



# Connecting for Good *Impact Report*

Evaluating the impacts of Connecting for Good

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORT BY ANTHILL COLLECTIVE / JULY 2024







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CREATIVE  
KINDNESS  
TACKLING ISOLATION

# Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an independent evaluation of Connecting for Good (CfG). Connecting for Good is a social movement working to address isolation and marginalisation across Coventry, empowering the Coventry community to make change through community organising.

This evaluation used a mixed methods approach engaging a total of 92 CfG members. This included a survey of 65 CfG members, three focus groups and Most Significant Change exercises with 22 CfG members, and a diary study with a further 10 CfG participants and staff. The evaluation was also peer-led. We recruited and trained two CfG members to lead three evaluation workshops and support with data analysis and sense-making.

**We found very strong evidence that Connecting for Good has positive impacts on three primary outcomes:**

l) Increased power to make change collectively

- CfG members (79%) are three times more likely than the national average (27%) to think they have the power to influence local decisions.
- CfG members are much more likely to have taken part in civic activism (73%), civic participation (79%), or civic consultation (83%) activities in the past 12 months than the national average (7%, 41%, 19%).
- Strong qualitative evidence supports this as well, with this impact area being mentioned as one of the most important impacts by CfG participants (14 out of 22).





## II) Stronger community connections

- Members of the Connecting for Good programme have very strong social support networks for people to turn to for help (98%) or socialising (95%), despite many having traits that make them more at risk of being isolated and marginalised.
- There is also strong qualitative evidence showing how people build new relationships with others through Connecting for Good. The most commonly cited impact in evaluation sessions was having stronger connections to others or feeling closer to their community (16 out of 22 CfG participants).

**“I was a stranger to the city trying to find connection. Now...I can point out stories, connections, actions on every corner.”** CORE GROUP MEMBER

- This impact is seen equally throughout the CfG community, suggesting Connecting for Good has likely had a positive impact on CfG participants' social connections, particularly those from marginalised groups.

### III) Increased leadership capacity

- Over two thirds of CfG members reported increases in their ability to lead.
- There is particularly strong evidence that people's confidence to lead has improved, with 85% of CfG members saying they are more confident leading, and 81% saying their confidence has increased overall.
- Improved leadership ability was seen as the most important change by the highest number of participants.
- Increases in confidence, learning new skills and techniques, as well as personal growth were key factors that were related to people's improved leadership abilities.

**“My proudest moment was when we sat down with the council and there was a noticeable shift in power towards us.”** COMMUNITY LEADER

### **We also found good evidence that Connecting for Good has positive impacts on an additional three key outcomes:**

#### IV) Greater sense of belonging

- 88% of CfG members said they felt like they belonged to their local community - significantly higher than the national average (65%).
- Sense of belonging is also higher than the national average for groups more likely to experience isolation or marginalisation, such as people with a disability (71% vs 62%) and people from ethnically minoritised communities (88% v 60%).
- An increased sense of belonging was mentioned during each evaluation session, with 7 out of 22 participants mentioning it as an important impact.
- Key factors that led to an increased sense of belonging include the feeling of being part of a wider community or something bigger than themselves, and having a sense of shared purpose or endeavour.

## V) New community-led initiatives are tackling isolation and marginalisation

- Connecting for Good has supported 18 community-led initiatives, which are working towards tackling isolation and marginalisation and include and are being led by people with lived experience.
- 95% of CfG members said that their initiatives tackled the root causes of isolation and marginalisation.
- Tackling isolation in particular came up during the qualitative evaluation session as an important impact 6 out of the 22 participants.
- The CfG community is highly inclusive of isolation and marginalised groups:
  - *49.2% have a disability, compared to 24% nationally.*
  - *55.4% are living in poverty, compared to 17% nationally*
  - *25.4% are from Black, Asian or minority ethnic communities, compared to 18% nationally*
  - *35.5% are unemployed, compared to 4.4% nationally*

**“The people power is out there. The tools are there to organise and unite.”** CORE GROUP MEMBER

## VI) Greater collaboration across the system

- We heard many tangible examples of greater collaboration across Coventry, whether that’s with the council, community organisations or local businesses.
- Collaborating with people in positions of power was the third most common way that CfG initiatives tried to make change, with 34% of survey respondents ranking this in their top three.
- Many community-led initiatives, particularly those who are aiming to shift power, have demonstrated a good understanding of power and how to influence the system.
- However, engagement from the system towards CfG initiatives was patchy and tended to be reliant on individual relationships, making them vulnerable to turnover.





Being self  
conscious  
about your  
appearance,  
not looking  
like what is  
perceived as  
"normal"  
creates low self  
confidence and  
makes it HARD  
to meet new  
people. You  
feel JUDGED

Emma



“Our community organising is giving voice to an unheard and diverse range of people here in Coventry.” CORE GROUP MEMBER

**We also observed evidence to suggest impact on three secondary outcomes has been made:**

- People have a greater sense of belonging.
- Community-led organisations are tackling isolation and marginalisation.
- There is greater collaboration across the system, with initiatives engaging people with positional power.

There was strong evidence of impact for these outcomes as well but not to the same extent - with some observed impacts either not as widespread across the CfG community or not seen as important as other outcomes by CfG members.

We conclude that Connecting for Good has made significant progress towards its ultimate goals. Connecting for Good has grown an inclusive community of leaders and an ecosystem of community-led initiatives that have, in their small steps, shifted power and made Coventry a more inclusive place. Connecting for Good has a strong foundation with which to further deepen its leadership capacity, bring leaders together to mobilise the collective power of the ecosystem, and push for more systemic change.



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