



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF HEALTH



# What can we gain from a synthesis of practice-based case studies on community health?

South, J.<sup>1</sup>, Bagnall, AM, Southby, K.<sup>1</sup>, Freeman, C.<sup>1</sup>, Pennington, A., Corcoran, R.<sup>2</sup>.

Oral Presentation: 5<sup>th</sup> fuse international conference on knowledge exchange in public health. Newcastle, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June, 2022

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2. Institute of Population Health, University of Liverpool, UK.



# Our starting point

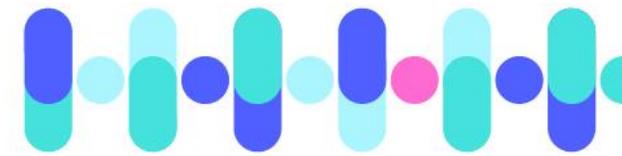
Practice-based case studies offer:

- A summary of successes, unintended consequences, challenges and learning.
- Rich detailed descriptions of a local context and the complexity of multi-sectoral action.
- A knowledge translation tool to share and support good practice.
- Powerful stories to capture hearts and minds.
- A way of sharing key information with a wide audience.

**But...how do we pull together learning across multiple case studies?**

Case studies are often used by community-based/VCS organisations to evidence their work – an untapped source of evidence?

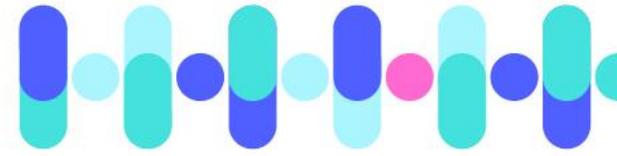




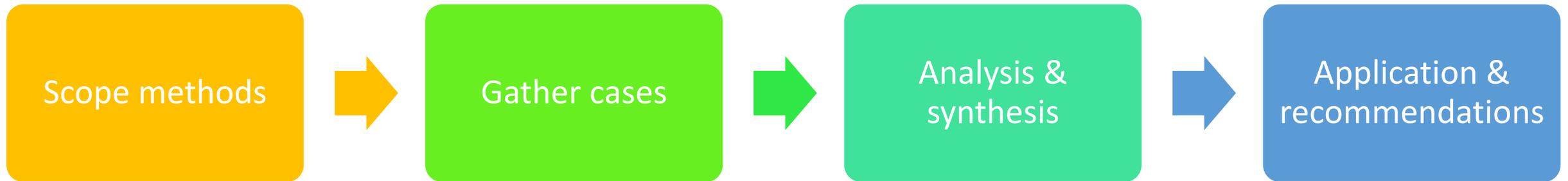
# Study aims

- To conduct a review and qualitative synthesis of the methods, approaches, reported outcomes of and learning from community-based practice in supporting community wellbeing,
  - with a focus on projects aiming to improve community infrastructure (places and spaces).
- To scope, develop and pilot a robust method of qualitative review and synthesis for these practice-based projects.





# Design and methods





# Practice-based case studies – a working definition

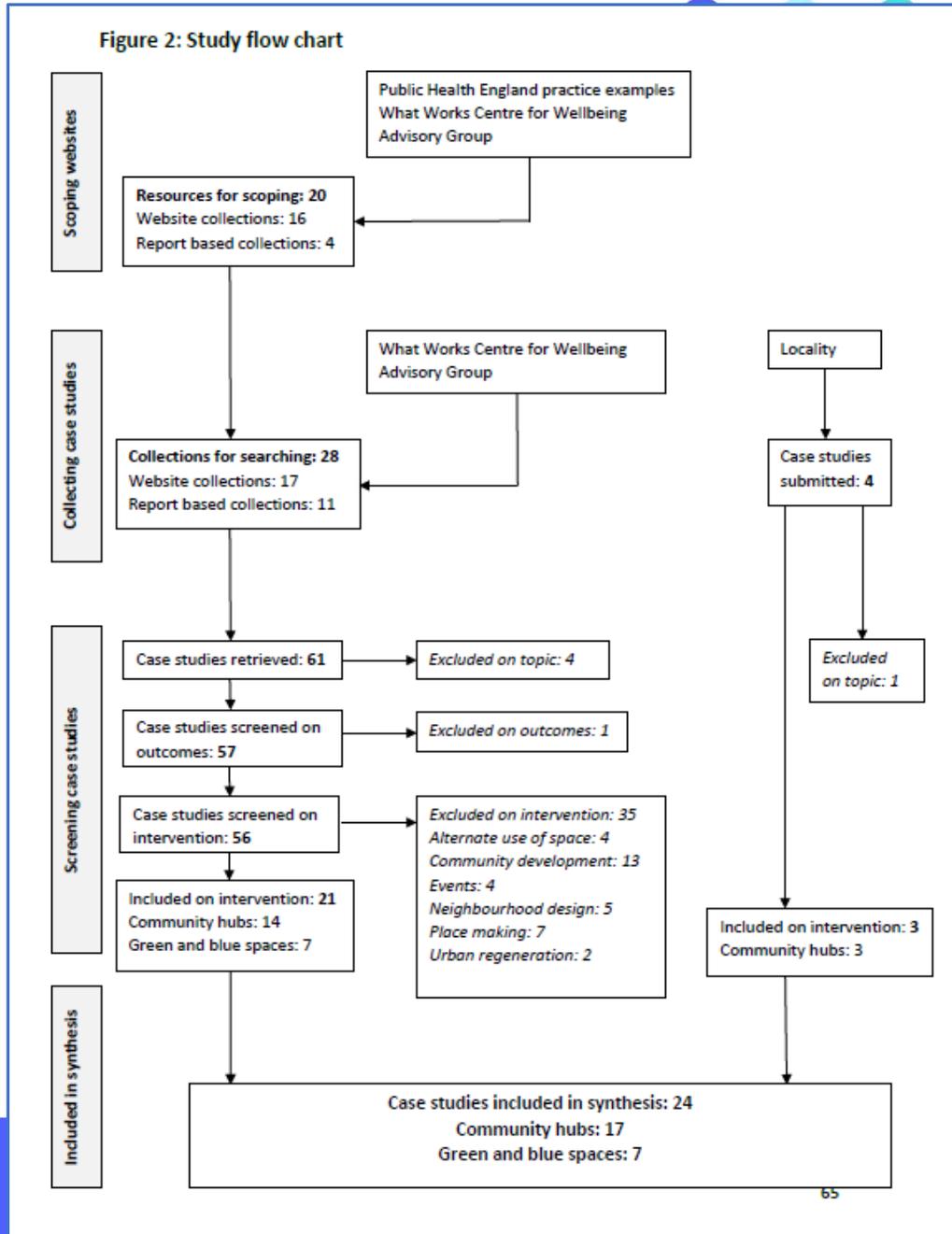
*Practice-based case studies report on the evidence generated from the implementation of an intervention in a real-life practice setting and include the learning from those involved in the development and delivery of that intervention. Such case studies typically provide a narrative explaining how the intervention developed in that context and what happened. They are most often developed by practitioners involved in an intervention, but can also be developed in collaboration with funders, third sector organisations or researchers aiming to capture practice-based knowledge.*

South, J., Southby, K., et al. (2021) Community Wellbeing Case Study Synthesis: Technical Report. What Works Wellbeing Centre.



1. Scope methods - Literature review (40 articles) & analysis of websites to develop protocol and identify methods.

2. Gathering a collection 24 practice-based case studies focused on promoting community wellbeing (places & spaces) – community hubs and green spaces.





# Selection & cross case analysis – order from chaos?

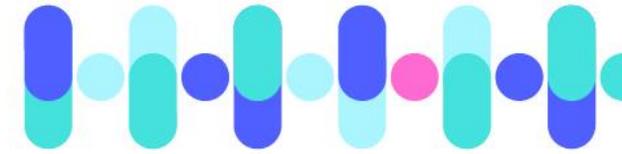
3. Analysis and synthesis of sample (using agreed methods – framework analysis and matrices).

- What cases are suitable?
- Approaches to synthesis?

4. Review of methods with research team, Locality and Advisory group. Recommendations for future development, implementation and dissemination.



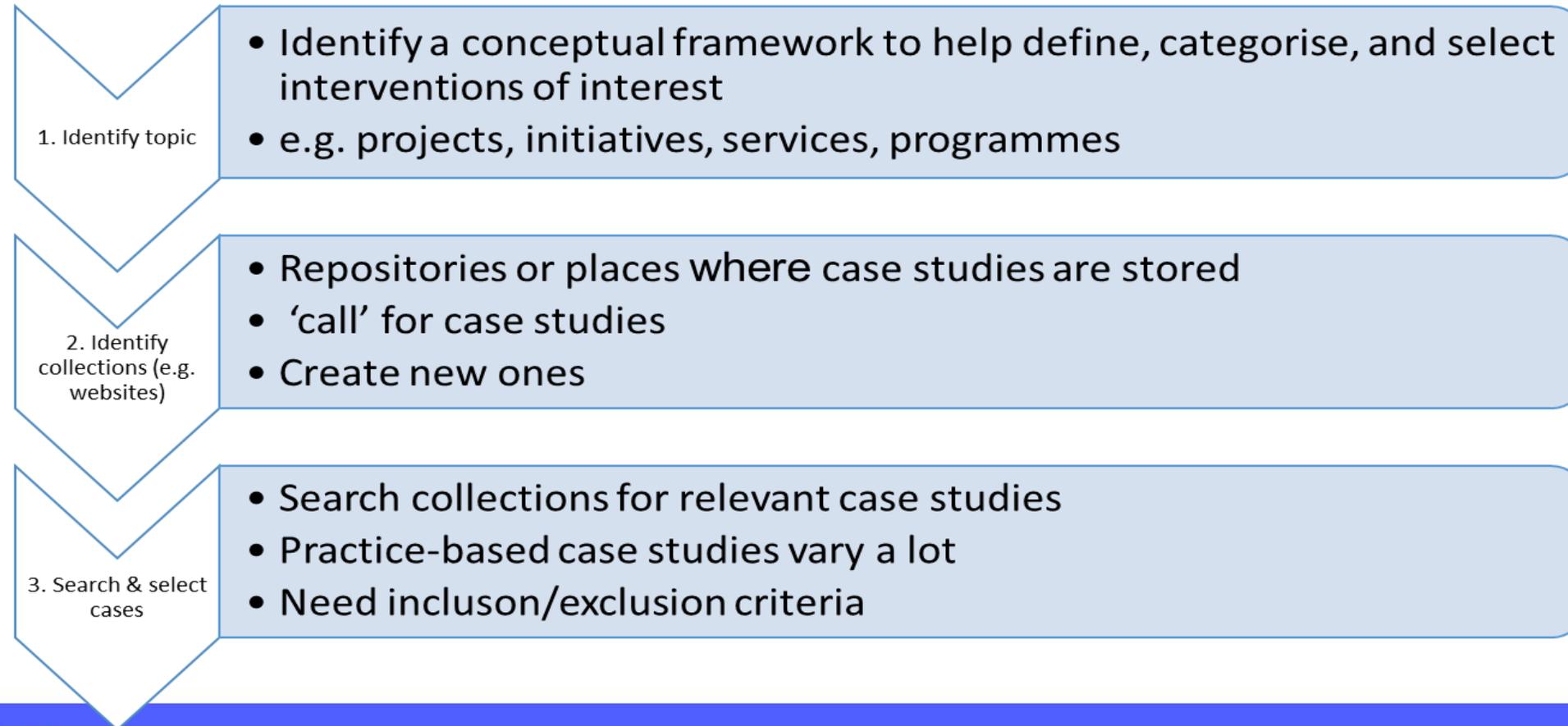
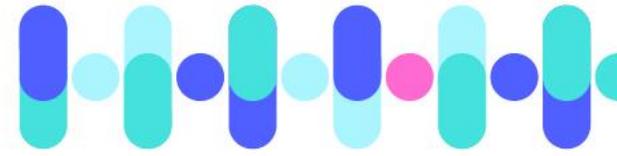
# Final framework- results



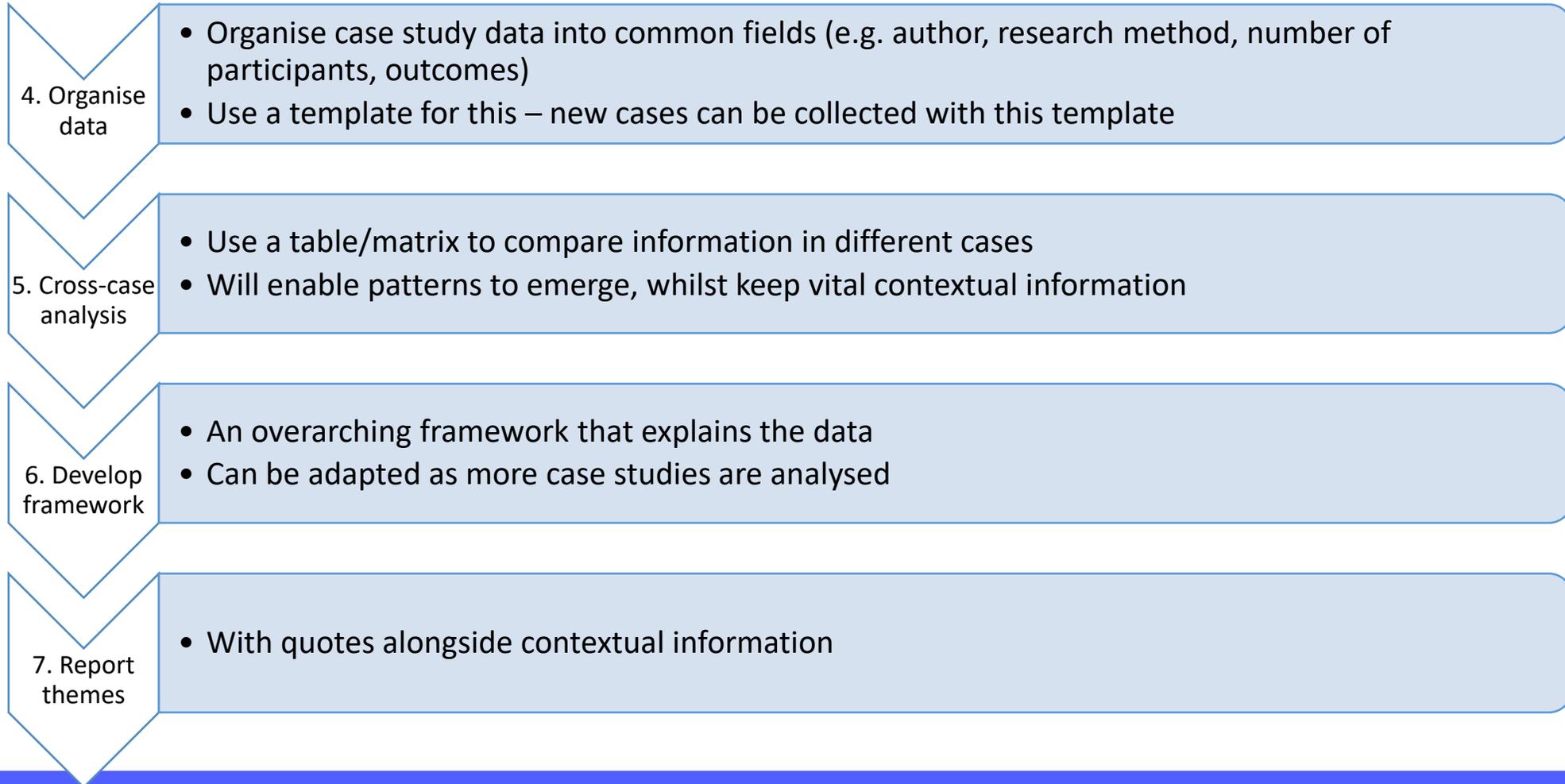
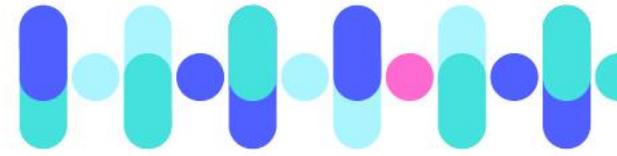
- **Purpose & approach.** This covered the ‘why and what’ of project development and delivery:
  - o Challenge & response - linking need to activities
  - o Building social value.
  
- **Outcomes.** This covered reported outcomes:
  - o Individual-level
  - o Community-level
  - o Organisational-level
  - o Reach (who participated).
  
- **What works & what supports.** Cross cutting themes on:
  - o Building connections
  - o Recognising assets & addressing barriers in context
  - o Capacity to deliver
  - o Learning & adaptation.

	<b>CAPACITY TO DELIVER</b>	A13. Building capacity (to deliver) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research capacity</li> <li>• Partnerships/coalitions</li> <li>• Training/skills development – professionals and volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>BUILDING SOCIAL VALUE</b>	<b>LEARNING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>through participation and</i></li> <li>• <i>developing understanding through experience (DOING) and gathering insights</i></li> </ul>	A12. Learning about environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Taster experiences</li> </ul> A15. Understanding the benefits of interacting with the natural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and wellbeing benefits</li> <li>• Understanding has to be built</li> </ul> RESEARCH A21. Evaluation A22. Learning by doing
	<b>TOWARDS GREATER EQUITY</b>	A16. Understanding and addressing inequalities

# Overview of method for review and synthesis of practice-based case studies (1)

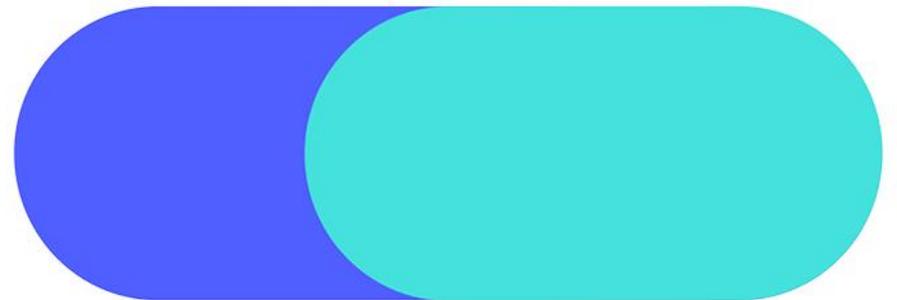
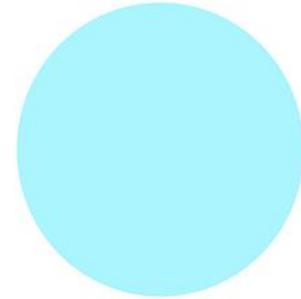
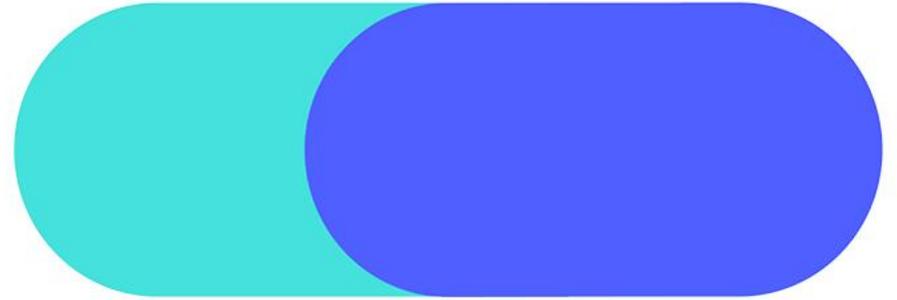


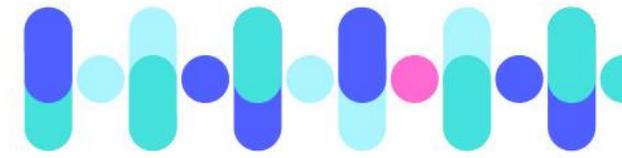
# Overview of method (2)





So what did we gain  
from the synthesis?  
What did we learn  
about methods?





# Adding to the evidence base on places & spaces for community wellbeing

- ✓ Rich account of project journey
- ✓ Sense of development, adaptation & learning
- ✓ Strong practitioner voice & community perspectives
- ✓ Mechanisms of change: empowerment, learning, capacity building
- ✓ Synergies with systematic review: More detail in case study synthesis around: activities; implementation & delivery; motivation; organisational outcomes; unforeseen outcomes.
- ✓ Evidence gaps (partially) filled e.g. context; reach to disadvantaged communities; finance; sustainability



What can practice-based, case study evidence tell us about how community hubs and green spaces can enhance wellbeing in a place?

## THE BIG PICTURE

This review of practice based case studies plugs some gaps in the evidence on how community hubs and green spaces can enhance wellbeing in a place.

Case study evidence provides important and rich detail on these projects and activities, and how they are delivered. This provides policy makers and practitioners with tangible illustrations to refer to in the design and modification of interventions.

This research identified community wellbeing outcomes that support the findings from systematic review evidence, as well as describing additional and unforeseen outcomes, including those that arise from the benefits of more informal spaces that may not have been the subject of formal evaluations, as well as benefits to the organisations responsible for the delivery of the interventions.

A key theme emerging from the case study evidence was the importance of considering local context and the complexity of responding to local needs through multiple and layered interventions in both green spaces and community hubs. Community involvement in the delivery of projects was also identified as important. This supports the systematic review evidence, which found that community involvement in planning was important for the success of projects to improve wellbeing outcomes.



# Final reflections



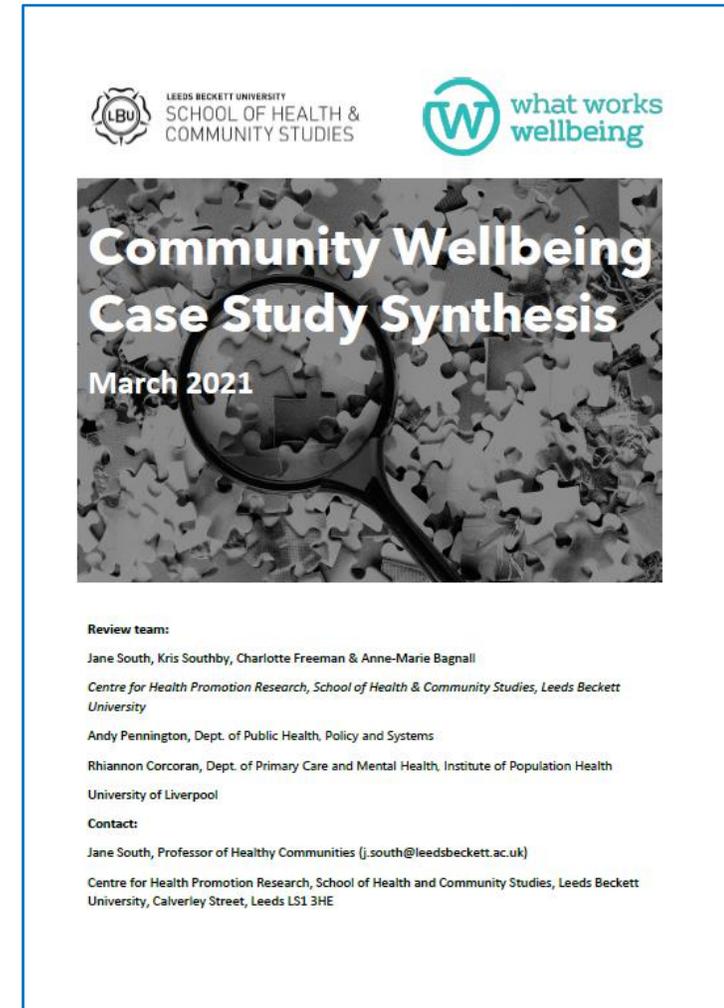
- The pilot has shown that it is possible to synthesise practice-based case studies in a systematic way – this a rich source of evidence.
- The proposed method is a starting point. Lots of learning about the quality, availability and accessibility of practice-based case studies.
- Lots of opportunities for further methodological development eg quality appraisal, conceptual framework for practice-based evidence.
- Method could be very helpful for improving use of evidence from VCS/grassroots community-led projects.

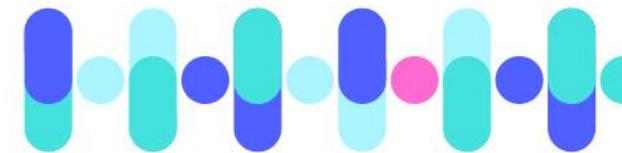
# Acknowledgments

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<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/>

We would like to thank advisory group for their support and contributions throughout the study. Thanks also to Locality members who provided case studies about their community organisations.





# Find out more

Blog: <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/community-wellbeing-using-case-studies-to-build-the-evidence-base/>

Guidance for commissioners on effective case studies & template:  
<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/guide-to-effective-case-studies/>

Synthesis methods guide:  
<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/case-study-synthesis-centre-guide/>

Pilot study – community hubs/green spaces results:  
<https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/community-hubs-green-space-April2021.pdf>

Full technical report: <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Community-wellbeing-case-study-synthesis-Technical-Report-2021v2.pdf>



## A guide to synthesising **CASE STUDIES**

April 2021



Deborah Hardoon, What Works Centre for Wellbeing  
Jane South, Kris Southby, Charlotte Freeman & Anne-Marie Bagnall, Leeds Beckett University  
Andy Pennington & Rhiannon Corcoran, University of Liverpool



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Thank you

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**Any questions?**