

# **Social Return on Investment – Barnsley's new secret weapon?**

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Metropolitan Borough Council

# What is 'Social Return on Investment'?

- A way of capturing the social, economic & environmental impact of activities
- Can help to capture the 'soft' effects which unit cost or value for money analysis misses
- Gives an evidence base for the real effects that a project or activity has had on those taking part
- Uses financial 'proxies' underpinned by research to give a monetary value to these effects/changes
- The final figure is expressed as £X for every £1 invested



# Why is SROI important to our work?

- Barnsley has devolved £2.1m per year of core funding to 6 locally based Area Councils for commissioning since 2013
- Projects commissioned locally seemed to be increasing impact – but no real evidence
- A need to prove that using localised datasets/community intelligence & high emphasis on social value increased impact
- A need to evidence the success of the Area Council approach for the future - & justify additional costs of local devolution



# What did we use it for?

- Used SROI methodology to analyse 6 projects commissioned & funded through Area Councils
- All had been strongly evidence based & used intelligence from community consultations about local need
- South Area One Stop Shop Project yielded a massive £28.81 for every £1 invested (average £5)
- High return was due to low cost of project compared against £ brought into community alongside high savings around mental health & depression



# So why is it our secret weapon?

- Captured the 'intangibles' we suspected but couldn't prove!
- Evidenced the added value from devolved commissioning & emphasis on social value/ use of local organisations
- Level of debate around commissioning in Area Councils much higher - & social value better understood
- Affecting wider commissioning processes within the Council
- Busts the myth that 'soft' outcomes can't be measured



# The 'One Stop Shop' analysis

- Project employs a Welfare Rights Worker & a CAB Generalist Adviser working together in local venues
- High SROI came from low project costs set against high levels of benefit gain, debt managed & impact on mental health
- More accurate proxies could be chosen because lots of relevant monitoring data being collected
- Will also influence in the future the outcomes/outputs/social value indicators we put into tender specifications



# Any questions?



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