



# Partnership approaches to address local health inequalities

## Interim learning theme illustrations from the Govanhill Equally Well test site January 2012

Chris Harkins<sup>1</sup> Pauline Craig<sup>2</sup> Lucy Robinson<sup>3</sup> James Egan<sup>1</sup>

The Govanhill Equally Well test site has proven to be a rich source of learning from which to inform the implementation of Equally Well and the development of Scottish social policy.

The Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) is responsible for the evaluation of the Govanhill test site. Interim evaluation findings have been published and are available to download from the GCPH web site at [www.gcph.co.uk/publications](http://www.gcph.co.uk/publications).

The interim findings strongly indicate that the working of the Govanhill test site through the Govanhill Neighbourhood Management Group and the Govanhill Hub are closely aligned to the types of approaches required to address health inequalities outlined in Equally Well.

The interim learning from the test site is arranged under five core themes. The five themes outline some important challenges in implementing the type of partnership approaches endorsed by Equally Well. The five learning themes are presented overleaf as illustrations. These illustrations were developed collaboratively by the GCPH, NHS Health Scotland and the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS). The illustrations are intended to help Equally Well partners, both locally and nationally to quickly digest the interim learning from the Govanhill test site.

More details on the evaluation of the Govanhill Equally Well test site can be found in the [Local Evaluation Plan for the Govanhill Equally Well Test Site](#) available on the GCPH website.

The authors would like to thank the partner agencies contributing to the Govanhill Neighbourhood Management Group and frontline staff operating within the Govanhill Operational Hub. Special praise is due for the way in which these organisations and staff have embraced and contributed to the ongoing evaluation of the Govanhill Equally Well test site.

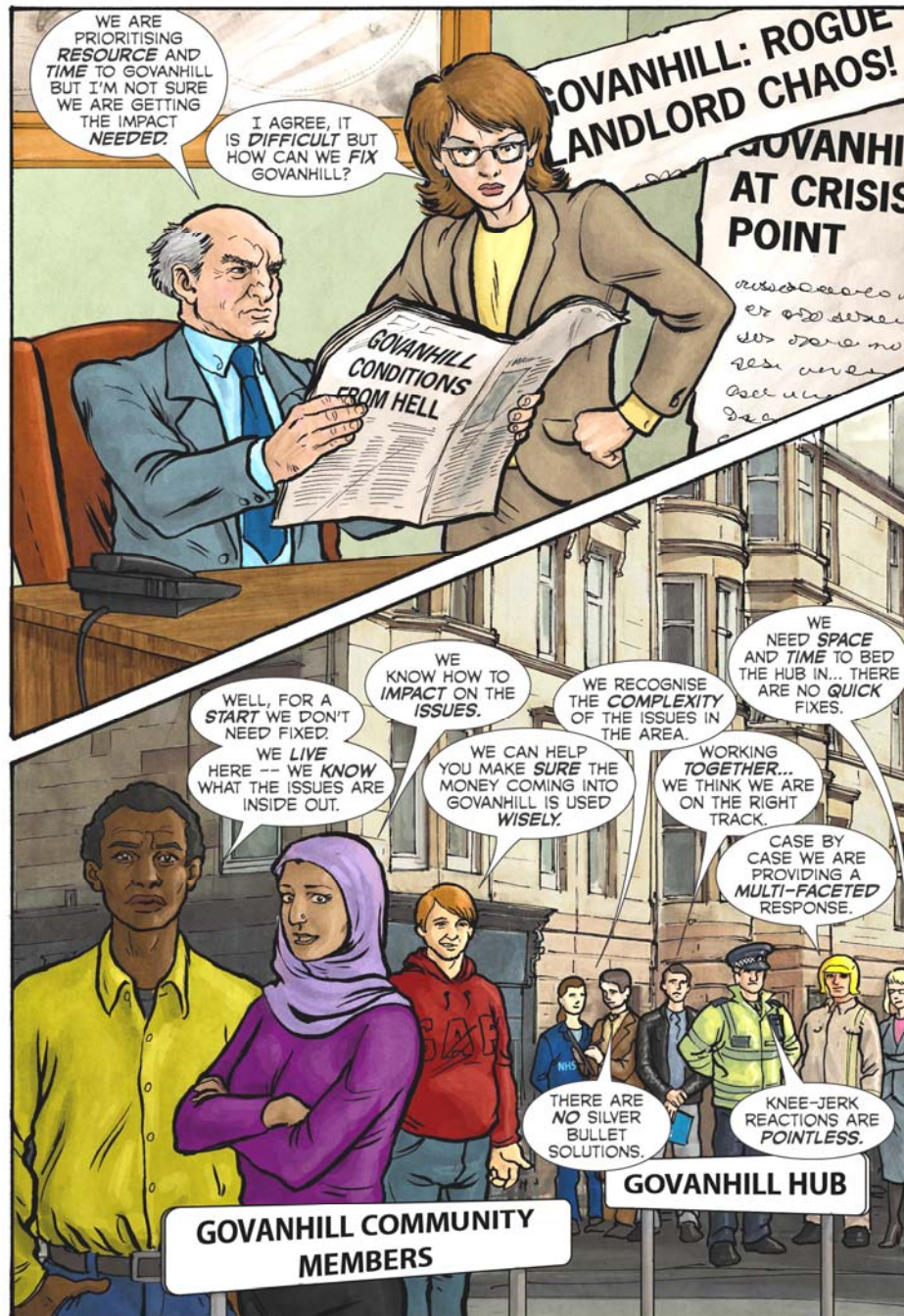
---

<sup>1</sup> GCPH

<sup>2</sup> Formerly GCPH, now at NHS Health Scotland

<sup>3</sup> IRISS

**LEARNING THEME 1: COMPLEX ISSUES DEMAND COMPLEX SOLUTIONS: THERE IS LITTLE ALTERNATIVE...**



**Learning theme 1:**

- ☪ Test site evaluation evidence supports that through the Hub, Community Planning Partners are committed to developing and implementing tailored, complex and multi-faceted responses within Govanhill
- ☪ Factors exist which are detrimental to such responses; perpetuating short-termism and a desire to apply simplistic methods to complex issues
- ☪ Community engagement has proven challenging in this diverse and transient community but is vital to maximising the impact of public sector resource prioritised for use in Govanhill



**LEARNING THEME 2: HEALTH INEQUALITIES ARE NOT A SINGULAR ENTITY; THEY REPRESENT AN OUTCOME OF COMPLEX AND MULTIPLE UNMET NEEDS...**

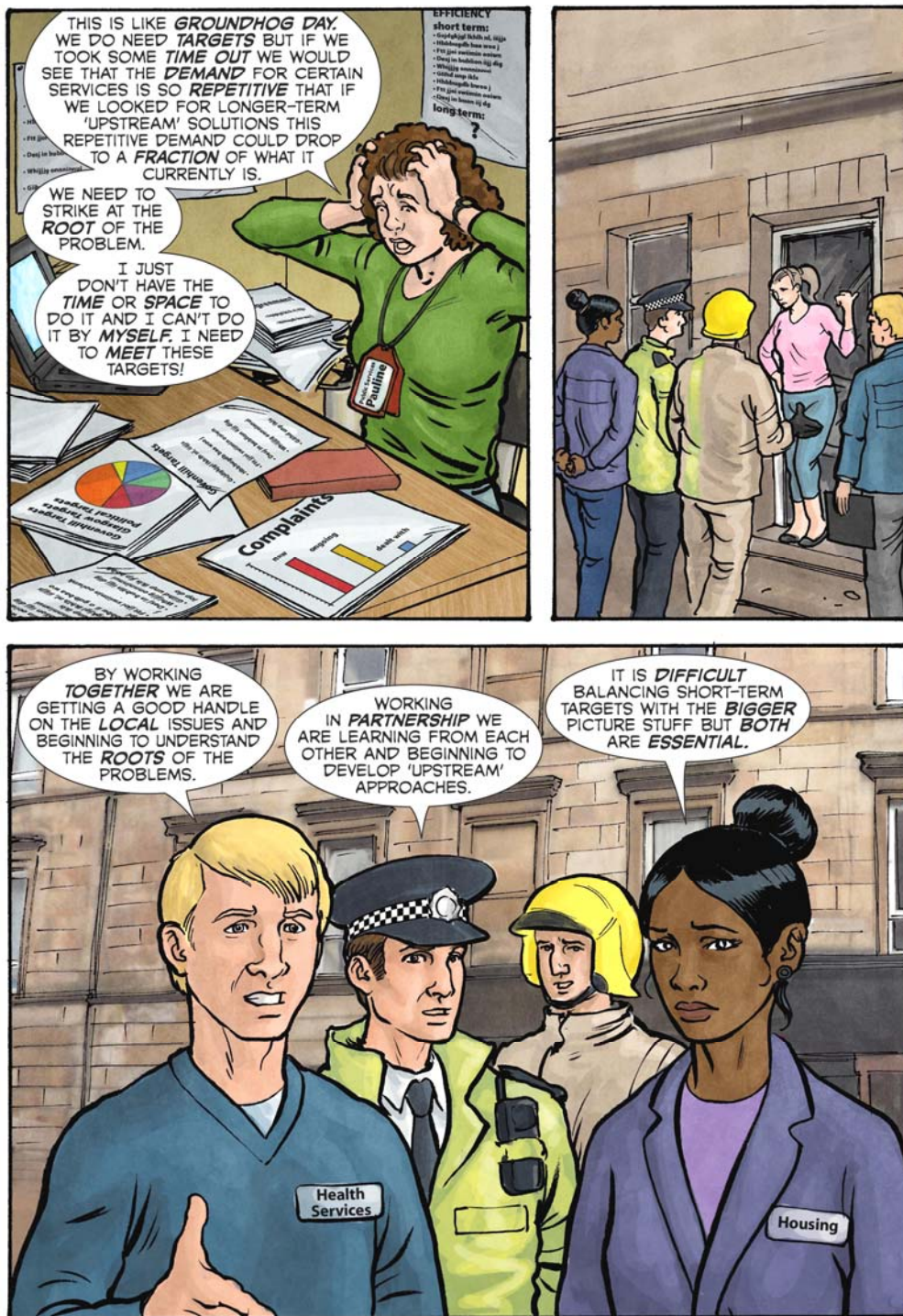


**Learning theme 2:**

- Ⓒ Learning from the 'frontline' underlines the fact that the circumstances and behaviours which propagate health inequalities are multiple and extremely complex
- Ⓒ The test site indicates that strong partnership working is not merely a desirable way of working but is fundamental in responding effectively to complex and multiple needs and thus addressing health inequalities
- Ⓒ The Hub is an exemplar of the types of partnership working endorsed by Equally Well and its development is important to capture



**LEARNING THEME 3: UNEVEN GROUND FROM THE OUTSET: THE DRIVERS OF SHORT-TERM EFFICIENCY AHEAD OF UPSTREAM WORKING AND SOLUTIONS...**



**Learning theme 3:**

- ⦿ Upstream working and thinking is potentially more complex and challenging than efficiency driven working
- ⦿ Public services operate within a target culture which tends to promote efficiency in discrete service delivery ahead of upstream partnership action
- ⦿ The prevailing target culture may do little to promote equality
- ⦿ Shifting resource from long-established efficiency driven working to 'untried' upstream partnership approaches is contentious



**LEARNING THEME 4: INTER-AGENCY INFORMATION SHARING IS CENTRAL TO EFFECTIVE EARLY INTERVENTION AND APPROACHES TO ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUALITIES...**



**Learning theme 4:**

- Ⓒ Inter-agency information sharing is pivotal to the types of partnership approaches required in Govanhill and endorsed by Equally Well
- Ⓒ However, there are valid legal, ethical and cultural barriers to information sharing between some partners
- Ⓒ The balance between the right to privacy and appropriate information sharing requires immediate consideration nationally and locally

**LEARNING THEME 5: COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IS NOT EFFECTIVELY PROMOTED BY CURRENT LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY...**



**Learning theme 5:**

- Ⓒ The language used in Equally Well and terminology of health inequalities represents a barrier to engaging with the policy for some
- Ⓒ Test site partners do however demonstrate an acute understanding of the determinants of health inequalities but articulate this in broader terms
- Ⓒ Minor refinement of Equally Well's language may help foster collective responsibility for addressing health inequalities across the range of Community Planning Partners