

A Big Local Basic Income

Proposal for a locally led basic income pilot

The Project	2
Why a basic income pilot?	2
The Proposal	3
The Team	3
Values and Principles	4
Project summary	5
The Locations	7
The Response	10
The Recipients	14
The Money	16
The Duration	19
The Interactions	20
The Evaluation	21
The Research Partner	24
The Story	27
Next Steps	28
Appendix: Study materials and findings	29

The Project

Why a basic income pilot?

A basic income would guarantee financial security for all.¹ It has five core characteristics:

- **Cash:** it's money you can spend on whatever you want.
- **Regular:** so you know the next payment is coming.
- **Individual:** Each person gets their own basic income, paid to the **individual** not the household.
- **Unconditional:** You don't have to work or make any promises to get your basic income, there are no strings attached
- **Universal:** everyone gets it.

Everything else remains to be decided. Including how much people receive and how it's paid for. Many affordable basic income programmes have been proposed and the impacts are generally positive.

But before we design a specific basic income, we need to decide what we want it to do. Should it be enough to live on or just a top up? Do we want it to redistribute wealth and address inequality? How do we know what people and communities would do differently with a basic income?

There are big questions about this big idea. To find answers we need a national Basic Income Conversation.

Following an event hosted by Basic Income Conversation with a large number of Big Local community groups, seven Big Locals decided to investigate the possibility of establishing basic income pilots. Basic Income Conversation therefore supported the creation of a National Steering Group to develop the project. Following initial discussion with local people and colleagues, five decided not to proceed. It is important to note that these discussions took place near the end of the 10-year funded period from the Local Trust so required a commitment to working without the guarantee of project funding going forward.

¹ All recipients within a micropilot or all official residents within a national scheme

Two Big Locals – Grange Big Local (GBL), in East Finchley, London, and Big Local Central Jarrow, South Tyneside – identified substantial local support through initial engagement and decided to move forward with the National Steering Group and the project. They decided to undertake a number of more formal engagement activities with their local communities to obtain feedback on the key components necessary for basic income pilots in their areas.

The Proposal

This proposal is intended to translate the conversations that have been had with local people into a practical, actionable plan for a basic income pilot. It outlines a broad option for a pilot and its evaluation with suggestions of how it could be altered to suit requirements. It will be revised based on feedback from the Big Locals involved and local people. The report will be used to facilitate discussions with funders and policymakers, and to demonstrate that a pilot is feasible.

The Team

Elliott Johnson, Senior Research Fellow in International Relations and Politics at Northumbria University, lead authored this proposal.

Prof Matthew Johnson, Professor of Politics at Northumbria University, provided oversight and valuable input into the design of this proposal.

Cleo Goodman, Co-founder at Basic Income Conversation, first approached the Big Locals about the idea of basic income and has managed the pilot project.

Lena Swedlow, Campaigns and Projects Officer at Basic Income Conversation, has organised a range of activities in relation to the pilot project.

Julia Hines, Grange Big Local, has undertaken a range of consultation activities and produced the data underpinning the GBL sections of the report.

Anne Corrigan, Coordinator at Big Local Central Jarrow, has had oversight of the project in the area.

Rosalind Taylor, Community Development Worker at Big Local Central Jarrow, has undertaken a number of consultation activities in the area.

We would also like to thank all members of Grange Big Local and Big Local Central Jarrow as well as the many local stakeholders and people who took part in the consultation activities.

Values and Principles

This project will involve residents of Big Local areas, project coordinators, representatives from Big Locals, Local Trust and Basic Income Conversation, researchers, partner organisations and funders.

The principles that underpin the way we work together are:

1. **COMMUNITY DRIVEN** - The community will lead the decision making at every stage of this project.
2. **RESPECT** - We will respect each other's roles and perspectives.
3. **SUPPORT** - We will support people throughout the project and after it ends.
4. **FAIRNESS** - Participation is open to all residents, without discrimination or judgement.
5. **TRANSPARENCY** - We will be clear on the aims, processes and obligations involved in the project.
6. **CONFIDENTIALITY** - We will keep information confidential unless agreed otherwise. All data will be securely stored.
7. **RISK OF HARM** - Involvement in the pilot will not bring harm to participants or the community.
8. **LEARNING** - We will prioritise learning by collecting useful data.
9. **TRUST** - We will work to build trust in the project by being trustworthy ourselves. We will trust the community throughout.
10. **ACCESSIBLE** - We will involve as many people as possible in the project. We will explain all relevant information in accessible language.
11. **INFORMED CONSENT** - The community will have access to the information they need to make informed decisions about the project.
12. **UNIVERSAL** - People will be able to take part in the project regardless of their income or situation.

Project summary

This report suggests that there is substantial support for basic income pilots in Central Jarrow and Grange. Supported by Basic Income Conversation, consultation by Big Local Central Jarrow and Grange Big Local showed that despite initial lower levels of awareness of basic income, the majority of respondents felt both that it was a good idea in principle and that it would be good to run pilots in their local areas.

They also indicated concerns about the practicalities of running pilots, including in terms of community cohesion (especially for those who do not take part), how payments would interact with taxes and existing benefits, and how participants could transition into and out of the trial. There was also a belief that local economic benefit was important and there remained reservations about how money could be best used, including whether targeting specific groups was needed.

Based on this consultation and previous work on the design and evaluation of basic income trials, this report suggests two options for the pilots, both of which would require £840k to cover the basic income payments alone:

1. 100 participants (50 in each area) receiving around £700 per month each over a period of **one year**. This option provides a larger sample size which may increase the chance of producing statistically significant findings from smaller effects in individuals.
2. 50 participants (25 in each area) receiving around £700 per month each over a period of **two years**. This option provides a smaller sample size but over a longer period which may produce larger effects in individuals.

The design of the trial depends heavily on available funding, but this would provide a meaningful trial reflective of basic income policies that have been proposed by others with payment of a size similar to the UK's full new State Pension.

An additional challenge relates to the interaction with taxes and existing benefits. It is essential that participants receive a substantial benefit from participating. It is possible that one such benefit is not necessarily an increase in income, but the knowledge that the payment is unconditional for a two-year period. However, this must be counterbalanced by concerns in transitioning back onto conditional benefits at the end of the trial. Given these considerations, it may be necessary to reduce or increase the payment. A reduction in numbers of participants is likely to be preferable to reducing the duration of the trial or the size of payment should a lower budget be necessary.

Validated, or at least well-evidenced, evaluation measures would be drawn from the Northumbria University team's existing protocol resource.² This process would involve co-production with communities. We therefore do not propose a specific research protocol for evaluation of impacts of the basic income pilots at this stage, but the existing protocol resource provides clear indications of robust methods. A mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods that have been validated and received ethical approval at universities is recommended. Paper questionnaires may be preferable (with accessible alternatives) to address issues relating to internet access. Rolling Citizen Engagement groups, combined with individual interviews are also recommended. Where possible, it is recommended that community researchers undertake the face-to-face research activities following suitable training and academic support.

All outputs should be produced in consultation with community members, with lay reports designed to be as accessible as possible. It may be advisable to include design costs for easy read versions of reports. Co-authorship should be offered to community members providing substantive input. All formal community involvement should be remunerated at Northumbria University research assistance rates (currently £17.19 per hour though in equivalent vouchers where appropriate for Department of Work and Pensions purposes) or on the basis of in-kind support.

Finally, communication of findings must be agreed with the communities in order to ensure that perspectives are not misreported or misinterpreted and that communities are able to 'tell their own story'.

² Johnson, E.A., Johnson, M.T. & Pickett, K.E. (2022) Generic, adaptive protocol resource for cash transfer trials, v02.02 (online), Newcastle: Northumbria University. DOI [10.17605/OSF.IO/FJH2P](https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/FJH2P).

The Locations

Big Local Central Jarrow

Jarrow is a town in the north-east of England, located on the south bank of the River Tyne. It has a rich cultural and industrial heritage. From the middle of the 19th century until 1935, Jarrow was a centre for shipbuilding, and was the starting point of the Jarrow March against unemployment in 1936. The people of Jarrow are proud of its cultural and industrial heritage and there is a strong sense of community throughout all the areas of Jarrow.

Today, Jarrow is an area of deprivation with its industries closed and the majority of homes being social housing. Indeed, 85.3% of people live in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation.³ The remainder live in an area that is in the most deprived 30%. The Upper Tier Local Authority in which Jarrow is located, South Tyneside, was the 22nd most deprived in England in 2019 and is representative of the sort of community targeted by government for Levelling Up. The health of the population in the area is also poor, with life expectancy of residents being 10 years less than a person living in a neighbouring ward of Cleadon. Men have a life expectancy of just 70, compared with a regional average of 78 and national average of 80. Indeed, 98.3% of people live in a health deprivation 'hotspot'.

There are 4,273 people living in Central Jarrow. 41% of children aged 0-19 are in relative low-income families in Central Jarrow compared with 29% across the North East. 26% of people have a limiting long-term illness in Central Jarrow compared with 22% regionally. 33% of people have no qualifications in Central Jarrow compared with 26% in the North East. 16.4% of working-age people claim workless benefits compared with the regional average of 10.5%. Finally, 17.2% claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) compared with 10.9% across the North East.

In 2012 The Centre of Jarrow was designated as a "Big Local Area". Local residents and partner agencies are using the funding from the Big Lottery Fund to make a massive and lasting difference to their community. It's about bringing together all the local talent, ambitions, skills and energy from individuals, groups and organisations who want to make their area an even better place to live. As such, it provides an appropriate base to undertake research with under-represented groups of people who are likely to be disproportionately affected by the welfare

³ Data in this section is sourced from Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion's (OCSI) Local Insight Profiles (latest report 8 November 2022): <https://local.communityinsight.org/>. This collates data from official sources at local area level.

system and changes to it. This ensures integration of multiple knowledge and skill sets derived from lived experience of vulnerability to welfare reform, regional inequality and inequalities in health.

The following quotes from residents of Jarrow indicate why Big Local Central Jarrow are involved with the project:

“There are people who can’t see beyond a week or month. Holidays, culture and activities are blocked off to them”.

“In areas of the North-East, we suffered through industrial changes in the 1980s. The inequalities between here and the rest of the country are huge. UBI could improve the health profile of the region”.

Grange Big Local

Grange Big Local (GBL) is in a small pocket of East Finchley, in suburban London. Their vision is to promote a thriving and caring community.

The area contains a number of social housing estates, run by Barnet Homes, Optivo and Home. A proportion of the social housing was sold under right to buy legislation. A recent fire in one of the Barnet Homes blocks revealed that approximately one third of the block were social housing tenants, one third owner occupiers, and one third of the flats were being privately let, often as houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). This means that the home was occupied by three or more people from more than one household. The area also contains some streets of private housing, some owner occupied and some privately rented.

The most striking thing to note, both within the Grange Big Local area, East Finchley, and the London borough of Barnet, is the marked level of inequality. Walk 20 minutes from GBL and you will find yourself on Bishops Avenue, where the average house price is a shade under £7.5 million.

There are 6,542 people living in Grange. While Grange scores comparatively well on a number of measures of deprivation, 55.5% of people are in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods by income compared with a London average of 20.6%. In addition, all residents live within neighbourhoods that are in the top half of areas with barriers to housing and services.

GBL want to explore the difference a basic income could make to the wellbeing of people living in their area – especially: those on low incomes, those in the gig economy on wildly changing incomes; those who are, or want to be, carers; those who want to take risks as entrepreneurs, and those who want to feel safer.

They would like the people in our area to be part of imagining, and testing, a different way of doing things. Being part of the basic income conversation could be part of Grange Big Local's legacy.

The Response

Both Big Local Central Jarrow and Grange Big Local undertook a range of consultation activities, ranging from door-knocking and on-location community consultations in Grange to more formal roundtables and focus groups in Jarrow. Materials, notes and more detailed reports are available at the end of this report.

Awareness of basic income was still relatively low where it was measured in the consultation activities. In Grange Big Local's door-knocking, around one in five (21%) of the 112 respondents were aware of basic income. In the subsequent micro-pilot meeting in Grange, 19 of the 28 attendees had heard of universal basic income (UBI) before door-knocking and leafleting activities. This suggests, perhaps unsurprisingly, that people with prior knowledge were more likely to engage with more detailed activities relating to the concept. This should be noted when interpreting these findings and in relation to potential engagement and take-up in the pilots.

Despite this relatively low prior awareness, responses even at the door-knocking stage were overwhelmingly positive. For example, of 101 respondents, 76 thought that basic income is a good idea and that Grange should run a trial.

Table 1: Grange Big Local door-knocking responses matrix on whether basic income is a good idea and whether Grange should undertake a pilot

	Basic income is a good idea	Basic income is not a good idea
Should be part of a trial	76	3
Should have other priorities than a trial	14	8

In relation to the micro-pilot meeting in Grange, participants highlighted a number of benefits, which reflect the kinds of arguments for basic income that have been seen in previous studies. For example, the (note-form) quotes below demonstrate a belief that basic income would promote autonomy, security and health as well as reducing crime:

UBI would “convert people into self-sufficiency and would save by promoting mental and physical health and therefore would save on services in the future”

“Gives the ability to do something different, for example travel, different jobs, support for artists”

“People have to rely on their children earning in order to make ends meet. It can increase crime, or mean people turn a blind eye to where the money is coming from, because they can’t afford to otherwise”

Other positives were expressed. For example, one resident was keen to start their own business while also caring for young children. She recognised that UBI would not penalise her husband and the family’s resources while setting this up. Others saw the benefit for people receiving individual payments which would enable them to leave abusive domestic situations. The unconditional nature of basic income was also highlighted:

“Helps give people dignity. If disabled [you would] not have to jump through hoops. The dignity aspect is really bad at the moment”

“The unfairness of the present system [is an issue] because it encourages destitution, and then we will help you! This disincentivises savings”

The current system was described as “bureaucratic”, “judgemental” and aggravating literacy problems. People were “too scared to apply for anything in case money is taken away” and were confused by benefits and their different names. Many highlighted the cost-of-living crisis, including rents, and how basic income might influence employers as key in the discussion. Inequality was also often noted.

The positive response to the idea of basic income and a trial was not solely among residents. The Big Local Central Jarrow roundtable included local councillors, Big Local employees and volunteers. It highlighted potential economic benefits, including potentially as part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda. There was a sense that Jarrow, with its history of progressive protest, is a good place to trial it specifically. There was a belief it could test the impact on people’s diet, health, wellbeing, activity, hopes, aspirations, enterprise, reskilling, pride, freedom and community flourishing across all ages.

On the other side, it was felt that it was an opportunity to explore how bad poverty is for individuals, families and wider society. One participant felt people may be more likely to engage in lower paid socially beneficial work like social care. Finally, there was a feeling that it is an opportunity to change attitudes and improve self-worth.

Where concerns and opposition were presented in the activities, they focused on a small number of issues that have been raised in the existing literature. Some respondents felt that efforts would be better directed elsewhere, for example towards particular age groups or people in the greatest financial need. Some also felt that services were a bigger priority. Other concerns, including from those who supported the idea as a whole, tended to focus more on the practical, detailed design of the pilot along with concerns relating to community cohesion and

fairness. For example, the roundtable in Jarrow resulted in some ‘big questions to answer’ before a rollout. These were:

- How will we fund the pilot and its evaluation?
- How will basic income payments interact with tax, benefits and pensions during the pilot?
- What support will pilot participants need during the pilot and after it ends?
- What does a “fair” pilot look like?
 - What level of payment?
 - How many participants?
 - How are participants chosen?
 - How long is the pilot?
 - How is the control group formed?
 - How is the rest of the community invited to contribute?
- How do we make sure the pilot benefits the entire community

In addition to these questions, people at the Grange micro-pilot meeting wanted to know the following:

1. What the impact on inflation would be.
2. Whether there would be a London weighting.
3. What would happen to funding for basic services, like NHS, schools, childcare, with particular concern about intersection with Free School Meals.

Some of these questions were not ones that could be answered through public consultation. For example, where funding might come from and how payments might interact with tax and benefits are questions that can only be answered by policymakers and government. However, the remainder from the Jarrow roundtable fed through to the detailed focus groups.

Identifying the size of payment was one of the most challenging areas in the groups and no final agreement was possible. Suggestions ranged from £700-£1,500 per month depending on the arrangement with benefits. There was some discussion that the payment should be on top of whatever people currently receive (in total income). £1,500 on top of current income received comments of “I would be well off on that amount” and “People might go crazy with this amount of money”, with £700-£1,000 felt to be more reasonable.

With regard to how participants should be chosen, there was a broad range of opinion, with suggestions of using whole areas, targeting specific groups (such as those below the poverty line), covering a cross-section of the population in areas or recruiting on a random basis. There were also discussions about whether it would cover individuals or households. Again, there was little agreement, but with concerns expressed about causing community discord, particular individuals being

safe and able to accept the money and a need for support and a plan for transitioning in and out of the trial.

The issues of community cohesion and making it 'fair' for those who don't take part was also highlighted. There was discussion about ensuring that the plan is communicated as widely as possible, that everyone has the opportunity to take part, that participants are diverse and include people who are most at need and that non-monetary support is very important for the whole community. There was also a broad feeling that it would not be possible to please everyone and that the current system is already a 'lottery'. However, it was felt to be important that disappointment be managed, confidentiality be assured and that there be ways of involving others in the research in another way might if possible.

In addition to those highlighted previously, the Grange micro-pilot meeting identified some further concerns and considerations. This included:

- ensuring that evaluation of the trial is robust and validated
- ensuring that it would be clearly and accessibly explained
- whether participants could be obligated to take part in the research and if there would be disqualifications for those leaving the area or being jailed.
- support for including peer researchers to improve skills and because "people might prefer peer researchers than a man in a suit asking them questions"
- possibly including financial education to widen benefit to the whole community

In addition to the positive perspectives on basic income in the Jarrow roundtable, participants also expressed that changing mindsets about unemployed people and poverty as well as stigma around benefits should be an important feature. There was a specific focus on influencing long-term change and providing additional support and advice. This was in addition to creating local economic benefit including through a more circular economy, more engagement with lower-paid socially beneficial work and care, and increased entrepreneurship, reflecting the remits of participants. There was concern about discouraging low-paid work, but that this may be addressed through improvements in security and conditions.

Importantly, concerns raised throughout the activities were not necessarily incompatible with a belief that a trial could be useful. In the Grange door-knocking, some respondents liked the concept of basic income and a trial but did not feel that they personally should take part. This reflects existing focus on conditionality in welfare policy and there may be room for further discussions about how tax changes would likely balance out the income for wealthier people. Indeed, some participants in the micro-pilot meeting highlighted that "It would give more of a community feel if everyone had it [a basic income]", and that "People would contribute more, be more generous".

The Recipients

We propose two options for the number of participants, but with the same level of payment in each. Both options would require a budget of £840k for the payments alone:

1. 100 participants (50 in each area) receiving around £700 per month each over a period of **one year**. This option provides a larger sample size which may increase the chance of producing statistically significant quantitative findings from smaller effects in individuals.
2. 50 participants (25 in each area) receiving around £700 per month each over a period of **two years**. This option provides a smaller sample size but over a longer period which may produce larger effects in individuals.

We also propose that 20% of places are reserved for disabled people (as defined by the social model) to match the national population and as they are disproportionately likely to be affected by changes in welfare policy. A sample that reflects ethnic diversity based on local demographics, a range of economic backgrounds and an even split in terms of gender is also important. A range of ages should also be included, but it is unlikely that quantitative findings within specific groups will be statistically significant.

We do not believe that it is feasible to include a control group for two reasons:

1. It is ethically challenging given that the control group would likely need to be within the same local areas causing potential risk of community cohesion problems or feelings of inequality.
2. Given challenging economic circumstances, it is unlikely that a control group could reasonably reflect an objective counterfactual due to experimental conditions.

We propose that individuals nominate themselves following advertising of the project in the two local areas. Should there be an oversubscription, demographic guidelines (above) should be used to assign places randomly before following a check that payments are not going to the same household. Efforts should be made to advertise to specific groups if the initial self-nomination does not recruit enough potential participants in each. We do not believe that it is likely that streets or small areas will wish to participate as a whole and there are ethical issues relating to community cohesion should all but one or two households choose to take part. A randomised approach across the Big Local areas is therefore preferable in this regard too.

A dedicated contact number and email address should be provided to participants to obtain support should there be any issues during the project. This should be in addition to a full information sheet that will include local support organisations as well as an FAQ to cover more common issues.

The project would be subject to a full ethics submission and would be revised according to requirements provided.

A full 'universal' basic income cannot be simulated in such a pilot. That would require everyone in an area to receive a payment, including all adults within a household. In addition, there is likely to be a degree of self-selection bias. This could include people in higher paid work feeling that participation is not worth their time or, on the contrary, people in receipt of benefits not feeling it is worth the risk to their existing income. Negotiation with the DWP must be undertaken to reduce the risk that people in receipt of existing benefits lose out through participation. Recruitment materials and a strategy that encourages people in work to take part is also crucial to obtaining a sample that reflects likely national policies. The effects on all socioeconomic groups are important to understand.

As mentioned above, there are potential risks to manage. These include those relating to community cohesion, 'hedonistic' spending of additional income on things like alcohol or cigarettes, and transitions to and from the payments. In terms of community cohesion, it is essential that positive communication campaigns are undertaken to highlight the benefits on the whole community. In relation to hedonistic spending, there is evidence that having a predictable, secure income actually promotes long-term thinking and reduces hedonism.⁴ Finally, transitions to and from the intervention requires support from project organisers and discussions with HMRC and the DWP to ensure a smooth process.

⁴ Johnson, M. T., Johnson, E. A., Pickett, K. and Nettle, D. (2020) 'Designing trials of Universal Basic Income for health impact: identifying interdisciplinary questions to address', *Journal of Public Health*, DOI: 10.1093/pubmed/fdaa255.

The Money

Funding

Initial funding was provided by the Local Trust in order to support the production of this report.

Funding for the micro-pilot has not yet been secured. This pilot proposal report is intended to be used to secure the funds required to run the micro-pilot and its evaluation.

Grange Big Local, Big Local Central Jarrow, the Local Trust, Basic Income Conversation and the Research Partner all have existing relationships with potential funders, and it may require approaches and applications to a number of bodies to secure the required funding.

The three main categories of funders are:

- Government-funded research councils (ESRC, NIHR etc.)
- third-sector research funders (Wellcome Trust, Nuffield Foundation) and other charities which sometimes provide funding (Joseph Rowntree Foundation etc.).
- private philanthropists and philanthropic organisations.
- Local or Combined Authorities

In general, the first two categories are more likely to fund the evaluation of such projects than the intervention itself. This means that the support of private philanthropic sources, or local or combined authorities, is required at an early stage.

Payment size

We have based our proposed payment size on three considerations:

- Consultation with participants in Grange and Central Jarrow
- An understanding of the scale required to have a meaningful effect based on our model of impact (Figure 1, below)
- The practicalities of sourcing funding

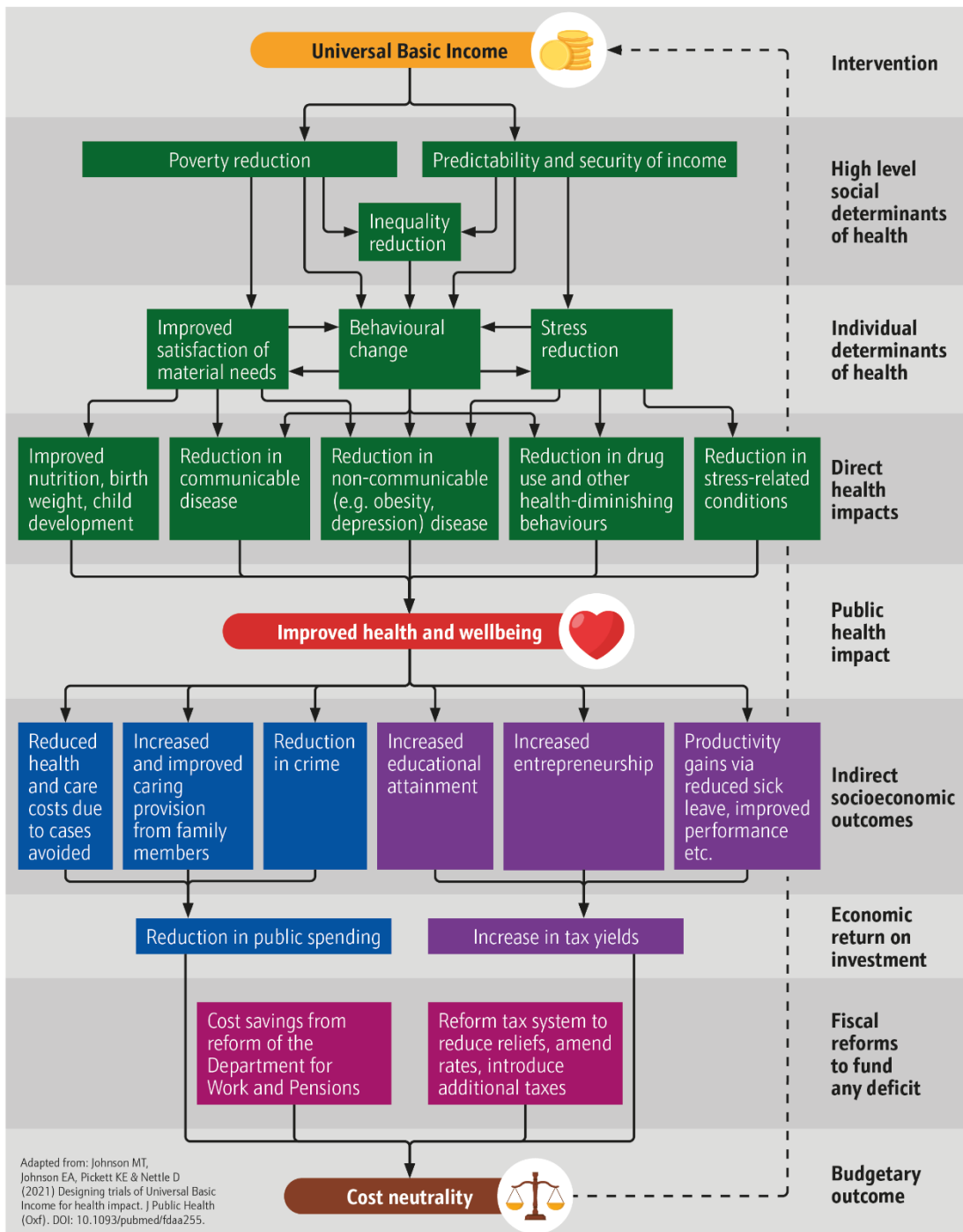


Figure 1: UBI model of impact

We propose that individuals receive £700 each per month. This is similar to the UK’s full new State Pension and to an intermediate scheme proposed as part of recent economic modelling by the Northumbria University team.⁵ There is,

⁵ Reed, H., Lansley, S., Johnson, E. & Johnson, M. (2022) Universal Basic Income is affordable and feasible: evidence from UK economic microsimulation modelling. Journal of Poverty and Social Justice. Preprint: <https://osf.io/b65ur>.

however, a challenge based on compatibility with the existing means-tested system of benefits. Discussions with the DWP have not led to a waiver for schemes in Wales and Scotland.

One of the project principles is that no-one should be worse off as a result of participating and measures of the effect on people's real incomes should be included to ensure that findings are suitably contextualised. Engagement should be sought with the DWP in an attempt to seek a waiver so that participants' means-tested benefits are not affected, but the success of this cannot be guaranteed. It would not be sensible to proceed with the project should individuals not receive a financial benefit by taking part. Under a full UBI policy, there will be a large number of people who do not receive a substantial increase in income from the payment but who instead benefit from no longer being at risk of losing a means-tested alternative. However, in pilot conditions, such individuals would be required to reapply for benefits at the end of the intervention period which could add to stress and mitigate any wellbeing benefits seen during the intervention. It may be that in the event that a full waiver isn't granted, DWP negotiations could be best used to ensure a rapid, streamlined transition back to means-tested benefits for applicable participants.

Both suggested designs with £700 per month payments would require £840k for the payments alone. While we believe that the number of participants and the intervention period have some flexibility, community members and previous research suggest that the size of the payment is important in order to make a real impact. However, this may require some changes based on discussions with HMRC and the DWP.

Administration

If feasible, it is recommended that local trusted organisations hold and administer the payments. Ensuring that the funding is held in a separate, secure account that cannot be accessed for any other purposes or subject to insolvency proceedings is essential. It may be that existing Big Local procedures could be used.

The main consideration must be that participants are guaranteed the payments for the duration of the intervention to mitigate risks relating to increased spending in anticipation of increased income etc.

The Duration

Reflecting the model of impact in Figure 1 (above), it is essential to ensure that participants have a feeling of security of income over an extended period. However, this needs to be counterbalanced by the budget required for payments that are impactful.

We suggest that one or two years provides a good starting point for further discussion. It is possible to obtain a further round of evaluation once the basic income payments have ended to examine longer-term impact, perhaps at a six-month or one-year point. However, it is important to note that participants will have returned to conditional forms of support so there may not be a longer-term impact in advance of a full national rollout.

A trial that is limited in length is unable to simulate the full effect of a basic income. However, one or two years would provide a degree of certainty that a shorter trial cannot. If a longer trial is preferred, it is recommended that this be decided at the outset. Providing additional funding towards the end of a project when participants already expect it to end will not provide a sense of security but rather replicate the volatility in the current system. Equally, it is unlikely that introducing further participants later on in the project will provide the clarity in evaluation that is needed.

The Interactions

There is now precedent for trials of basic income in the UK. The trial in Wales for care leavers, involved extended negotiation with HMRC and the DWP in order to attempt to gain exemptions for participants so that they would not lose out financially. Unfortunately, an exemption was not granted and it was announced that the payments would interact with benefits as it would be counted as income.⁶ In order to address this, the Welsh Government chose to provide payments, after tax, of £1,280 per month (£1,600 gross),⁷ significantly above other basic income schemes that have been proposed and well in excess of the 2022/23 National Minimum Wage for 18- to 20-year-olds (£6.83 per hour⁸) on a full-time basis.

On the one hand, a pilot that is not granted an exemption may simulate a basic income scenario in which the existing conditional system and the current tax regime remain unchanged. On the other hand, payments are not permanent and there is a risk of complications when participants who currently receive benefits transition to and from the basic income pilot. While this is unlikely, these issues must be discussed fully both with participants and with HMRC and the DWP ahead of the start of a project.

In terms of remuneration for taking part in the evaluation, the NIHR indicates that high street or gift vouchers may or may not be treated as earnings by HMRC and the DWP.⁹ It is therefore important to clear this before beginning the project.

⁶ <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-basic-income-pilot-care-leavers-wales>

⁷ <https://www.gov.wales/basic-income-pilot-care-leavers>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

⁹ <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/payment-guidance-for-researchers-and-professionals/27392>

The Evaluation

Evaluation principles

Based on the consultation so far and our previous work on the evaluation of basic income, we believe the evaluation should be undertaken with the following principles:

1. Co-produced: community involvement is essential to ensuring that the evaluation looks at the right areas and is trusted by participants.
2. Comprehensive: measurement should capture wellbeing in its broadest form.
3. Validated: where possible, measures that have been validated in previous studies should be used.
4. Accessible: methods and measures should be described in ways that can be understood by participants and the local community. Where more complex methods are used, work should be undertaken to ensure they are communicated as clearly as possible.
5. Affordable: costs should be kept as low as possible to provide the information required.

The hypothesis and specific areas for investigation

At this point, a broad hypothesis is proposed that participants receiving basic income will experience improved health and wellbeing (including social and economic benefits).

The following are proposed as important areas of investigation:

1. Subjective financial strain (how well people are managing financially)
2. Objective income
3. Economic activity and aspirations
4. Mental health and wellbeing
5. Physical or overall health
6. Subjective stress (how stressed they feel)
7. Engagement with unpaid work like caring for relatives
8. Control over people's own lives
9. Community trust

We would design the final evaluation materials in consultation with local people. This means that final measures cannot be provided here but would be primarily drawn from the Northumbria team's existing protocol resource,¹⁰ as these measures have been validated, used in large studies and/or designed on the basis of existing evidence. Many of the measures have been used in studies with vulnerable communities via ActEarly and Born in Bradford. The Northumbria Team has also employed the measures in developing an evaluation process for the Welsh trial of basic income for care leavers, which has supported identification a range of ways in which experience of impact on financial security and behavioural change can better be captured.

Other evaluation design considerations

Due to issues with internet access, it is suggested that quantitative evaluation (questionnaires) should take place using paper forms (with accessible alternatives). Qualitative evaluation could take the form of monthly focus groups with rolling individual interviews.

It is not proposed that a control group be used for two reasons:

1. It is ethically challenging given that the control group would likely need to be within the same local areas causing potential risk of community cohesion problems or feelings of inequality.
2. Given challenging economic circumstances, it is unlikely that a control group could reasonably reflect an objective counterfactual due to experimental conditions.

This evaluation would add to existing evidence to build the case for much larger trials. The qualitative component will be crucial given the importance of storytelling fed back by both project members and local people. Ethics should be prioritised, and it must remain optional for people to participate in the evaluation.

Evaluation costing

Study details must be finalised before a detailed costing can be provided.

We do not believe that directing participants to an online survey would be feasible given concerns about a lack of internet access. There are, therefore, two options for questionnaire responses. The first is to provide paper questionnaires which would then require input into the online survey system (likely Qualtrics). Were this

¹⁰ Johnson, E.A., Johnson, M.T. & Pickett, K.E. (2022) Generic, adaptive protocol resource for cash transfer trials, v02.02 (online), Newcastle: Northumbria University. DOI [10.17605/OSF.IO/FJH2P](https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/FJH2P).

to be adopted, input would be costed at Northumbria University Research Assistance rates (currently £17.19 per hour) and may be supplied to community researchers to avoid transmission of paper research materials. Alternatively, community researchers could complete online surveys in the presence of respondents or over the phone via smartphone, tablet or computer. This avoids both paper records and data input costs but would require more time dedicated to interviews which would also require compensation.

While the Research Partner is likely to be able to provide some in-kind support in the form of research workload allocation, this will require further investigation based on the final study design and the availability of the proposed team (see 'Research Partner' section, below).

The Research Partner

As part of the project, the groups involved appointed Matthew Johnson and Elliott Johnson of Northumbria University as the project research partner. The partner is responsible for producing the initial design of the experimental and evaluation processes for the micro-pilot to be included in this pilot proposal report.

The research partner has the following commitments:

- Develop a proposal for the experimental design of the micro-pilot
- Develop a proposal for the evaluation process for the micro-pilot
- Provide a costing for the delivery of the micro-pilot and evaluation
- Work with the National Steering Group, Local Task Forces and Basic Income Conversation to present the local communities with the design and evaluation proposals, then to incorporate feedback from the community where necessary
- Engage academics and experts that could play a role in delivering the research components of the micro-pilot, securing their commitment in principle to the project to ensure the proposal is as compelling as possible to potential funders
- Produce a written summary of the experimental design and evaluation processes for the proposal report
- Uphold a genuine commitment to co-production and accessibility throughout, including a willingness to adapt approaches.

The research partner was identified by virtue of their ability to:

1. Demonstrate significant expertise in the development of qualitative evaluation methods for interventions comparable to basic income
2. Demonstrate expertise in the development of quantitative evaluation methods for interventions comparable to basic income
3. Demonstrate expertise in the design of intervention assessments, including safeguarding participants and sampling and control group methodologies
4. Have experience of co-production and working with communities to ensure they have ownership of research involving their local area
5. Understand the principles of this project, the Big Local programme and the Local Trust's values, ethos and approach to creating resident-led change
6. Experience of seeking funding for similar projects was also desired.

The research partner was chosen on the basis of:

- An up-to-date CV
- A short proposal (no more than five pages) outlining:

- The skills and experience you can bring
- Recent examples of relevant experience in design, evaluation and co-production
- How you meet the requirements set out above
- The approach you would take to carry out the work, including managing the challenges of operating without funding in the first stage of the project
- Optionally, a short video summarising the proposal you have submitted

A panel of residents, project partners and individuals with relevant technical academic experience reviewed the proposals. Following a meeting via Zoom with the Northumbria University Team and the project National Steering Group, it was decided that the proposal was successful and an agreement to appoint the research partner was made.

The partners worked with the National Steering Group to develop this proposal based on the research activity of the Big Locals in their respective areas.

Proposed pilot evaluation team

The team has been developed over a period of four years and includes people from a broad range of disciplines. The team includes experts on basic income in general, pilots in particular, and social, economic and health outcomes of relevance to evaluation of this pilot. The following key contributors agreed to be involved in developing and eventually evaluating the pilot. They provided their contribution free of charge but may require costing for time during any funded study.

[Matthew Johnson](#), Professor of Politics, Northumbria University

[Elliott Johnson](#), Senior Research Fellow in International Relations and Politics, Northumbria University

[Jonathan Coates](#), General Practitioner, St Anthony's Health Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, and NIHR In-Practice Fellow, [Durham University](#)

[Neil Howard](#), Lecturer in Development, University of Bath

[Daniel Nettle](#), Professor of Behavioural Science, Newcastle University

[Kate E. Pickett](#), Professor of Epidemiology, University of York
Citizen Engagement Group (Big Local Central Jarrow)

In addition, a multidisciplinary International Advisory Group from the existing members of Prof Johnson's broader team will be formed. This would meet quarterly, providing guidance on strategy and evaluating progress. Individual members of the committee would be contacted individually to provide guidance on issues of direct relevance to their expertise. The Citizen Engagement Group will be invited to each of the meetings to ensure community engagement with

strategic development of the project and would be remunerated at research assistance rates (currently £17.19 per hour) for attendance.

The Story

It was clear from engagement with project members that it is essential to tell the story of the project throughout development and in engagement with stakeholders.

The reasons for storytelling's importance relate back to the project principles. However, it is also important for the following:

- To show the real impacts financial insecurity has on people and to make it clear that something needs to change, both within communities and to policymakers
- To communicate the data collected during the pilot and examine basic income as a route to providing this financial security
- To make sure people involved are listened to on subjects that have a real bearing on their lives

Next Steps

This proposal has been developed based on findings from the consultation activities undertaken by Big Local Central Jarrow and Grange Big Local and the Northumbria team's previous work. Initially, the Northumbria team will work directly with the National Steering Group, Local Task Forces and Basic Income Conversation to present the proposal and obtain feedback from the local communities. The team has a commitment that this should be meaningful co-production, with feedback used to refine and even replace areas of the proposal that do not align with community priorities or experience.

The final report is intended to be used as an outline to secure further buy-in from local and national stakeholders as well as in efforts to secure funding for the micro-pilots. Further, it will serve as a template for other areas that might wish to undertake their own micro-pilot. It may even be possible to include those areas in this specific project.

The report must not be an end in itself but rather a means of securing both trials of basic income and a more secure future for all communities.

Appendix: Study materials and findings

Big Local Central Jarrow

Roundtable

Findings

Basic Income Conversation / Big Local Central Jarrow Micro Pilot Project

Minutes of the Roundtable event on May 10th 4pm - Big Local Base, Jarrow Focus

Attendees

Local councillors, Big Local employees and volunteers

Park it!

This station was to capture the important questions that we need to think about but weren't focusing on during the roundtable session. This means we can come back to them and stopped us from dwelling on them during the roundtable.

- Where will funding come from?
- How will payments interact with pensions?
- How do we work alongside people's attitudes towards everyone getting the payments?
- Societal change?
- Tax deductions and administration?
- Impact when pilot ends?
- Impact on low income jobs?

What should we keep in mind during the community consultation?

This station was to capture what we should keep in mind to make sure the community consultation is respectful and effective.

- Unemployed/inactive - change mindset
- Data protection (GDPR)
- Equality
- Stigma

- Low income working people - invisible
- Culture/diversity
- Opportunity to influence change
- Branding e.g. hardship funding
- Support and signposting alongside pilot
- Impartial advice and guidance
- Support to set up own business/social enterprise
- Industrial industries/perks around having incentives
- Pitch - this is an opportunity (remove negative wording)
- School/college engagement
- Lesley Carlisle - living better lives strategy - carried out a community consultation
- Payment to take part in consultation is an acknowledgement of how valuable time is - build into funding bid
- Talking about how everyone benefits
- Circular economy
- How to manage communications and message in public domain i.e. how to protect participants
- Literacy - pitch at age 10
- Describe in a simple way but gets people excited without raising expectations.
- Get everyone in the community to understand the benefit to the community.
- People need to understand it will only be a small number.
- Test should be universal not just a targeted demographic.
- Ensuring all community take part in consultation to make it open and honest.

Tops, pants and socks

At this station we wanted to capture the good, the bad, the neutral and the unknown. These were people's initial responses to the idea of a local micro-pilot in Jarrow.

Tops - Positive thoughts and questions about a basic income micro-pilot

- Good idea – How will it work? Could this be part of Levelling Up that the Government talks about?
- An opportunity to see what a difference it can make to peoples sense of ? and wellbeing.
- There were many marches in the 30's- but people remembered Jarrow. This is the place to prove this.
- This is about communities flourishing and with a cross section of households will make the case for UBI! All ages and all stages.

- Opportunities for hope- ability to use the money to be active, hopes and aspirations.
- Cultural diversity. Data confidentiality. Social enterprise ? family. Looking at root cause.
- Healthy choices, improving diet health and wellbeing.
- Opportunity to reskill explore career options for those whose careers stalled due to Covid (preventing them from falling into jobs that are available rather than careers they have chosen)
- Freedom, pride to explore aspirations.
- Opportunity to explore how bad poverty is for individuals, families and wider society.
- I suspect with additional money people may be more not less likely to engage in lower paid work e.g. social care.
- Health and wellbeing improvement.
- Good opportunity to help people struggling.
- Opportunity to change and challenge attitudes
- Improves self-worth.

Pants - Negative opinions or potential issues with a basic income micro-pilot

- Potential risk of choosing and selecting people to be in the pilot and how other community members respond.
- How diverse a group of people in the pilot which may impact on learning to inform policy.
- Housing benefit? Universal credit? HMRC? How to get them involved. Social care financial assessment if eligible for charging.
- Lots of ifs Buts and maybe?
- JCP/DWP must buy into the project.
- Stigma from those that have opinions regarding giving “handouts”
- Political buy in (Government).
- Financial management help.
- How will it be paid for?
- Could raise negative thinking so need to think how to counteract this.
- Don't want to discourage people away from essential lower paid sector such as care work (need to look at we balance with recruitment in this sector/work make these careers more secure and have more progress).
- Do high earners receive Basic Income?
- Public Attitudes to social support and support for low income, low skill individuals/families.

Socks - Other thoughts and questions

- How many households would be involved?

- The South Tyneside Pound- How do we keep the economic benefit in the community? (Morrison's vouchers etc wouldn't be as effective as vouchers for local independent shops for example)
- Difficult concept to sell.
- Difficult to roll out across a wider population.
- Safety net for those who see it as a wind fall.
- Socks continued
- People may not be financially responsible
- Need to consider outcomes and what you want to achieve/show for pilot to roll out.
- How to evidence the long term positive impact of basic income

Big Questions to explore further

There are lots of questions that we didn't get a chance to answer during the roundtable. During the community consultation we will work with the community to settle on answers to these questions for the pilot proposal report. We will run focus groups in the autumn to discuss these questions with residents.

- How will we fund the pilot and its evaluation?
- How will basic income payments interact with tax, benefits and pensions during the pilot?
- What support will pilot participants need during the pilot and after it ends?
- What does a "fair" pilot look like?
 - What level of payment?
 - How many participants?
 - How are participants chosen?
 - How long is the pilot?
 - How is the control group formed?
 - How is the rest of the community invited to contribute?
- How do we make sure the pilot benefits the entire community

Focus groups

Format

1 Welcome to the session - 15 mins

Obj: Give attendees clear idea of why they're there and who is in the room

- Welcome! Thank you for your time
- Here to get your input in a project we have been working on
 - Introduce you to an idea called basic income
 - The idea that everyone should get a regular income, regardless of what else is going on in their life to make sure no one slips into poverty

- We're going to tell you a bit about this project
 - We're asking people in Jarrow if they want to try a basic income with a few people here to see what happens
- We're going to ask you a few questions about whether you think we should try it and if so, how you think we should do that
- Introductions:
 - Let's start off by saying a bit about ourselves and why you came to this session

2 Introduction to basic income - 20 mins

Obj: Make sure people understand what basic income is and feel forming opinions on it during this session

- Cleo to do introduction to basic income
- Q&A/discussion

3 A pilot for Jarrow? - 10 mins

Obj: Make sure people understand what this project is and why we, particularly Big Local Central Jarrow, are working on it

- What we're talking about here is a basic income micro-pilot for Jarrow
- This is a small scale test of basic income that would:
 - Help us learn more about what happens when people get a basic income
 - Influence people, politicians and policymakers in the UK to make sure they learn from the good things that happen during the pilot - e.g. if we show a basic income is really good for people, we tell them a basic income should be given to everyone
 - Tell Jarrow's story
- We're going to go into lots of details in the rest of our conversations today but very simply a micro-pilot would involve:
 - A small group of people in Jarrow - a hundred or a couple hundred maximum
 - Getting a regular payment of the same amount
 - Them telling us what difference this makes to them
- Explanation of why Big Local Central Jarrow are doing this project
- Will explain what we're going to do for the rest of the session and then invite Qs

4 Reaching agreement - 10 mins

Obj: Explain how we are going to go about the group discussions and invite any final Qs

- For the rest of the session we're going to work in small groups

- We're going to discuss a series of questions
- For each question we want your small group to give us an answer that you can all agree with, unless there are some really big disagreements
 - We only want one answer from the whole group that takes into account all the things that are really important to you
- So to get there:
 - Start by making sure you feel clear on the question and the form the answer should take
 - Discuss the question in a broad way, consider both
 - Ideas for how to answer the question
 - Key concerns and strong opinions
 - Agree on an answer
 - Discuss details that would make the answer even stronger
 - Test for agreement
- Agreement:
 - Agree - Completely happy with the answer
 - Agree with reservations - Willing to agree but have some things you are concerned about that you would like to be worked through
- Disagree:
 - Stand aside - Won't help to implement the proposal but don't want to block the rest of the group from going ahead with it
 - Block - Completely disagree with the answer and want to block it from being considered
 - If you want to block a proposal you have to propose an alternative that the group might be able to get behind
 - Block is meant as a final check, you should be trying to reach agreement
- Write down a short summary of the answer your group came up with and any reservations, stand asides or blocks
 - The facilitator supporting your group will read this back to you once this has been agreed on, then you can move on to the next question
- Of course if you completely disagree with the idea of the pilot then you might want to block all of the decisions
 - But the final question is your space to "Block" the pilot in its entirety so please feel free to play devil's advocate throughout the discussion of the other questions but do participate and see if you can reach a place of agreeing with reservations
- Example, the first question is how much should people receive?
 - Start off by making sure you're clear on the format your answer should take
 - An amount of money and an explanation of why you think that's the right amount
 - Have a broad discussion about possible answers
 - The minimum amount of money that would be enough to make a difference

- The maximum amount of money that can be considered “basic”
 - People’s feelings about how much money should be being given to people
 - Notice areas where you agree and come up with an initial answer
 - so how much you think it should be and why
 - Think about whether this answer can be improved
 - whether there is more detail you can add in about why
 - Check how people are feeling about this answer - do you agree, agree with reservations, stand aside or block?
 - If everyone agrees then great you’re done
 - If someone agrees but with reservations, make sure you have those reservations written down so they can be fed back
 - If someone is standing aside, feedback why they made that decision
 - If someone blocks it then note down what the answer was that they wanted to block and their reasons
 - e.g.
 - I might think we should be giving people a million pounds a month
 - I might think this so strongly that I block any other proposal
 - Or I might stand aside, saying I cannot support any basic income that is less than a million pounds a month but I’m not going to fight against the group
 - Or I might agree with reservations, saying I prefer a basic income of £500 a month to none at all but still think it should be £1million instead
- Questions on reaching agreement?

How much should people receive? - 25 mins (1hr 20min)

Break - 10 mins

How should we choose participants? 30 mins

- People enter their names and are chosen randomly (universal)
 - Pros - everyone has access, more like a basic income and more likely to mean people support the pilot because they might benefit
 - Cons - the people in most need are not being chosen
- People enter their names based on a set of criteria the organising group chooses (targeted)
 - Pros - a group deemed most in need get to participate
 - Cons - a small group of people decide who gets to be involved on everyone else’s behalf, less like a basic income
- A street or building is chosen and everyone is asked to participate (geographic)

- Pros - more like a basic income because it's close to what it would be like for everyone in a place to get it
- Cons - other people might be jealous and cause problems for those people
- If you can pick an option and tell us why you picked that one and why you didn't pick the others

Can we make it fair that not everyone in Jarrow is involved? 30 mins (2hr 30)

- How do you think people will feel about only a small group of people participating?
- How can we involve them in the project to make it fairer?
- Do you think this is too big of an issue to get through or do you think we can make this project fair?

Do you think a pilot project should happen in Jarrow? 20 mins

- If there is agreement in favour, summarise why you agree and how you think it would benefit Jarrow
- If there is disagreement, summarise why you disagree and why you don't think it's right for Jarrow
- If people don't have strong feelings either way summarise the reasons for this indecision
- If there is a mixture of strong feelings in favour or against, summarise both

Next steps 10 mins

- How would you like to be involved moving forward?
- Would you like to be told about another event like this when we have the draft of the pilot proposal?
- Would you like to join the Local Task Force?
- Do some door knocking?

Findings

How much should people receive?

Group 1 (Ros & Rebecca's group day 2?)

- How much would make a difference?
- What should it include?
- Pension credit any additional income
- Worked longer years due to low income
- Extras -> opticians, medical costs -? "free" to person - take into account?
- Effect people differently, means testing
- (£240) rent, car, bills £1040

- £1600 Welsh trial - is this enough?
- Meets basics + extra
- Choices
- Tax?
- Needs to be fair
- Would we take pension (state) into account?

Group 2 (Me and Anne's group day 2)

- Council tax charges - would it impact them?
- Consider
 - Basic outgoings
 - Cover basics first
 - food, utilities and rent etc
- For the pilot it would have to cover at least benefits plus more
- People in work will be better off
- Needs to be higher than universal credit
- Will be dependent on each household
- Couple hundred pounds a month would pull out of poverty
- £1500 on top of wage feels as if it would be too much
 - "I would be well off on that amount"
 - "People might go crazy with this amount of money"
- £700 suggested
 - Would it make changes in life?
- Inequality - breaks your heart/breaks you hard
- Design pilot to get £1000 additional to what you have
 - Agreed with reservations on this - not in total agreement
 - Starting point
- There is a risk for potential harm
- Maybe the pilot would cause conflict and ruin the prospect of it going ahead
- Range proposed £700 - £1500 depending on benefits
 - Couldn't agree as a group on one figure

How should we choose participants?

Group 1

- Street/area might not want it
- Fair
- Ok way I am/safe at moment
- People worried - universal credit...
- Change in life circumstances - becoming single
- Forward thinking/planning

- Cross section - learn more, what will happen?
- Low paying jobs - what happens?
- Anyone - names in hat
- Targeted group - need
- Geographic area
- Individual or household

Group 2

- Cross section of society
- Fear of losing benefits stops people from coming to events like this
- Putting names in a hat
- Not simple
- Would give to younger generation - those most likely to have it in the future
- Not geographical - safety and risk
- Random
- Would be seriously concerned about their safety if they were selected
- Risk of young people having the responsibility to manage money
- Trustworthy system needed
- Project should be advertised widely
- What is the poverty line - should this be the target group? Maybe random selection of people below the poverty line
- Feel the pilot could be dangerous - may cause a lot of animosity - but not a reason not to do it
- A lot of support needed for participants
- Agree - random selection
- With reservations - a random selection from below the poverty line
- Exit strategy for people who can't manage on the UBI amount
- Randomly across all of Jarrow? To spread out participants

Can we make it fair that not everyone in Jarrow is involved?

Group 1

- Communication - leaflets, cards with kids, door knocking, market stalls
- Everyone has the opportunity to take part - then selected fairly
- Based on need?
- Conflict
- Divides in community
- Base sample on need, make sure groups are represented e.g. carers, old people
- Long lead in time
- What's the point? Lethargy of community
- Events, community support, relationship - an engagement person, welfare
- The difference the money + support compared to just support
- Vote - democratic- should we do it?/options

Group 2

- Winners and losers? - inevitable
- Equality of access to participating across the area
- Not a fair system now - it's already a lottery
- Won't be fair to everybody and could cause issues in the community
- Manage the disappointment/anger
 - Everyone in Jarrow gets x amount a month or on a rota - not enough to change behaviour
 - Give those not picked a one off payment to soften the blow
- Confidentiality important
- Involve those not chosen to be paid to continue to be part of the research
- Can't keep everyone happy
 - Set criteria - needs to make a difference to life to show impact
- Threat to destroy community and create tensions
- Fairness of the monies coming from the rich
 - Give to everyone who meets the poverty criteria
- Free school meals amount as poverty line - ? £16950
 - If household income less than £16950 then choose random sample of a range of demographics
 - Gender
 - Age - under 25, 25-50, 50-65, 65+
 - Disability
 - Employed
 - Unemployed
- Jarrow march stunt - take evidence to Downing Street after pilot
- Mental health support
- Good quality job and employment opportunity

Do you think a pilot should happen in Jarrow?

Group 1

- Try something new
- Health benefits
- Why Jarrow? - history

Group 2

- Mix of opinions
- 1
 - No - don't think should do it
 - Should be fighting the gov to give people more money to live
 - ? could be convinced that a pilot could be used to make the point to the government
 - Would be supportive if it would benefit the NHS/NHS workers

- 2
 - Not sure
 - Agree with pilot and the policy but think it may cause conflict
 - Would agree to it going ahead if others were pushing it through
 - Is a risk RE addictions
- 3
 - Definitely up for the pilot
- 4
 - Need something radical to make the shift
 - Pilot will be radical - yes!
- Seems a small area to pilot - Go right across Jarrow?
 - Needs more information out there
 - Need to try the pilot
- Keep those involved and part of the conversation - this will be hard to keep the commitment

Grange Big Local

Outreach Consultations

July 2022

Finchley Toy Library

Conversations with 3 people: two women (one White, one Asian) and one man (Black)

All of them were in favour of interventions to support the cost of living crisis – benefits, debt advice, budgeting advice, support for foodbanks and vouchers all mentioned.

One conversation specifically about basic income – consultee was in favour and in favour of a trial.

Silver Birchers – forest school for older people

Conversations with 3 people – all White, all over 55 – all neutral on basic income.

Monday Club – Tarling Road Community Centre

Conversations with two women, both Black or Mixed Race. Both thought basic income was a good idea in principle and supported a trial.

Archer Academy – secondary school fair

Conversations with 6 parents, all supportive of basic income and a trial.

Tarling Road Community Centre Open Day

7 conversations

5/7 people had heard of GBL before

5/7 had heard of basic income before

6/7 thought a trial was a good idea

Thoughts/ reasons

“Interested in good ideas and in trying things”

“How would you select people? Practicalities. The minimum wage has been used to suppress wages. This is the same”

“Free money is a good idea!”

“It would help people. It would support people”

“I think it should be researched but I don't think the effects will be good”

“It will help those who need it. It may be problematic for those who don't get it”

5 thought participants should be chosen randomly, 1 by block or street, 1 didn't answer, because they were against a trial.

Universal – in particular no income assessment before being chosen?

4 agreed, 1 did not agree, and 2 did not reply

Other comments

“Interested in these ideas”

“I would be more at ease saying it has nothing to do with me”

“Can research assess to what extent money is spent locally?”

“You have to be really careful about how you choose people. Lots of social niceties and nuance”

“I think you have to select who takes part”

“I would not feel bad if I did not get it. I would be happy for others”

Summary

19 people consulted

9 in favour of basic income 10 not asked/ not willing to commit

15 in favour of a trial, 3 neutral, 1 against

Of the 7 people asked whether the cohort should be universal, 4 were in favour, 1 against and 2 did not comment.

Door-knocking

Script

UBI CONSULTATION SCRIPT

Intro

Hello, my name is ****. I am a volunteer with Grange Big Local. Do you have a moment?

Q1. Have you heard of us? Y/N

We are a community association made up of neighbours, because a small pocket of East Finchley has been awarded lottery funding that can be spent in any way local people choose. We are funded by Local Trust, who have chosen 150 areas all over the country to receive funding of £1 million over a ten year period.

We have a chance to be part of some research looking at the difference basic income might make in a place like ours. This leaflet has information about a meeting on 22 November to decide whether we should go ahead.

Q2. Have you heard of basic income? Y/N

Universal Basic Income, or UBI is the idea that everyone in the country gets a certain fixed amount of income, not means tested, that people can rely on. For some people it might not make much difference and would be taxed away. For people who are self-employed, or on zero hours contracts, it may give them security month to month. People looking for work would not risk a gap in benefit between jobs, or over/ underpayment.

Q3. Do you think basic income sounds like a good idea? Y/N

If we did this project, we would use some of our lottery money, but raise most of it from other places, to give perhaps 100 households extra money for a year or two. We would work with researchers from the University of Northumbria to see what difference it made to their lives, and their children's lives – to their health and wellbeing, to their housing, jobs, volunteering and education. What we would not do is ask them what they spent money on.

Q4. Do you think we should be part of this trial, or do you think we should have other priorities? Y/N

Q5. Would you like to come to a meeting about it? Y/N

There will be free pizza, a kids corner if you need to bring them, and the chance to find out more and have your say. If you need help to come, please let us know. Details are on the leaflet, or I can take your email address.

Q6. What else do you think we should be thinking about?

116 participants responded through door-knocking in the local area. Not all respondents answered all questions.

Findings

Q1. Have you heard of us [Grange Big Local]? Y/N

Yes: 42% (49); No: 58% (67)

Q2. Have you heard of basic income? Y/N

Yes: 21% (24); No: 79% (88)

Q3. Do you think basic income sounds like a good idea? Y/N; Q4. Do you think we should be part of this trial, or do you think we should have other priorities? Y/N

	Basic income is a good idea	Basic income is not a good idea
Should be part of a trial	76	3
Should have other priorities than a trial	14	8

UBI good idea	6
Trial good idea	6
Trial bad idea	1
Don't know UBI	13
Don't know trial	10

Q5. Would you like to come to a meeting about it? Y/N

Other considerations

Comments ranged from general positivity about the idea, to support but a belief that they didn't personally need a basic income, to concerns about the design or other priorities, for instance relating to young or older people.

Q6. What else do you think we should be thinking about?

Demographics

Gender

Male: 41% (39)

Female: 59% (56)

Other: 0% (0)

(Census 2021 52% Female)

Ethnic background

White/White British: 51% (50)

Black/Black British: 16% (16)

Asian/Asian British: 27% (27)

Other: 6% (6)

(Census 2021 65% White, 11% Black, 35% Non-White)

Age group

<16: 1% (1)

16-24: 11% (11)

25-34: 19% (18)

35-44: 21% (20)

45-54: 20% (19)

55-64: 13% (13)

65-74: 10% (10)

75+: 5% (5)

Sexual orientation

Gay/homosexual: 8% (7)

Straight/heterosexual: 88% (79)

Bi/Bisexual: 1% (1)

Other: 0% (0)

Prefer not to say: 3% (3)

(ONS 2020 3% population identify as LGB)

Disability status

Disabled: 14% (12)

Non-disabled: 86% (74)

(Census 2021 6% on disability benefits, 13% limiting long term illness, 2% PIP claims for mental health reasons)

Summary of equalities data

Shows we spoke to a reasonably representative group.

Slight over-representation of females probably because we knocked between 5-7pm in the main, and so women were more likely to open the door/ be home with children.

V slight over-representation of non-White ethnic groups probably because we focused on the estates, but might just be sample size.

Can't explain the over-representation of LGB people, other than small sample size, or LGB people choosing to live in urban centres.

GBL population

For reference, the population of GBL is 6,542.
67.7% are aged 16-64 (4,429 people)
12.5% are 65+ (818 people)

UBI Micro-pilot Meeting

Report

Held on 22.11.2022

Present

28 residents

Jar votes

Heard of UBI before the doorknocking/ leafleting: Y - 19 N - 9

Think UBI is a good idea: Y - 23 N- 4 DK 1

Think a trial is a good idea: Y - 25 N - 3

Organiser Comments

The proportion of people who had heard of UBI was much higher than the door-knocking results, so this is a very self-selected group. Looking at the equalities monitoring information the group was also largely white and largely female, with a significant number of people identifying as Christian (possibly because leaflets were left in a couple of churches).

Comments on elements of UBI

Cash

Not seen as controversial – one person asked about whether cash meant actual tender in an envelope.

General agreement that it gave more choice and dignity than vouchers.

“Different people will do different things with the money”

“The cost of living is why we are here today”

UBI would “convert people into self-sufficiency and would save by promoting mental and physical health and therefore would save on services in the future”

“Gives the ability to do something different, for example travel, different jobs, support for artists”

“People have to rely on their children earning in order to make ends meet. It can increase crime, or mean people turn a blind eye to where the money is coming from, because they can’t afford to otherwise”.

But concern was raised that this would increase gambling and gambling addiction.

Also concern about basic services:

“Money isn’t everything. In Sweden there is high tax and they provide things like childcare”.

“We should invest in education and the care system”

One person thought that people would rely on it, putting them in the control of the government. They believed the system is corrupt and that this would increase its power and reach.

Regular

Easily understood and not controversial

“People could rely on it”

“It would stop or help some mental health problems”

“Worry makes you ill!”

“Your fear level would be reduced, because of reduced deprivation. You would feel safer”.

Parental stress over money was also mentioned.

Individual

Again, this was easily understood and supported.

One person was keen to start their own business whilst also caring for young children. She recognised that UBI would not penalise her husband and the family’s resources whilst setting this up.

Another person highlighted its importance in cases of marital conflict “especially men or women controlled by their partners, because it would be easier for them to leave”.

A third person said “The present system is misogynistic, because if husband was in work, women are not eligible for support even though their income just as important for family finances; people should be treated as individuals”.

Unconditional

This was both easily understood and mainly supported. There was a lot of discussion about the impact of barriers and cut off points.

The current system was described as “bureaucratic” “judgemental” and that it aggravates literacy problems. People were “too scared to apply for anything in case money is taken away” and were confused by the different benefits and different names of benefits.

“Helps give people dignity. If disabled not have to jump through hoops. The dignity aspect is really bad at the moment”

“The unfairness of the present system because it encourages destitution, and then we will help you! This disincentivises savings”.

A number of people spoke about difficulties of fitting work around welfare of children/ concern about eligibility for free school meals -if you earned a little children would then lose out. Pupil premium was not just about FSM – eligibility brings a package of support, including free uniform, access to school trips etc.

Rent was another theme that came up in a lot of discussions – rising rents being a big cost of living pressure and the worry that basic income would cause inflation that has a knock on effect on rent.

“It would help people who are struggling to get homes, especially with all the landlords who won’t take people on benefits”.

One person felt “It would discourage you from working. With universal credit, if you get a job it is taken away”.

One person asked “How will this influence employers?” which was followed by a discussion of where basic income intersects with minimum/ living wage and whether having the economic power to walk away would empower people to ask for better/ safer working conditions.

Universal

This was the one element that some people found difficult, both generally and in the context of a trial.

“Some people don’t need it – takes away from people who really need it. It should be targeted”.

“Universal is the only one of the five features that troubles me. It would be a waste of money”.

“High earners don’t deserve it”

However, not everyone felt this way

“It would give more of a community feel if everyone had it”.

“People would contribute more, be more generous”.

There was some discussion of how everyone knows what is happening to energy and food prices, but people who don’t get benefits, cannot say how much UC is. Also that current system is stigmatising and that this would reduce inequality without othering people.

“Fair as long as they pay fair tax”

“It would narrow the gap between the poor and the rich”.

“You would think about society in a different way”.

“Restructuring of society – so far failed people”

“It would never take off in this country because the Daily Mail wouldn’t support it”.

“Tax highest earners ?money stolen from the poorest – concentrated wealth”

General points

People wanted to know:

4. What the impact on inflation would be.
5. What would happen with other means and needs based benefits like PIP, attendance allowance, cancer patients, and whether it would apply to pensioners.
6. How it would be funded.
7. Whether there would be a London weighting.
8. What would happen to funding for basic services, like NHS, schools, childcare, with particular concern about intersection with Free School Meals.
9. What the level it would be at, particularly relative to UC – “Survival not replacement for work” “Pointless if so low that it doesn’t cover all your needs”. “Needs to address all your needs”

Trial

Majority supported this in principle, even if they had some concerns about basic income as a concept.

“It would help the economy and the high street because people would spend more”.

“Politics done on the hoof, but important to do trial”

“It would get people talking about it”.

“I think people would feel proud of a trial. I think it would be something positive for here”.

They also thought this was a good area for a trial because it is demographically and economically diverse.

The key features they were concerned about were:

1. Impact on those on benefits – not making volunteers worse off (Free school meals being the one that came up most often). Safeguards, advice and consent all seen as key, including at the end of the trial. Also engagement with housing providers, DWP and the Council.
2. Whether there should be narrowing of the target group and how the participants would be chosen. Suggestions included: targeting those on the border of receiving benefits, vulnerable families, especially where children and young people had been drawn in to gang crime, focusing on people on benefits, and excluding pensioners. Others thought that a wider range would be more interesting.
3. They wanted reassurance that the trial would be robust and validated and that the results could not be swept away – questions about sample size, control group etc.
4. Reassurance that it would be clearly and accessibly explained “It is important the way you deliver it and the way you put it out to people – they need to know what they are signing up for. You don’t want people to go into it and come out halfway through because they are worse off”.
5. Accountability of participants in the trial – if you accept the money you take part in the research. Consideration about what happens if people move out of the area (or in), including those incarcerated.
6. There was support for using peer researchers, both as a way of broadening the impact of the trial (teaching local people transferable skills) and because “I think people might prefer peer researchers than a man in a suit asking them questions”.
7. A number of people have suggested financial education as a way of widening the benefit to the community, but would that make the impact of each intervention harder to unpick? Would it be a condition?

Notes

How will it be funded? Who gets it?

- Could rely on payment
- Housing costs vary regionally/ disability – so some extra means and needs tested payments may be necessary.
- A floor for financial stability
- ?democracy – decided by Government
- Modelling – look at tax, benefits, but distribute it in a different way
- Discourage you from working – universal credit if you get a job it is taken away.
- Tax highest earners ?money stolen from the poorest – concentrated wealth
- Child care
- Cancer – affects income and nec for benefits
- Cost of living – why we are here today disproportion of wealth
- Money is not everything – other countries eg Sweden tax and childcare
- Idea in general - rent rises ?democracy
- Good idea – if there is a pilot discuss afterwards ?effect on inflation
- Understand the idea
- System corrupt – money because given to you?
- Trial – to see if it will show benefits. Govt will never agree unless it shows benefits eg over 1-2 years.
- Not all to go in tax
- Where's the money coming from - GBL?
- Politics done on the hoof, but important to do trial
- Pressure of rent
- Trial would be with top up – measure the impact
- How to design trial/ social experiment/ ?volunteers
- Ability to do something different/ travel/ diff jobs/ artists
- Need a level of trust – volunteers for the scheme
- Different people will do different things with the money
- Have to use savings before accessing benefits – would provide an incentive for people to save.
- People could use the money positively.
- Better mental health
- Choose street
- Versus Enfield
- Can't list your income yet
- Administrative costs for trial?
- Inclusivity
- Massive fundraising efforts!
- If you already have an income
- Benefits may have to be on hold
- Child care costs

- Liaise with DWP?
- Volunteers will be monitored and asked questions (Uni of Northumbria)
- UK state funded
- Point of trial is to gather evidence
- Health, wellbeing, stress levels etc
- End of June is when last tranche of money starts
- Fundraising necessary
- Basic understanding for everyone
- Capacity – expensive project
- GBL has until March 2026 (Grange Big Local finishes)
- GBL could help to set up trial and potentially
- Fundraising really necessary
- Encapsulates an area including affluent dwellings and streets and students/renters etc
- Random choice of society – microcosmic
- Age range?!
- This all maybe about 100 people
- “Ineffectual sample size”
- Anyone involved in trials must be accountable
- Be active even after event
- Skews data and wouldn't be impartial anymore (never going to be)
- Basic understanding that everyone who gets it needs to
- Government scheme taxed
- Consent would be issue
- Locals spend in area
- Perspective to be aware of
- High earners don't deserve??
- More targeted – age group. Invest in education. 6th form. Care system!!!
- Trial
- Conversations would be continued
- Tax could decline or give it back
- Two tiered system
- (Academic)
- Universal
- Child credits?
- Not predetermined outcome
- Pandemic eft a lot of people lost a lot of income
- Logistics
- Shorten the gap
- Restructuring of society – so far failed people
- Gambling
- Important to include debt advisors as part of the trial
- This area could be good because it is diverse
- Survival not replacement for work

- Some people don't need it – takes away from people who really need it. It should be targeted.
- Universal is the only one of the five features that troubles me. It would be a waste of money
- Where does the money come from?
- Would it work alongside PIP and child benefit?
- It would stop (or help) mental health problems.
- Think about society in a different way.
- It would never take off in this country because the Daily Mail wouldn't support it.
- Helps give people dignity. If disabled not have to jump through hoops. The dignity aspect is really bad at the moment.
- It would help the economy and the high street because people would spend more.
- It would give more of a community feel if everyone had it.
- What level would it be? Same as UC?
- How would it influence employers?
- Would it affect free school meals? Kids get a lot if they are on FSM – free trips, free uniform.
- Help people who are struggling to get homes especially with all the landlords who won't take people on benefits.
- Marital conflict especially men or women controlled by their partners, because it would be easier for them to leave.
- Would it replace basic state pension
- Pointless if so low that it doesn't cover all your needs.
- Needs to address all your needs
- Fair as long as they pay fair tax
- It would narrow the gap between the poor and the rich.
- Would it have a London weighting?
- Trial
- May be a good place to trial because there is money about and it is a left leaning area.
- Benefits of trial – leaves a legacy
- It would get people talking about it
- Got to be explained very simply and clearly
- Trial must be rigorous or experts will dismiss it – persuasive evidence needed
- Would there be a control group?
- Try to choose people who are not on benefits but economically vulnerable – close to the border.
- I think people would feel proud of a trial. I think it would be something positive for here.
- I can't decide if it would be worth it or not.
- I think people might prefer peer researchers than a man in a suit asking them questions

- It is important the way you deliver it and the way you put it out to people – they need to know what they are signing up for. You don't want people to go into it and come out halfway through because they are worse off.
- Huge benefit
- Opportunity to live in ways they can't
- Young
- Leaders:
- Councillors disability benefit recipients
- Community police
- Foodbank – Anna
- Young
- Church leaders
- Benefit recipients the forefront
- School teachers
- Participants:
- Incarcerated folks
- Considered rules of people moving in and out
- Questionnaires – conditionality
- Potential solutions
- Why GBL?
- Debt counselling?
- Building in community level interventions with pilot
- Range of different people. Validity of results if lots of “type”
- Demographic *illegible*
- “More interesting if range”
- Well off interesting for the area
- Helps tackle stigma (groups)
- Health impacts
- Everyone does their own thing
- Certainty and fluctuating
- Effects:
- Mental health – bill stress
- Fear level reduced because reduced deprivation – safer
- Safe and security
- “Normal” level of deprivation
- Contributing back increase/ generosity
- Peace of mind/ stress/ anxiety
- Avoiding bureaucracy cf UC
- In debt to people that are supposed to help
- Literacy problems aggravated by UC
- Domestic peace
- Means testing – aggravation, judgemental, trick you
- Parental stress
- Can't replace hearing aid
- Joy/ *illegible*

- Too scared to apply for fear of taking away
- Too many different names for different benefits
- Scepticism of making a difference
- Someone in place for the transition post-pilot take care of benefit transition. Staggered eg Citizens Advice

Equality and Diversity Results

Gender

Male 3

Female 14

Other

Age

16-24

25-29

30-34 2

35-39 2

40-44 3

45-49 3

50-54 3

55-59 1

60-64 3

65+ 1

Prefer not to say

Ethnicity

Asian

Black

African 1

Mixed

Mediterranean and latin american 1

White and Black Caribbean 1

White

English 4

Irish 1

Welsh 1

Scottish 1

British 4

Polish 2

Other

Turkish Cypriot 1

Prefer not to say 1

Do you consider yourself to have a disability or health condition?

Yes 4

No 13
Prefer not to say 1

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual 12
Homosexual 1
Lesbian
Bisexual
Asexual
Pansexual
Undecided
Prefer not say 1

What is your religion or belief

Christian 6
Prefer not to say 3
No Religion or belief 3
Buddhist 1
Muslim 2
Other:
Animism 1