



Flintshire County Council Connect for Change

Research | Practice | Solidarity

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Preface

In Flintshire, the Local Authority and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board have taken a number of proactive steps to understand the complex health and social care needs of the British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities living in the area. Through ongoing community engagement and consultation, they have gained valuable insights into the challenges experienced in education, health, housing, and social care, as well as the service areas requiring improvement.

While this proactive engagement has provided a strong foundation of understanding, the opportunity to translate research findings and community feedback into a formal, long-term strategy for lasting change has not yet been fully realised. Without a coordinated and structured approach to service design and delivery, localised improvements risk becoming fragmented or short-term, reducing their potential impact on outcomes across education, health, housing, and social care.

To support opportunities for transformative change, we have been working with David Jolly, Resettlement Coordinator, and Hannah Lloyd, Principal Public Health Practitioner, along with a range of colleagues from education, housing, health, and social care. Our aim was to develop a strategic framework that creates opportunities to deliver sustainable, meaningful, and targeted support for the British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire.

This report summarises the results of these efforts and identifies opportunities for transformation through a project called Connect for Change. Presented as a Theory of Change, the strategy outlined herein has the potential not only to enhance services but also to provide a model for a community of practice that could be applied in other parts of the United Kingdom.

A special thanks go to all those staff members who participated in the Theory of Change Workshops and contributed to the development of Connect for Change.

Dr Dan Allen & Mairtain Moloney-Neachtain

Plain Language Summary

What This Programme Is About?

Connect for Change aims to make health, education, housing, and social care services fairer and easier to use for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller people in Flintshire. It was developed with input from education, health, housing and social care professionals.

Why Change Is Needed?

British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller people in Flintshire often face poorer health, barriers to services, and low trust in authorities. This programme helps fix those issues by improving communication, building trust, and making services work better for everyone.

How the Programme Will Help?

The programme will help by focusing on:

- Listening to community voices
- Training staff so services are safer and more respectful
- Improving access to health care and immunisations
- Making planning and housing processes fairer
- Ensuring all services work together instead of separately

What Happens Next

Over the next four years, the programme will build stronger relationships, improve services, and involve communities in decision-making. The goal is long-lasting change that makes life fairer and healthier for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller people in Flintshire.

Executive Summary

Connect for Change is a four-year programme designed to improve education, health, housing, and social care outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people in Flintshire. It brings together Flintshire County Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and community partners to create a fairer, safer and more culturally informed system of support.

Why is Connect for Change needed?

British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people experience some of the poorest health and wellbeing outcomes in the United Kingdom. Barriers to services, low levels of trust and inconsistent support mean inequalities persist across education, healthcare, housing and social care. Previous work in Flintshire has created valuable insight, but these efforts have not yet formed a coordinated long-term strategy.

What will Connect for Change deliver?

Over four years, the programme will deliver:

1. Stronger leadership and accountability
2. Better engagement with communities
3. A more confident and trauma-informed workforce
4. Joined-up services across Flintshire
5. Fairer access to health, housing and planning
6. Measurable improvements in outcomes

How will progress be monitored?

Change will be measured through year-by-year evaluation, community feedback, workforce data and service activity. Findings will guide programme adjustments and help secure long-term investment.

What is the overall impact?

Connect for Change provides a practical, achievable roadmap for long-term improvements in equity, participation and service design. It will ensure that public services in Flintshire work with British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities building a fairer and more inclusive future for all.

1. Introduction

In Flintshire, the local authority and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) have made significant progress in understanding the health and social care needs of the British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities¹. Through community engagement, targeted assessments such as the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment², and ongoing equality planning aligned to the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan,³ they have developed a stronger evidence base and a clearer understanding of the barriers affecting service access, trust, and outcomes across education, healthcare, housing and social care.

Box 1: Problem statement

Problem Statement

Despite proactive steps toward race equality in Flintshire, considerable challenges remain. Many members of the British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities continue to experience:

- Poorer health outcomes,
- Limited access to primary care,
- Barriers linked to accommodation insecurity, and
- Low levels of confidence in statutory services.

Previous engagement activities and pilot projects have generated valuable insight; yet these findings have not been fully translated into a coordinated framework capable of driving sustained, long-term change. Without such a structure, service improvements could remain fragmented or short-lived, allowing inequalities to persist.

This report responds directly to the problem statement presented above. It presents the outcome of three Theory of Change (ToC) workshops designed to enable education, healthcare, housing and social care professionals guide a more coherent,

¹ The term British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities refers to recognised ethnic groups who share distinct cultural identities, histories, and traditions. This includes Romany Gypsies (whose heritage in Britain dates back to at least the 16th century), Irish Travellers (with cultural origins in Ireland and a long-established presence in Britain), and Roma people (who have migrated to the UK more recently from various parts of Europe). Each group is recognised as a distinct ethnic minority under the Equality Act 2010. The term does not include individuals or groups who travel for lifestyle or occupational reasons, for example, 'New Travellers' or 'Showpeople'.

² [Provision of Transit Site accommodation for the Gypsy Roma Traveller Community in Flintshire.](#)

³ [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#)

strategic approach to improving outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire. Through collaborative participation, the three workshops were able to identify the conditions, actions, and partnerships required to move from isolated interventions toward a shared, transformative vision of equitable access, participation, and wellbeing in line with the BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027⁴ and Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28⁵.

What is a Theory of Change Workshop?

A Theory of Change (ToC) workshop is a structured participatory process that brings people together to explore how specific actions can lead to meaningful and lasting change⁶. In Flintshire, it was designed to empower colleagues to collectively define the problems they wanted to address, identify the outcomes they hoped to achieve, and map out the logical steps that connected day-to-day activities to long-term goals. Through supportive facilitation, the process created a shared understanding of how and why change is expected to happen, as well as the conditions, partnerships, and assumptions that must be in place for success.

What did the Theory of Change Workshop do?

Over three days, colleagues from Flintshire County Council and BCUHB worked together to consider ways to strengthen services for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities. The workshops were facilitated as part of a collaborative initiative designed to strengthen joint understanding and coordination of services.

Each session was carefully facilitated to ensure open, inclusive, and reflective dialogue. The workshops began with an introduction to the ToC approach, explaining its purpose as a tool for collective planning and its relevance in translating ideas into a strategy for service improvement. Colleagues were encouraged to think critically about what they believed needed to change, why it matters, and what actions could realistically be delivered to achieve that change within Flintshire. Facilitated discussions then guided colleagues through key stages of the ToC process.

Together, the workshops identified:

- **Inputs** – the resources, partnerships, and capacities needed to support improvement;

⁴ [BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027](#)

⁵ [Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28](#)

⁶ Mayne, J. (2012). *Contribution analysis: Coming of age?* Evaluation, 18 (3) pp. 270-280.

- **Activities** – the interventions, engagement approaches, or service developments required to effect change;
- **Outputs** – the immediate, tangible results expected from these activities; and,
- **Outcomes** – the medium-term changes that reflect improved practice or community experience.

Each workshop focused on the theme of equality, participation and service provider responsibility to support the strategic goals of the BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027 and the Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28. By embedding the principles of co-production, cultural humility, and long-term thinking, the ToC workshop supported those ambitions directly. Through group exercises, colleagues discussed the barriers and enablers affecting each theme, drawing on local data, professional knowledge, and experiences from direct work with communities.

The ToC process also allowed colleagues to articulate shared priorities, test assumptions, and identify where coordination across agencies could be strengthened. These discussions generated practical insights into what kinds of engagement, training, and policy (re)alignment are needed to make change sustainable.

Ultimately, the ToC workshops served as both an analytical and developmental exercise. They helped professionals move beyond isolated interventions and begin designing a coherent framework for ongoing collaboration, ensuring that future service improvements could be informed by evidence, grounded in lived experience, and guided by a shared vision for change.

The following sections of this report present four ToC models developed by education, health, housing and social care professionals in Flintshire. The first three ToC models reflect the themes explored during each workshop. The fourth synthesises these insights into an overarching model for collaborative action across Flintshire. Together, they offer a shared, evidence-informed structure for dialogue, planning, accountability and transformation.

2. Workshop 1 | 16th October 2025: What difference should services make?

The first Flintshire ToC outlines how coordinated investment, professional capacity, and structured engagement can improve health, housing and social care outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities. By allocating financial resources, developing tailored training materials, and developing professional supervision, the initiative creates the foundational inputs necessary to map existing services, establish a community of practice, and foster closer collaborative ties between agencies and British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities. Complementary actions, such as liaison roles, automated advice lines, and research into service barriers, support these efforts by ensuring that engagement is informed, accessible, and responsive to community needs.

Inputs were seen to generate immediate outputs, including community consultation events, strategic steering groups, detailed reports on authorised and unauthorised encampments, and key local contacts. These outputs are designed to directly support the BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027 and the Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28. Central goals include building stronger links between British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities and health, housing and social care providers, creating dedicated teams capable of leading transformative change, and ensuring staff training is tailored to the specific needs of local populations. By clearly articulating these goals, the initiative provides a roadmap for action, aligning resources and efforts across multiple sectors.

When these outputs are implemented effectively, assuming community willingness to engage and adoption of a whole-region approach, they lead to measurable outcomes. British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities gain the ability to identify and access services more efficiently, professionals develop enhanced capacity and knowledge and reliable data informs both temporary and permanent service provision. These outcomes collectively drive progress toward longer-term impacts, including mutual understanding of service delivery processes, greater trust between British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities and professionals, reduction in health inequalities, and the creation of a sustainable framework for ongoing engagement and support.

By foregrounding the goals illustrated in the TOC below, the first model ensures that all activities, from initial investment to professional development and community liaison, are purposefully directed toward tangible, lasting improvements in health and social care for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities.

3. Workshop 2 | 17th October 2025: What difference should services make?

The second Flintshire ToC provides a structured framework to improve education, health, housing and social care, and community outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities. By combining senior leadership support, flexible working arrangements, additional funding, and paid community representation, the initiative ensures that critical inputs are in place to drive transformative action. These inputs enable tasks such as improving relationships with Travelling Ahead, establishing formal professional development frameworks, offering induction training, developing training for teachers, and providing face-to-face assessments. Regular planning meetings underpin these tasks, ensuring coordination, accountability, and a continuous community consultation.

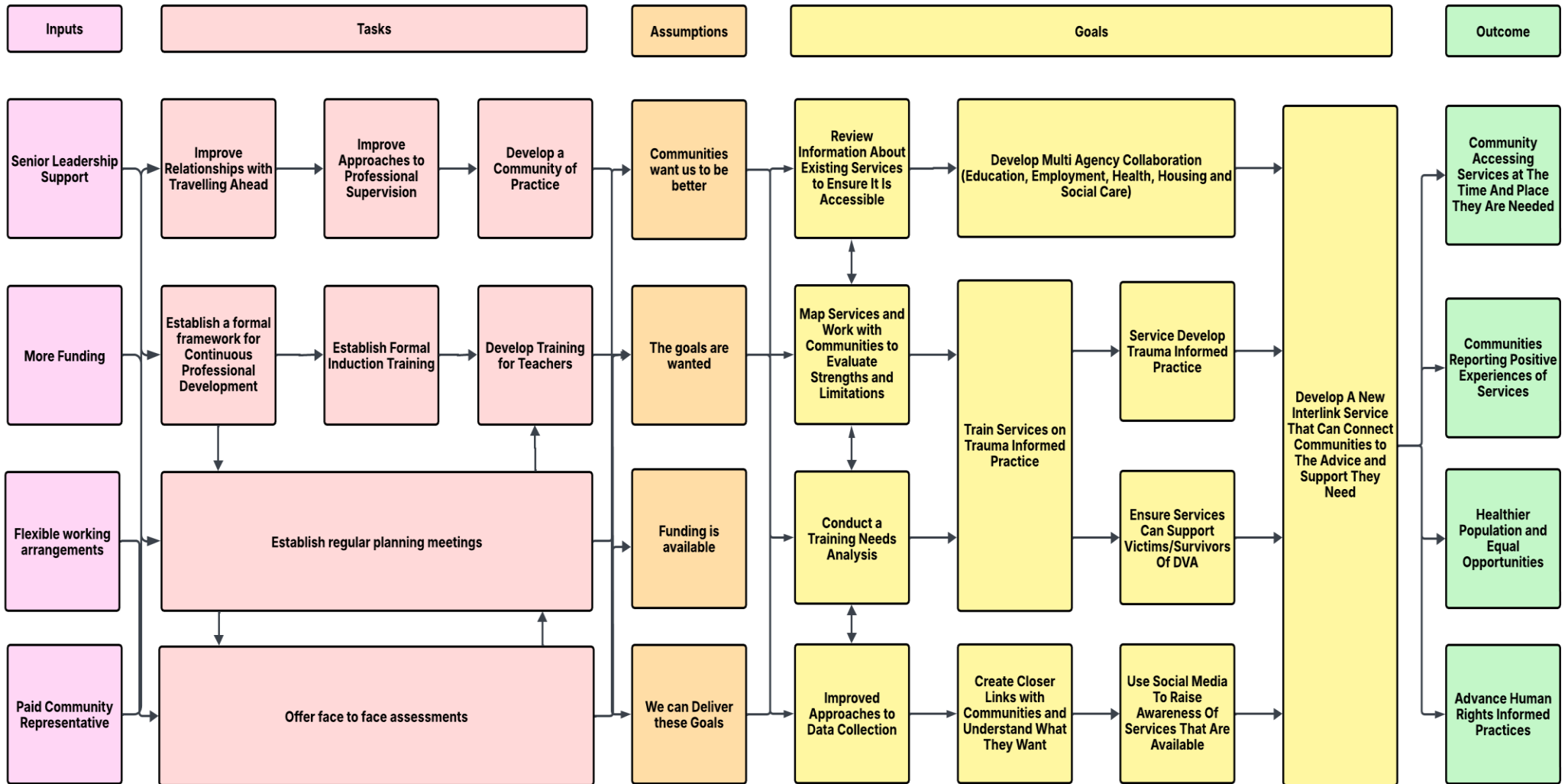
The goals of the ToC are central to its design, guiding both strategic planning and operational activity. Key goals include reviewing information about existing services to ensure accessibility, mapping services and working with communities to evaluate strengths and limitations, developing multi-agency collaboration across education, health, housing, and social care, and creating closer links with communities to understand their needs.

Other goals focus on ensuring services adopt trauma-informed practice models, supporting victims or survivors of domestic abuse, developing a new interlink service to connect communities to advice and support, and using social media to raise awareness of available services. Each goal is designed to directly address barriers to service access, inequities in provision, and gaps in professional capacity.

When these goals are achieved, they generate meaningful outcomes. Communities can access services at the time and place they are needed, report positive experiences of services, and benefit from improved health and equal opportunities. Professionals gain enhanced capacity, knowledge, and confidence in delivering trauma-informed and inclusive services.

Collectively, these efforts advance human rights-informed practices and foster trust between British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities and service providers. By foregrounding these goals, the second Flintshire ToC ensures that every input and task is strategically aligned to produce tangible improvements in service accessibility, community engagement, and long-term wellbeing in line with the BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027 and the Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28.

Day 2: 17th October



4. Workshop 3 | 24th October 2025: What difference should services make?

The third Flintshire ToC presents a strategic framework aimed at advancing equality, accountability, and community-led transformation. It prioritises supporting British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities, particularly those seeking greater involvement in legal and planning processes, by aligning leadership, resources, and community voices.

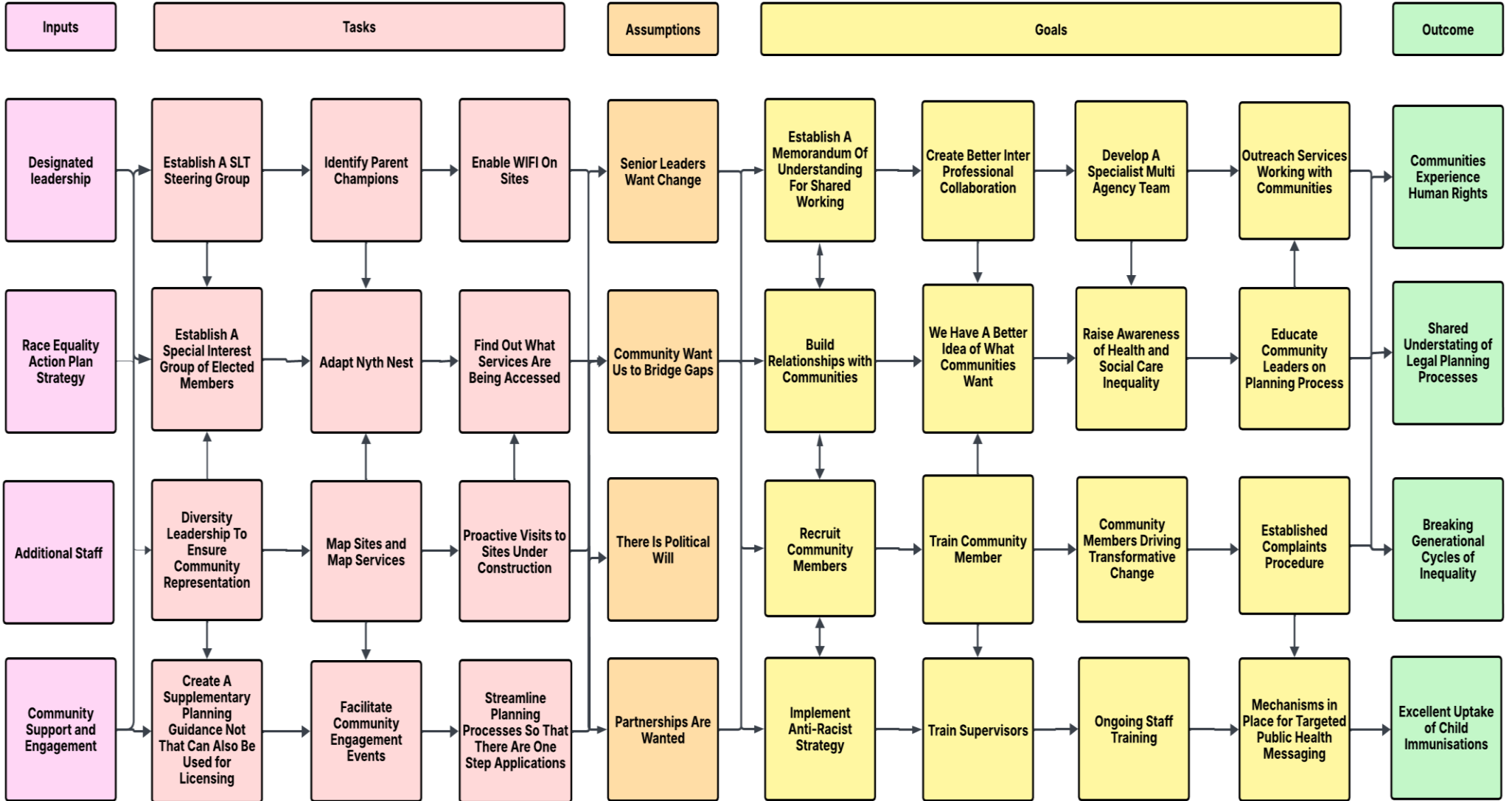
The initiative begins with key inputs, including designated leadership, race equality audits, additional staffing, and the development of a community engagement strategy. These foundational elements prepare the system for action and support a series of coordinated tasks. In education, these tasks include forming staff and parent steering groups, identifying parent leaders, mapping services and gaps, and streamlining processes to strengthen community leadership. In health, housing and social care, these efforts build trust, foster collaboration, and ensure that community members are meaningfully engaged in shaping services.

This framework is based on several core assumptions that senior leaders are committed to change, communities are motivated to participate in decision-making and that there is political will to support transformation. These assumptions act as the scaffolding for the strategy, reinforcing the belief that meaningful change is achievable when leadership and community aspirations are aligned.

Goals include developing mechanisms for accountability, training community members and supervisors, raising awareness of social and racial inequities, and deepening an understanding of community needs. Each goal is designed to dismantle barriers, strengthen capacity, and embed race equality into service delivery.

When these goals are realised, the outcomes are transformative. Communities gain access to human rights protections, take active roles in legal and building planning processes, and benefit from transparent update mechanisms. By aligning inputs, activities, and goals with community-driven outcomes, the third Flintshire Theory of Change ensures that transformation is not only possible but also sustainable in line with the BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027 and the Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28.

Friday, Day 3 24th October



5. Integrated Theory of Change for Flintshire: Connect for Change

The three ToC models presented above explore service improvement from different perspectives. Each workshop generated a focused model that captured the priorities, barriers, and opportunities identified by education, health, housing, social care professionals.

The three ToC models presented were not intended to stand alone. Instead, they served as building blocks for a comprehensive integrated mid-level theory. This integrated theory synthesises the common themes, shared mechanisms, and cross-sector dependencies identified across all workshops. It draws together the inputs, activities, and outcomes that were repeated across sessions, aligning them into a single coherent roadmap for systemic transformation.

Where individual workshops highlighted specific challenges and pathways, the integrated mid-level theory captures the overarching logic of into a Connect for Change programme. Presented as a fourth ToC, the Connect for Change model focusses on strengthening leadership, improving engagement, building professional capacity, coordinating services, embedding trauma-informed practice, improving access to building and planning processes, and reducing inequalities. In this way, the integrated Connect for Change ToC represents the collective insights of all workshop participants, offering a unified strategy for action across education, health, housing, and social care in Flintshire, as the following mid-level theory describes.

Box 2: Mid-level theory for Connect for Change

Connect for Change is a bold and compassionate initiative designed to create lasting equality, accountability, and community-led transformation for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire. Informed by a formal programme of workforce consultation and engagement, **Connect for Change** seeks to strengthen professional capacity, and structured community engagement services over the next four years.

At its foundation, **Connect for Change** requires several key inputs, including designated leadership roles, race equality audits, additional staffing, and permeant community representation. With senior leadership support, flexible working arrangements, and targeted financial investment, these inputs enable practical, measurable actions.

Activities include forming inclusive steering groups, recruiting, supporting and retaining community leaders, mapping services and gaps, and delivering tailored training and professional development programmes. Activities also strengthen liaison roles, introduce automated advice lines, and coordinate multi-agency collaboration across health, education, housing, and social care.

Complementary efforts, such as community research, social media awareness campaigns, and accessible face-to-face assessments, ensure that **Connect for Change** services are responsive and co-designed with British Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in Flintshire. The initiative is guided by a shared commitment to leadership and a strong dedication to change, community participation, and political support for transformation. These principles provide the scaffolding for the strategy and ensure alignment between service provision and the needs of British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire

In line with the the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Integrated Three-Year Plan for 2024-2027 and the Flintshire County Council Plan 2023-28, **Connect for Change** aims to achieve measurable outcomes, including increased access to education, health, housing and social care services, enhanced professional confidence in trauma-informed practice, stronger community leadership, and improved trust between British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities and service providers.

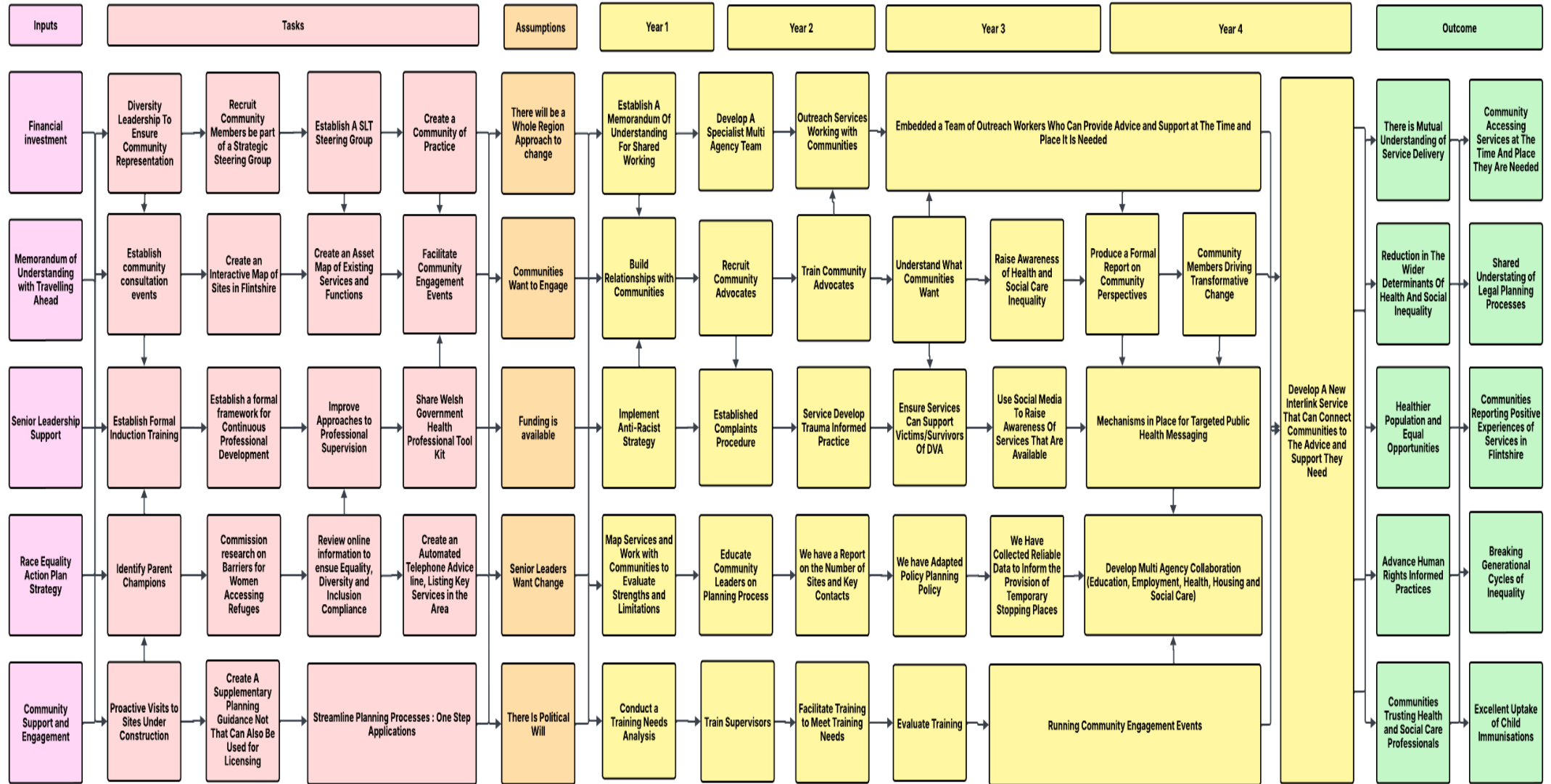
In the long term, these outcomes will reduce inequalities, embed equality into service design and delivery, and create a resilient, human rights–based system capable of sustaining transformation. Through collaboration, transparency, and shared ambition, **Connect for Change** will not only improve services, it will redefine how education, health, housing, and social care are designed, delivered, and experienced in Flintshire, ensuring that community voices drive lasting, meaningful change.

Mid-Level Theory

The mid-level theory presented above is intended to provide a balance between strategic clarity and practical detail. High-level theories describe change in broad, abstract terms, while low-level models focus on specific operational processes. Neither is sufficient for a programme of this scale. Connect for Change requires a framework that can account for the interaction between individuals, communities, and organisations, while still being grounded enough to guide everyday practice.

The mid-level theory for Connect for Change is also presented to enable the programme to capture the complex realities faced by British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire, such as multi-agency involvement, structural inequalities, and varied community experiences, without becoming overly technical or prescriptive. It explains how and why change is expected to occur, identifies the conditions needed for progress, and outlines the mechanisms that connect activities to outcomes. This level of analysis also offers a practical tool for evaluating progress over time, supporting adaptation as learning emerges.

Integrated Mid-Level Theory of Change for Flintshire: Connect for Change (Larger version in Appendix 2-6)



Theory of Change Mechanisms

The fourth ToC for Connect for Change provides a clear and practical roadmap for how improvement will happen. It explains the steps needed to achieve change, helps teams understand what to prioritise, and shows how different actions connect. This makes it easier for services to focus on the work that will have the greatest impact for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire.

The model also strengthens joint working across services. By setting out shared goals, it encourages education, health, housing, and social care teams to coordinate their efforts, avoid duplication, and offer families a more consistent and positive experience. It also acts as a tool for monitoring progress. The outcomes within the ToC provide a way to check what is improving, where challenges remain, and what adjustments may be needed over time.

Importantly, the ToC for Connect for Change supports co-production. By making the programme's assumptions, challenges, and expectations transparent, it gives communities the opportunity to question, shape, and improve the work. This helps ensure that the programme of work remains firmly rooted in lived experience and responds to the priorities of British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people.

Finally, the ToC also helps illuminate the key drivers needed to shape the impact of Connect for Change. These drivers, known as mechanisms, are subtle but powerful forces that explain how the project's actions lead to meaningful outcomes. While not always easy to observe, these mechanisms highlight the interaction between policy, practice, and the real-life experiences of individuals, families, and communities. The mechanisms that underpin Connect for Change include individual beliefs, attitudes, and decisions, as well as the resources and opportunities the programme requires and provides. There are seven core mechanisms driving this project.

Diversity Leadership within the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Flintshire County Council

Diversifying leadership supports the aims of the BCUHB Integrated Three-Year Plan 2024–2027 and the Flintshire County Council Plan 2023–28 by creating meaningful opportunities for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people to influence decisions and shape the policies that impact their lives. This mechanism focuses on establishing formal structures, such as advisory panels, community leadership groups and co-production forums, that enable community members to share their views, experiences and priorities directly with service leaders. Embedding these voices in decision-making strengthens the design and delivery of education, health, housing and social care services, ensuring they reflect real community needs.

A key element of this mechanism is removing the barriers that can limit British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller participation, both in consultation processes and in employment within BCUHB and Flintshire County Council. This includes improving access to information, offering training to build confidence and leadership skills, and

creating pathways into civic and organisational roles. It also requires public bodies to strengthen their commitment to the Anti-racist Wales action plan, deepen staff understanding of British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities, and adapt engagement methods so they are respectful and inclusive. By diversifying leadership across health, education, housing and social care, Connect for Change promotes a more collaborative environment where trust can grow, dialogue can flourish and community perspectives are recognised as essential to good governance. Over time, this helps create more equitable, culturally responsive services and supports long-lasting improvements in outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people.

Connect with Communities

Connecting with Communities focuses on building strong, trusting relationships between public bodies and British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people. Lasting change requires ongoing, respectful engagement that recognises the history of discrimination and oppression these communities have faced⁷. A central priority is to bring services closer to families by meeting people where they are, on sites, in community settings or through trusted intermediaries like Travelling Ahead.

Engagement must be flexible and sensitively planned, reflecting mobility patterns, community traditions and preferred ways of communicating. By adapting services in this way, education, health, housing and social care services can demonstrate respect, reduce fear and build the confidence needed for families to share their views, raise concerns and participate in decision-making panels.

Finally, connecting with communities promotes coordinated, multi-agency working. Shared visits, joint engagement activities and unified messaging to reduce duplication and create a clear, consistent service response. When agencies work together and connect meaningfully with communities, people may be enabled to influence policy, shape services and participate actively in leadership and co-production events.

Create a Collaborative Participatory Programme

Creating a collaborative participatory programme focuses on developing a multi-agency team that brings together education, health, housing, and social care services to work directly with British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities. This mechanism recognises that complex challenges, such as school engagement, health inequalities, housing insecurity, and social exclusion, cannot be addressed in isolation. By fostering collaboration, services can provide coordinated, consistent support that reflects the real needs and priorities of communities.

⁷ Allen, D. *et al.* (2024) 'A scoping review of social work with Roma and Traveller communities: introducing the ROMA model', *European Journal of Social Work*, 28(6), pp. 1291–1305.

A central feature of this mechanism is involving British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people in the design, delivery, and evaluation of programmes. Their experience informs decision-making, ensuring interventions are relevant, accessible, and trusted. Co-production strengthens engagement, promotes shared ownership, and improves outcomes across multiple service areas.

The programme also emphasises structured, multi-agency working. Joint planning, shared protocols, and coordinated case management can reduce duplication, prevent gaps in support, and ensure families receive timely and consistent services. Regular communication between professionals also enhances an understanding of community needs and enables more holistic responses. By integrating services into a participatory framework, this mechanism builds strong relationships, improves early intervention, and increases access to education, healthcare, housing, and social support. Ultimately, a collaborative participatory programme empowers British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire to actively influence the services they receive, fostering trust, resilience, and sustainable improvements in health and social welfare.

Reduce Single Person Dependency

Reducing Single Person Dependency focuses on creating a more resilient, coordinated system of support for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people by ensuring that responsibility for engagement, service delivery and relationship-building does not fall on a single individual or role. When only one person holds the knowledge, trust or cultural understanding needed to work effectively with communities, services become fragile, and progress can be easily disrupted by staff absence or organisational change. This mechanism promotes shared ownership across Flintshire County Council, BCUHB, education services and partner organisations, ensuring that engagement with British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities is consistent, reliable and embedded within everyday practice.

A key component of this mechanism is strengthening team capacity. This includes training staff across departments, improving their understanding of British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller experiences, and equipping them with the confidence to build respectful, sustained relationships. By distributing knowledge and responsibility across multiple roles, services become more adaptable and better positioned to provide timely support, prevention and early intervention. This mechanism also encourages multi-agency working, shared protocols and joint visits, reducing duplication and ensuring consistent communication. When organisations collaborate rather than rely on a single link worker or specialist, communities receive clearer messages, more dependable support and improved pathways into education, health, housing and social care.

Ultimately, reducing Single Person Dependency helps create a stable, trustworthy service environment where British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people can engage more confidently with universal services. It strengthens organisational

resilience and ensures that positive relationships are protected, sustained and able to evolve over time.

Raise Awareness of Public Health Services and Immunisation

Raising awareness of public health services and immunisation focuses on ensuring that British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people have clear and accessible information about the health support available to them. Many families in Wales experience barriers such as low trust in services, limited access to consistent information, digital exclusion and a history of discriminatory experiences within healthcare settings⁸. This mechanism aims to build confidence, increase understanding and support informed decision-making by improving how public health messages are communicated across Flintshire.

A key characteristic of this mechanism is adapting public health information so that it is easy to understand, relevant and delivered through trusted channels. This may include face-to-face conversations, outreach on sites, community events, and communication through trusted figures or organisations already known to British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people. Providing clear explanations about how to access services, such as screening, maternity care, health visiting, dental services and immunisation programmes, helps reduce anxiety and ensures families know what support is available and how to use it.

This mechanism also relies on improving training and awareness across health teams. Staff supported through community training are better equipped to communicate respectfully and respond to questions or concerns without judgement. When professionals demonstrate understanding and consistency, trust strengthens and families are more likely to engage with public health services. By raising awareness and improving communication, this mechanism contributes to better access, earlier engagement and more equitable outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities. It also supports informed choices and helps ensure that public health services are welcoming, accessible and responsive to community needs.

Review Planning Processes and Procedures

Reviewing planning processes and procedures aims to ensure that British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities have fair and equitable access to suitable housing and authorised sites. Historically, planning and site development procedures in Wales have created barriers that limit housing security, contribute to overcrowding, and perpetuate inequality⁹. This mechanism focuses on examining

⁸ [Travelling to Better Health Policy Implementation Guidance for Healthcare Practitioners on working effectively with Gypsies and Travellers](#)

⁹ [The Public Health Potential of Housing Interventions](#)

current policies, identifying obstacles, and implementing changes to make planning systems more inclusive, transparent, and responsive to community needs.

A key element is engaging British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller representatives in the review and redesign of planning processes. Their experience provides essential insight into the challenges of accessing authorised sites and navigating planning applications. By involving communities in co-production, Flintshire County Council can ensure that procedures reflect real needs, improve accessibility, and build trust between local authorities and families. This mechanism also requires streamlining internal processes, clarifying guidance, and increasing staff awareness of cultural and legal considerations affecting site development.

Multi-agency collaboration with housing, planning, and social care teams also ensures consistent decision-making and reduces delays or miscommunication. Training for planning officers and associated staff enhances understanding of British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller culture, mobility patterns, and the importance of providing safe, secure accommodation. Ultimately, reviewing planning and housing procedures strengthens community confidence, promotes equitable access to authorised sites, and ensures that policies support rather than hinder the wellbeing of British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people. By creating transparent, inclusive, and culturally informed processes, this mechanism contributes to long-term improvements in education, health, housing, social inclusion, and quality of life across Flintshire.

Develop a Whole Service Approach

Developing a whole service trauma-informed approach, ensures that all aspects of service delivery recognise and respond to the impact of trauma on British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people. Many families experience historical and ongoing discrimination, social exclusion, and instability in housing, education, and healthcare¹⁰. This mechanism focuses on embedding trauma-informed principles across Flintshire County Council and BCUHB, so that interactions are sensitive, consistent, and supportive¹¹.

A key element is training staff across all agencies to understand the effects of trauma on behaviour, engagement, and wellbeing. This includes recognising signs of trauma, avoiding practices that may retraumatise, and promoting approaches that empower individuals while building trust. By increasing workforce knowledge and confidence, services can respond to British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people in ways that are compassionate, culturally aware, and effective. This mechanism also emphasises organisational change. Policies, procedures, and service pathways are reviewed to ensure they are flexible, accessible, and do not inadvertently create

¹⁰ [Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers](#)

¹¹ [Trauma-Informed Wales Framework](#)

barriers or stress for families. Multi-agency collaboration reinforces a consistent, joined-up response, so that families experience continuity and support across health, education, housing, and social care systems.

Implementing a trauma-informed, whole service approach helps build trust, engagement, and resilience within British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities. By recognising lived experiences, fostering supportive relationships, and embedding understanding across services, this mechanism contributes to improved wellbeing, equitable access, and long-term positive outcomes for families in Flintshire.

Summary

This section of the report has outlined the development of an integrated mid-level ToC for the Connect for Change programme in Flintshire. Building on three sector-specific ToC workshops, education, health, housing, and social care, the chapter explains how individual models were combined into one unified framework. Rather than operating in isolation, each workshop served as a building block, highlighting shared challenges, priorities, and mechanisms for improving outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities.

Through the mechanisms identified, the Connect for Change programme aims to increase access to services, improve professional confidence, strengthen community leadership, and build trust between public bodies and British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities. Over time, the integrated ToC supports the creation of a more equitable, resilient, and human-rights-based system in Flintshire, one shaped by experience and committed to lasting, meaningful change.

6. Alignment with Strategic Plans

Connect for Change is a strategically aligned, evidence-informed programme designed to improve outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire. Its aims, structure and methods directly support the national, regional and local priorities set out in key policy frameworks, including the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Integrated Three-Year Plan (2024–2027), the Flintshire County Council Plan (2023–2028) and the Welsh Government’s Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (2022–2030). By bringing agencies together, strengthening community voice and embedding trauma-informed, culturally competent practice, the programme provides a coherent and necessary response to long-standing inequalities.

Connect for Change also supports public bodies to meet their statutory duties. Under the Equality Act 2010¹², Connect for Change actively contributes to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations by tackling the barriers faced by Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities and improving staff competence in working with minoritised groups. In line with the Human Rights in Wales¹³, the programme promotes the right to family life, non-discrimination and education by increasing fairness, transparency and accessibility within local systems. Furthermore, Connect for Change aligns closely with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015¹⁴, making a direct contribution to a More Equal Wales, a Healthier Wales, Cohesive Communities and a Prosperous Wales. Its design reflects all five ways of working, long-term prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement, ensuring that improvements are sustainable and grounded in lived experience.

Strategic response

Through improved access to primary care, public health services and immunisation, Connect for Change supports the Health Board’s commitment to reducing health inequalities. Its focus on trauma-informed and culturally informed practice strengthens the ability of staff across health, housing, education and social care to provide safe, respectful and responsive services. Multi-agency collaboration further enables earlier intervention, consistent support and a more integrated approach to prevention. By building stronger relationships and increasing community participation in health planning, the programme advances the Health Board’s wider goal of improving population health through partnership and equity.

At the same time, Connect for Change directly advances priorities within the Flintshire County Council Plan (2023–2028). It helps reduce barriers to learning by

¹² [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

¹³ [Human Rights in Wales](#)

¹⁴ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)

supporting educational engagement and promoting fair, consistent pathways into schools and support services. The programme also contributes to the Council's housing and planning objectives by working to improve access to safe, authorised and suitable accommodation¹⁵. Through its emphasis on community resilience, co-production and equitable access to services, Connect for Change strengthens coordination across housing, social care, education and community teams. This integrated approach enhances support for vulnerable families and ensures that services are rights-based, transparent and responsive to community needs.

Crucially, Connect for Change embodies the ambitions of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (2022–2030). It addresses institutional and structural racism by strengthening the voices of British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people in decision-making, service design and leadership. Through race equity audits, leadership accountability and high-quality anti-racist training, it builds the workforce knowledge, skills and values required for meaningful cultural change. Its commitment to trauma-informed and anti-racist practice across all sectors aligns directly with Welsh Government expectations that public bodies deliver fair, inclusive and anti-discriminatory services.

Summary

Connect for Change is both a transformative programme and a statutory necessity. It responds to documented inequalities, strengthens cross-sector collaboration and embeds cultural humility, trauma-informed practice and equitable access at the heart of service delivery. By aligning local action with national priorities and legal duties, Connect for Change provides a robust, forward-looking framework capable of driving meaningful, long-term change for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire.

¹⁵ [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2022](#)

7. Next Steps

Each mechanism listed above is designed to bring about measurable change, with outcomes assessed through research, service evaluations, and feedback from British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people. An ongoing evaluation not only proves the effectiveness of the programme but also provides crucial insights for adjusting strategies, refining approaches, and ensuring long-term impact. With clear goals and evidence of success, Connect for Change can attract funding for specific workstreams, ensuring that its efforts are sustained and expanded as needed.

The next steps for Connect for Change set out what will happen over the next four years and how progress will be monitored. These steps link directly to the table in Appendix 1, which describes the key actions, the mechanisms they relate to, and the outcomes expected for each year.

Over the four-year programme, services in Flintshire will work together with British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities to improve education, health, housing and social care. Each year has a clear set of actions designed to build on the work completed in previous years.

Year 1: Setting Up the Programme

In the first year, the focus is on putting strong foundations in place. This includes choosing leaders, creating steering groups, and making sure British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller community members are paid for their involvement. Services will begin mapping local needs and identifying what support is already available. Staff will also start early stages of training.

Year 2: Building Skills and Improving Services

The second year focuses on training staff so services can work in a more respectful, trauma-informed way. Multi-agency teams will start working more closely together, and planning and housing procedures will be reviewed. Awareness campaigns will help communities understand how to access health and social care.

Year 3: Strengthening Relationships and Measuring Change

In the third year, services will deepen their relationships with communities through regular outreach and co-production. There will be a review of early results to understand what is improving and what still needs attention. This information will be used to adjust the programme.

Year 4: Embedding Lasting Change

In the final year, the programme aims to make improvements permanent across education, health, housing and social care. A full evaluation will be completed to understand the impact of the programme. Lessons learned will be shared, and planning will begin for long-term funding.

Resource Implications

Delivering Connect for Change at the scale required will involve clear, well-structured investment to ensure the programme is effective, sustainable, and capable of delivering meaningful outcomes for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire. A comprehensive financial schedule will need to be developed to set out the full economic costs of implementation, ongoing delivery and evaluation. This should include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- **Programme Team** Dedicated staffing will be essential for programme leadership, coordination and delivery. This will include a programme manager to provide strategic oversight, liaison officers to support community engagement and multi-agency working, and administrative support to ensure efficient operational processes, reporting and communication functions.
- **Training** Specialist training will be required to embed trauma-informed and culturally informed practice across services. This includes high-quality anti-racist training and community-led consultations that strengthen workforce knowledge, confidence and competence in engaging with Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities. Training should be recurring to support workforce development and role induction.
- **Operational Costs** A range of practical resources will be needed to support day-to-day delivery. This includes on-costs and consumable costs associated with engagement events, outreach activities, communications, translation, printed materials, travel for staff visiting sites and community locations, and the logistical requirements of multi-agency collaboration.
- **Evaluation** To ensure transparency, accountability and continuous learning, the programme will require dedicated evaluation capacity. This may be delivered internally or through independent partners. Costs will include data analysis, monitoring systems, community feedback mechanisms and cost benefit reporting. Evaluation resources are essential for assessing outcomes, reviewing progress and informing future development.

Recommendations

To enable the successful implementation of Connect for Change and ensure it delivers long-term, system-wide improvements for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Identify full programme costs and secure multi-year funding to support core functions, including programme management, community leadership roles, training delivery and engagement infrastructure. Sustainable funding is essential to maintain momentum and protect continuity.

- Establish multi-agency governance arrangements, including a senior leadership steering group. This group should provide strategic direction, oversight and accountability, ensuring alignment between Flintshire County Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, education services and partner organisations.
- Endorse the adoption of race equity audits across Flintshire County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. These audits are critical for identifying structural barriers, monitoring progress against equality objectives and supporting transparent, measurable improvements in practice.
- Agree to review planning and accommodation procedures to ensure that systems are fair, transparent and accessible for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller communities. This includes examining current processes, reducing unnecessary complexity and involving community representatives in co-design.
- Support the introduction of multi-agency operational teams with shared protocols, integrated pathways and agreed data-sharing arrangements. Such teams will reduce duplication, strengthen early intervention and provide a consistent, coordinated response across education, health, housing and social care.

Together, these resource and governance commitments will enable Connect for Change to deliver lasting, equitable and system-wide improvements for British Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller families in Flintshire.

8. Conclusion

Connect for Change sets out a clear pathway for improving education, health, housing and social care services for British Gypsy, Roma, and Irish Traveller communities in Flintshire. By developing a shared Theory of Change, this report has brought together the insights of a diverse range of colleagues from across the region to show how meaningful, long-term progress can be achieved. The Connect for Change provides not only a vision for change, but a practical framework for guiding everyday decisions, strengthening service coordination, and embedding trauma-informed, equitable practice across BCUHB and Flintshire County Council in line with strategic level plans.

The work ahead represents an important opportunity for systems-wide transformation. If fully implemented, Connect for Change has the potential to reduce long-standing inequalities, build trust between communities and public services, and create a more resilient, inclusive, and human-rights-based approach to service delivery. The mechanisms, actions, and outcomes identified throughout this report highlight how sustained commitment can translate into lasting improvements in people's lives in Flintshire.

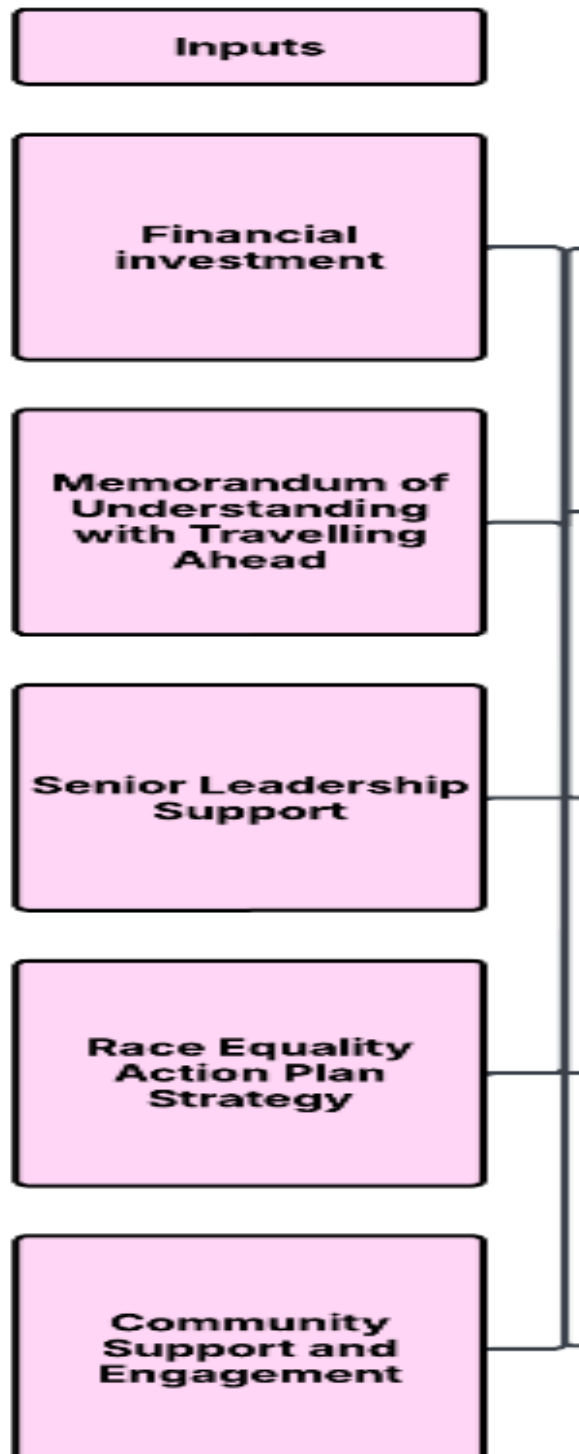
Achieving this vision, however, requires shared responsibility. BCUHB, Flintshire County Council, partner agencies, and local communities each play essential roles in making change possible. Success will depend on continued collaboration, open communication, and the willingness to learn, adapt, and work together in new ways.

Appendix 1: Next Steps

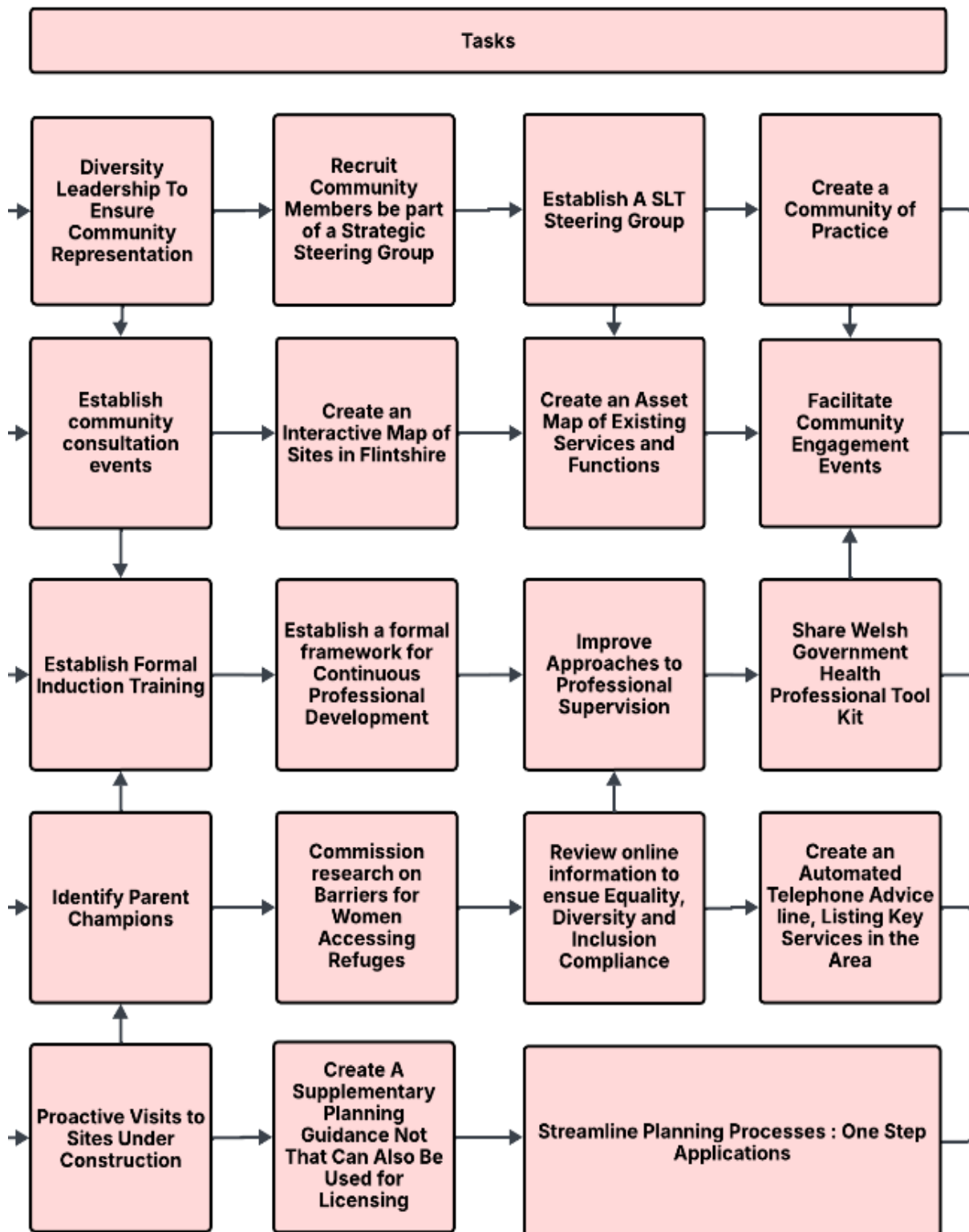
Year	Key Activities	ToC Mechanisms Addressed	Expected Outcomes
Year 1	<p>Appoint leadership and programme champions</p> <p>Establish inclusive steering groups and advisory panels</p> <p>Recruit paid community representatives</p> <p>Map community needs, assets, and service gaps</p> <p>Conduct initial workforce consultations and training audits</p>	<p>1. Diversity Leadership</p> <p>2. Connect with Communities</p> <p>3. Reduce Single Person Dependency</p>	<p>Strong governance structure in place.</p> <p>Baseline understanding of community needs.</p> <p>Community representatives engaged and remunerated</p> <p>Staff begin awareness and training programmes</p>
Year 2	<p>Deliver tailored trauma-informed training across services</p> <p>Develop liaison roles and multi-agency teams</p> <p>Review planning and housing procedures for inclusivity</p> <p>Launch awareness campaigns for public health, immunisation, and social services</p> <p>Initiate co-production strategy with communities</p>	<p>3. Reduce Single Person Dependency</p> <p>4. Raise Awareness of Public Health Services and Immunisation</p> <p>5. Review Planning Processes and Procedures</p> <p>6. Develop Whole Service Approach</p>	<p>Increased staff confidence and capacity</p> <p>Services begin demonstrating increased understanding and responsiveness</p> <p>Communities better informed about health and public services</p> <p>Early co-produced service improvements implemented</p>
Year 3	<p>Expand multi-agency collaboration across health, education, housing, and social care</p> <p>Conduct outreach activities</p> <p>Refine co-production mechanisms and community consultation strategy</p>	<p>2. Connect with Communities</p> <p>6. Develop Whole Service Approach</p> <p>7. Create Collaborative Participatory Programme Team</p>	<p>Consistent multi-agency supports available</p> <p>Community trust strengthened</p> <p>Early measurable improvements in access to services</p>

Year	Key Activities	ToC Mechanisms Addressed	Expected Outcomes
	Evaluate service uptake, engagement, and initial outcomes Adjust programme design based on evaluation		Lessons learned inform service refinement
Year 4	Consolidate improvements into standard service delivery Embed equity-focused practices and trauma-informed approaches across all agencies Conduct comprehensive evaluation and impact assessment Disseminate best practices internally and externally Plan for sustained funding and future programme scaling	1–7. All mechanisms integrated	Long-term systemic change embedded Reduced inequalities in education, health, housing, and social care Communities actively shaping policies and service design Evidence base for scaling and sustaining Connect for Change

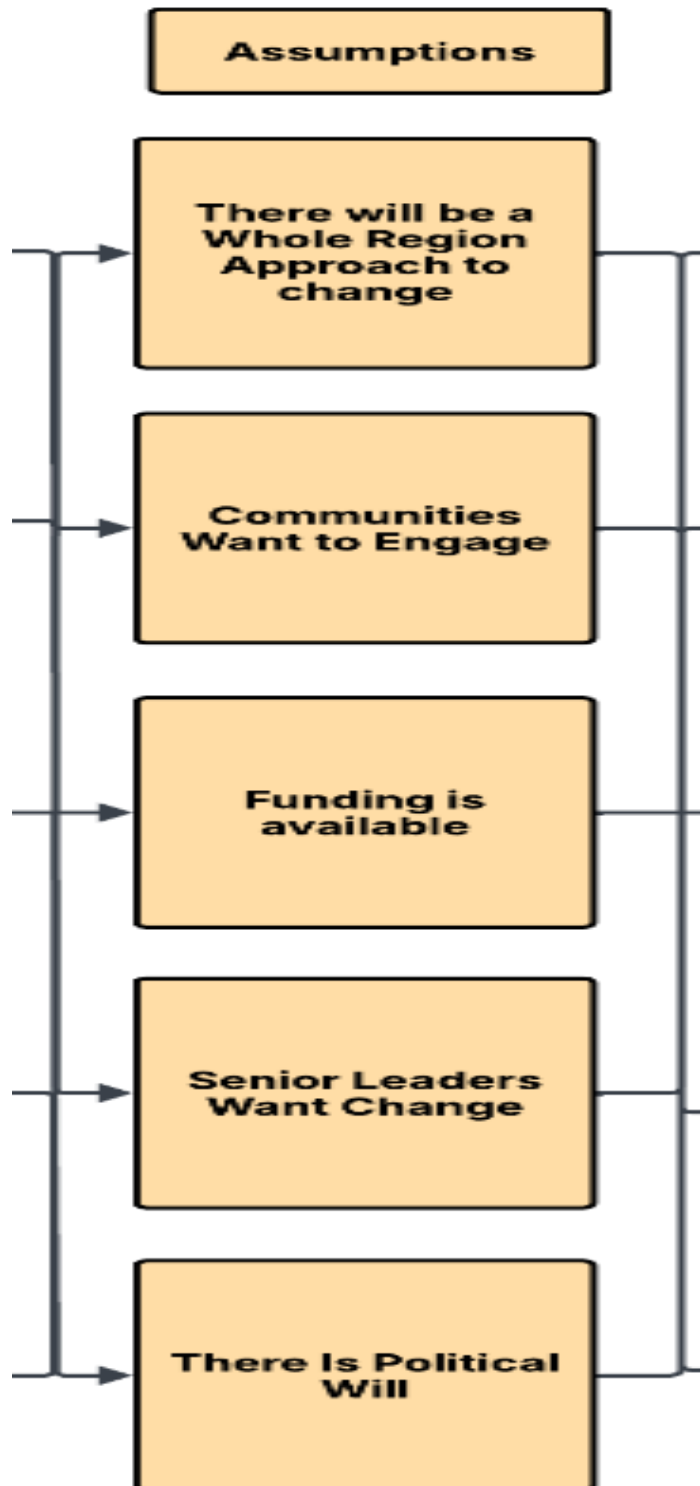
Appendix 1: Inputs



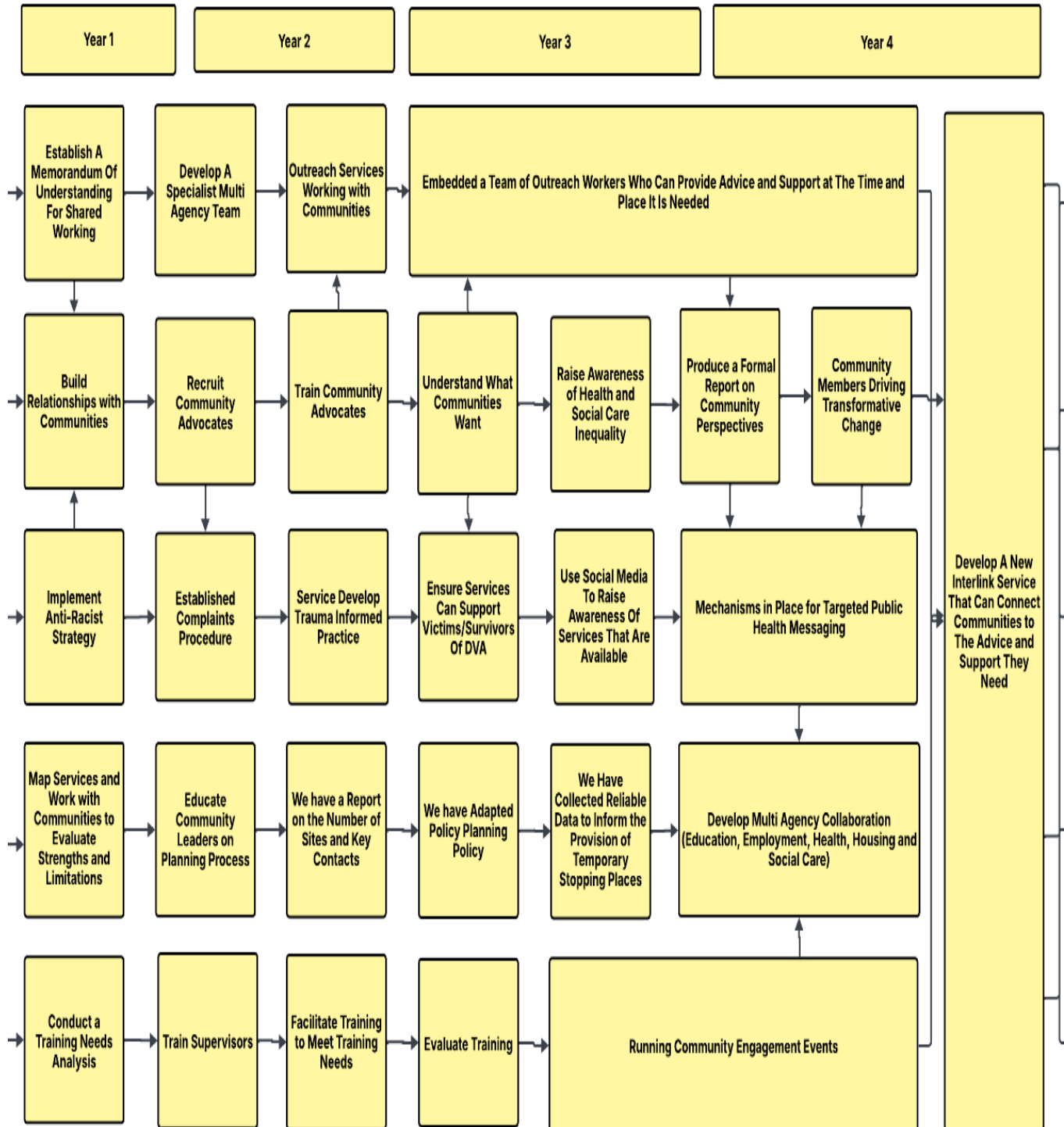
Appendix 2: Tasks



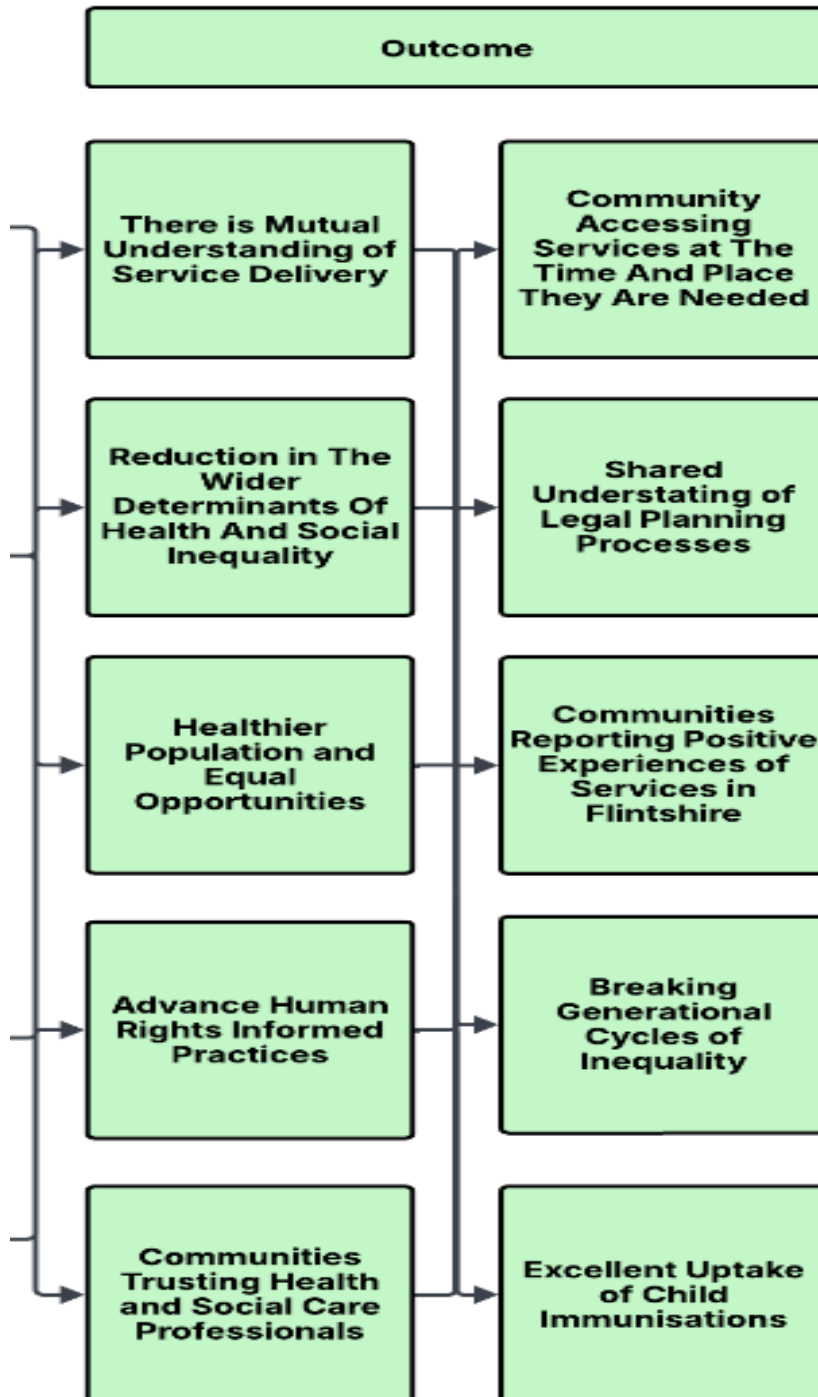
Appendix 3: Assumptions



Appendix 4: Goals



Appendix 5: Outcomes



Report written and produced by Dan Allen and Mairtain Moloney-Neachtain

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