Building the foundations for social connections in Yorkshire and the Humber

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Aims

The toolkit aims to support councils, service providers, voluntary and community groups and others to combat social isolation and loneliness, and build meaningful social connections amongst refugee, migrant, and receiving communities.

Methodology

The researchers conducted 10 focus groups with 70 residents, 2 in each of the following locations: Barnsley, Kirklees, Leeds, Scarborough and York. Additionally, they conducted 20 interviews with stakeholders that work with communities across the region. Finally, an online deliberative workshop was held over a weekend with 14 residents that took part in the initial workshops. Research participant came from different backgrounds and had different experiences of migration, with some arriving into

Yorkshire and Humber (Y&H) and others who spent most, or all, of their lives in the region.

This toolkit is a result of a collaborative research effort between Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and peer and community researchers at Migration Yorkshire. The project was born out of previous research, Communities up Close project, undertaken by IPPR for Migration Yorkshire. That project highlighted the importance of social connections between migrant and receiving communities.

Key issues

The research project hoped to understand how people that migrate to the Yorkshire and Humber region can be supported to connect with others in their new home and, in turn, how social isolation and loneliness can be reduced. The toolkit identifies 4+ barriers to social connections:

1. Structural barriers – such as facing problems when it comes to basic daily needs, or the costs associated with participating in various events.
2. Individual and relational barriers –such as worries about family back home, or those that are associated with language barriers.
3. Place-based barriers – such as lack of things to do locally, or unaffordable public transport.
4. Design barriers – such as people not knowing about events happening, or feeling disconnected from decisions being made about their own communities.
5. Plus – sometimes things we don’t consider, such as weather, can shape how and whether one takes part in social activities.

The toolkit includes five sections which propose ways to combat social isolation. Each of these includes useful practical guidance, tools and resources of what already works or is happening elsewhere; lots of quotes of what residents of Y&H region had to say about the topic; as well as

useful guiding questions that could help councils, public service providers and charity organisations consider and address issues of social isolation.

1. Holding activities that bring people together – aimed at councils and public service providers, as well as voluntary and community sector this section looks at how and where people in Y&H region could be supported to connect with one another, and also why this is important in their eyes. The section includes various examples of good practice, as well as recommendations from a community researcher how to support refugees and asylum seekers to maintain vital connections with their family, friends and communities in the UK, and transnationally.
2. Creating public spaces and infrastructure that work for communities - aimed at councils and public service providers this section suggests that in order to bring communities together there is a need for improved public spaces and transport. The section includes examples of good practice.
3. Investing in inclusive education, skills, and training – aimed at employers, councils and public service providers, as well as voluntary and community sector this section proposes that education, training and job opportunities was a priority for many Y&H residents. It speaks of the importance of access to ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), volunteering and the role local employers have in providing opportunities for Y&H residents.
4. Including diverse communities in decision-making – aimed at councils and public service providers this section suggests that for Y&H residents it was important to be included in decision making with regards to how the foundations for better social connections are built. It explores the representation of diverse communities in positions of authority, and proposes how people from all parts of the local community can be involved in public participation.
5. Transforming systems to include community needs – aimed at schools, councils and public service providers, as well as voluntary and community sector this section looks at how councils and other

partners can take action to transform systems and address systemic issues in order to meet the needs of their communities.

The toolkit is accompanied by a manifesto for action – a document that inspires action and is based on the conversations contained within the deliberative workshop with Yorkshire residents.

Recommendations

The toolkit consists of multiple recommendations and examples of good practice, as well as a checklist for building the foundations for social connections.

Web Link
https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/social-connections-in-yorkshire-and-...
Migrant Group
Asylum seekers
Refugees
Topic
Community and society
Community cohesion
Integration
Migration
Policy
Place
Yorkshire & Humber - region-wide
Year
2022
Publisher
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Source URL: *https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/research-entry/building-foundations-social-connections-yorkshire-and-humber*