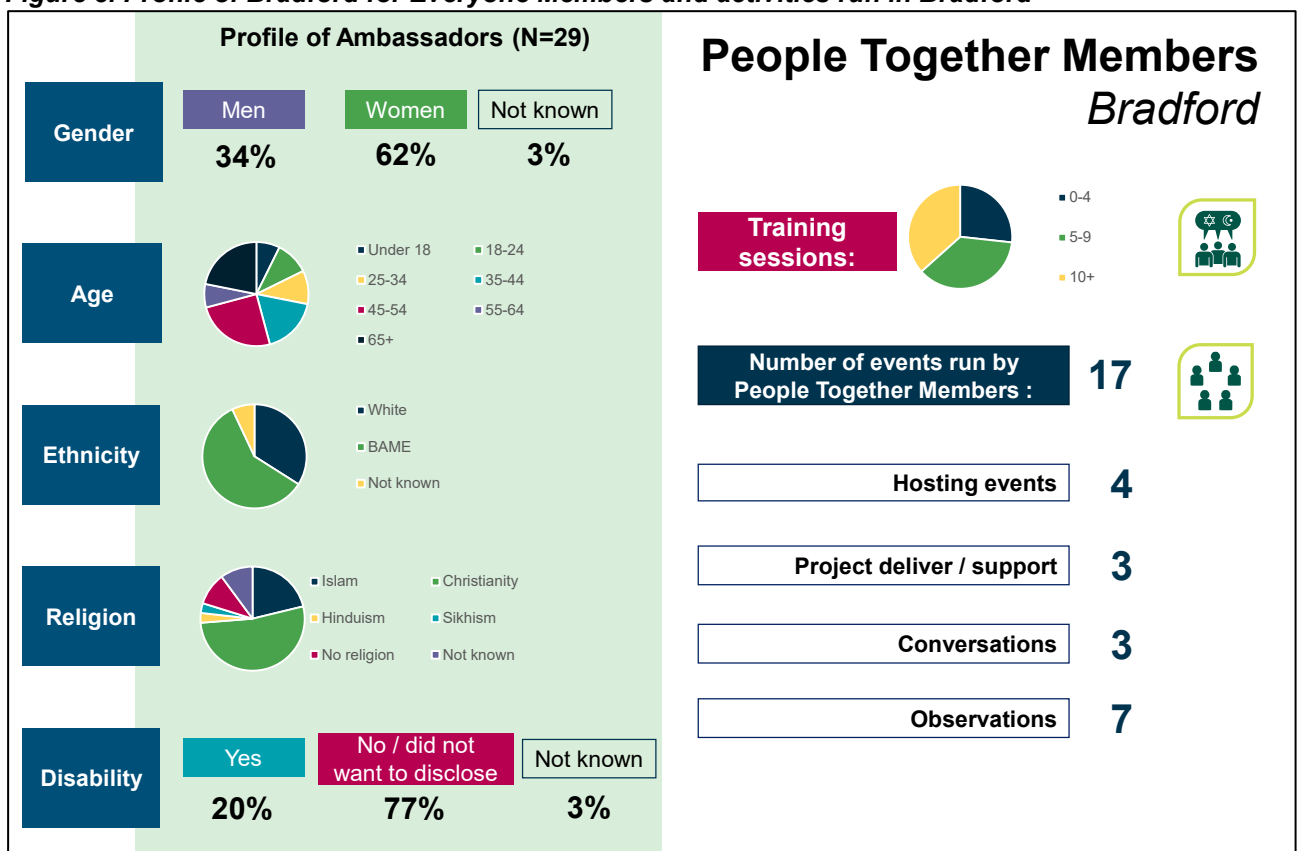


Bradford

The profile information outlined below has been taken in part from the baseline survey together with some management information provided by Bradford Council. Gender, age, ethnicity and religion has been taken from the survey and is based on 29 responses. Disability information, training session information and event information was provided by Bradford Council and is based on 31 Bradford for Everyone members that were part of the programme between May 2019 and August 2021. It is likely that most individuals were not part of the programme during this entire period but took part during this period of time).

Again, the Ambassadors profile skews female, encompasses a spread of ages, and includes representation of people from minority ethnic that is above average for the area. There is also greater representation of those aged 65+ than in the other two areas.

Figure 8. Profile of Bradford for Everyone Members and activities run in Bradford

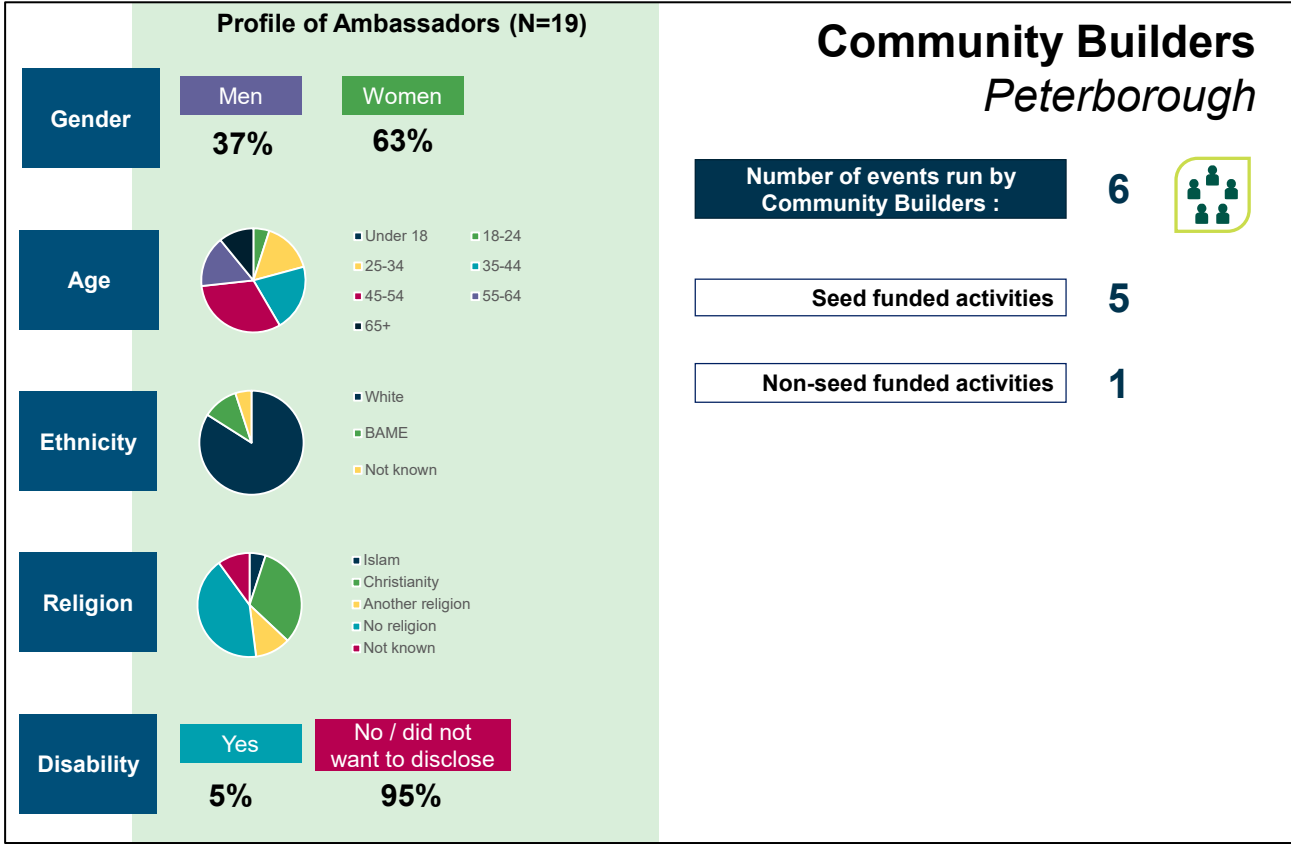


Peterborough

The profile information outlined below has been taken from the baseline survey and management information provided by Peterborough Council. Gender, age, ethnicity, and religion has been taken from the survey and is based on 19 responses. Disability information, training session information and event information has been provided by Peterborough Council and is based on 20 Community Builders that took part in the programme between January and May 2021.

As in the other areas, the profile is skewed towards female participants; however, unlike the other areas there is also a skew towards White participants, leaving people from minority ethnic backgrounds slightly underrepresented. There is a good spread by age.

Figure 9. Profile of Community Builders and activities run in Peterborough



B. Surveys

The Ambassadors baseline and end training surveys were disseminated to participants as both online and paper surveys. Where training had begun before the COVID-19 pandemic, Ambassadors were provided the opportunity to complete either a paper copy of the survey or via an online link (as was the case for the baseline survey in Bradford and the first cohort in Blackburn with Darwen). Once the COVID-19 pandemic hit, surveys were primarily completed online, although the option to complete a paper version was retained for any Ambassadors with difficulty accessing the online survey. Programme leads disseminated the surveys, by hand at training sessions in the case of paper surveys and as links sent over email for online surveys.

The Ambassadors follow-up survey was conducted via computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI). Contact details were obtained on an 'opt in' basis at the end training survey and the area programme leads.

C. Counterfactual impact assessment

Counterfactual Impact Assessment Approach

To isolate the effect of being an Ambassador, a number of the same survey questions were asked as part of a longitudinal two-wave 'comparison' survey commissioned by IFF and fielded by YouGov among its online panel members. Comparing the change in attitudes and beliefs of Ambassadors against those of the YouGov comparison group, gives a test of whether taking on the role of Ambassador has an effect on people's attitudes and beliefs that would not have happened if they had not participated. Seven outcomes relevant to the Ambassadors were measured in the comparison survey:

- How comfortable they feel talking to people from different backgrounds;
- How comfortable they feel talking to people who express attitudes and behaviours they disagree with;
- How far they feel that local residents respect differences with people from other backgrounds;
- How far they are personally motivated to work with others to improve the neighbourhood;
- How far they feel they can personally influence decisions affecting their local area;
- Involvement in local activities;
- Strength of belonging to their local area.

A decision had to be made about the optimal time interval between the baseline and follow-up fieldwork for the comparison group, given the differences across the three IAP areas in relation to the length of time between the start of the intervention (and collection of baseline data) and the follow up surveys. In the end, the 'best fit' was to have a baseline and three-month follow up for the comparison survey. The 'baseline' survey was carried out among 407 panel members in early April 2021. Three months later, these panel members were approached to take part in a follow up survey, which was completed by 288 members.

The original plan was to carry out the comparison survey within the IAP areas (among those who had not taken part in IAP interventions). However, the YouGov panel did not include sufficient numbers of members in these areas alone. As a result, the comparison survey was expanded to cover similar areas.

Methods for assessing impact

1. Matching the Ambassador and comparison samples

In order to make the Ambassador and comparison samples comparable, the comparison sample was weighted so that it matches the Ambassador sample on a few broadly defined characteristics, the small sample of participants precluded the use of more detail: age-group (up to 34; 35 to 54; 55 and over); gender; ethnic group (White; Asian; other); religion (None; Christian; other). The matching method used was propensity score matching. That is, a logistic regression model was fitted to the data with a binary group status as the dependent variable, and age, gender, ethnicity and religion as the predictors. The probability (or propensity) of being an Ambassador was saved per person and the

comparison group weighted to give the same distribution of propensity scores per group. Matching, in addition, on baseline outcomes was considered but the small sample size of Ambassadors led to an unstable propensity score model.

2. Calculating mean scores per outcome

The outcome variables are summarised using mean scores, with positive statements being given higher scores. Mean change scores are simply the average of the change scores between baseline and follow-up per person.

3. Statistical testing

Statistical tests have been used to test:

1. Whether the mean change score per group is significantly different to zero. This is a simple paired t-test, but the test accounts for the weighting of the comparison group.
2. Whether the mean change score is significantly different between the Ambassador and comparison groups. This is based on a regression, and controls for any baseline difference in the mean scores between the two groups. Again, the test accounts for the weighting of the comparison group.

Table A.1: Impact of being an Ambassador against a matched comparison group

	Intervention group				Comparison group				Mean difference
	Baseline	Follow up	Mean change	p-value	Baseline	Follow up	Mean change	p-value	p-value
How comfortable do you feel talking to people from different backgrounds to you (more than just saying hello)?									
<i>Mean score</i>	4.50	4.54	0.04	0.763	4.10	4.06	-0.04	0.702	0.020*
	%	%			%	%			
Very comfortable (5)	62	54			45	38			
Fairly comfortable (4)	31	46			30	41			
Neither nor (3)	4	0			17	12			
Fairly uncomfortable (2)	4	0			7	9			
Very uncomfortable (1)	0	0			1	0			
To what extent do you agree or disagree with: 'I feel comfortable talking to people who express attitudes or behaviours I disagree with'									
<i>Mean score</i>	3.92	3.84	-0.08	0.695	3.33	3.08	-0.25	0.049*	0.050
	%	%			%	%			
Definitely agree (5)	24	24			12	9			
Tend to agree (4)	52	52			40	36			
Neither nor (3)	16	12			23	19			
Tend to disagree (2)	8	8			22	27			
Definitely disagree (1)	0	4			4	9			
To what extent do you agree or disagree that residents in this local area respect differences between other people in the area?									
<i>Mean score</i>	3.30	3.48	0.17	0.308	3.48	3.58	0.10	0.411	0.958
	%	%			%	%			
Definitely agree (5)	13	13			12	16			
Tend to agree (4)	35	43			51	45			
Neither nor (3)	26	26			16	21			
Tend to disagree (2)	22	13			14	13			
Definitely disagree (1)	4	4			7	4			
To what extent do you agree or disagree that you are personally motivated to work with other people in your neighbourhood to improve the neighbourhood?									
<i>Mean score</i>	4.28	4.32	0.04	0.848	3.44	3.41	-0.03	0.765	0.035*
	%	%			%	%			
Definitely agree (5)	48	48			10	12			
Tend to agree (4)	36	40			46	44			
Neither nor (3)	12	8			28	22			
Tend to disagree (2)	4	4			13	16			
Definitely disagree (1)	0	0			4	5			
<i>Base</i>	26	26			288	288			

	Intervention group				Comparison group				Mean difference
	Baseline	Follow up	Mean change	p-value	Baseline	Follow up	Mean change	p-value	p-value
To what extent do you agree or disagree that you personally can influence decisions affecting your local area?									
<i>Mean score</i>	3.43	3.71	0.29	0.185	2.56	2.43	-0.13	0.268	0.003*
	%	%			%	%			
Definitely agree (5)	24	24			5	6			
Tend to agree (4)	29	43			23	13			
Neither nor (3)	19	19			21	29			
Tend to disagree (2)	24	10			23	25			
Definitely disagree (1)	5	5			27	28			
Involvement in activities (out of six)									
<i>Mean score</i>	1.12	1.19	0.08	0.670	0.25	0.24	0.00	0.958	0.157
	%	%			%	%			
None	35	35			83	82			
One	27	35			11	13			
Two	31	15			6	5			
Three	8	12			0	0			
Four	0	0			0	0			
Five	0	4			0	0			
Six	0	0			0	0			
How strongly do you feel you belong to the local area?									
<i>Mean score</i>	3.22	3.22	0.00	1.000	2.84	2.82	-0.020	0.862	0.297
	%	%			%	%			
Very strongly (4)	48	43			26	25			
Fairly strongly (3)	30	35			38	42			
Not very strongly (2)	17	22			29	25			
Not at all strongly (1)	4	0			7	9			
<i>Base</i>	26	26			288	288			