

Digital Health Hub on the High Street

A How To Guide for
digital inclusion in health

October 2018



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Introduction

The Nailsea pathfinder looked at how to establish a place for digital health inclusion on the high street. It used an asset-based approach to design a community centre from scratch that would meet the digital support needs of the residents of Nailsea.

65 High Street is founded on principles that guide its way of being.

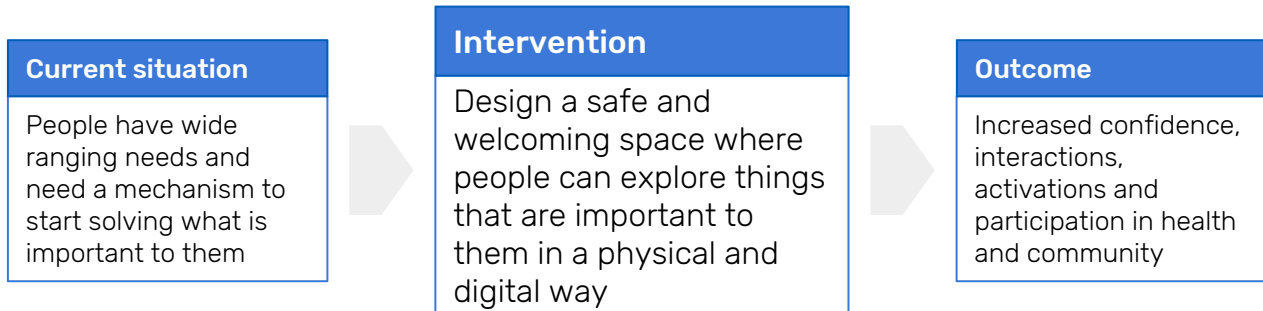
- Don't be dogmatic
- Digital technology can help
- Capture the goodwill of people
- Don't control what happens in the space
- Everyone who wants to volunteer is welcome
- Tell everybody
- Engage with whoever walks through the door

This makes the space flexible in its activities, relevant in its offer and holistic in its approach.

Giving a space for people to explore things that matter to them and find solutions that work best for them is a powerful mix.

This guide will explore how to design a space if:

- You are considering acquiring a premises and thinking about what you could do with it
- You already have a working premises but feel it could be more impactful for digital and health.



Intervention model

STAGE 1: Design the place

STAGE 2: Physical and digital

STAGE 3: Relationships

STAGE 4: Stay relevant

1

Find out what your community needs and how people engage with local activities and community

1a

Think of the whole journey of the person. From walking past to spending time in the place

2

Have no agenda. Start with "What matters to you?"

3

Become the centre of activities both physical and digital

3a

Provide access and see digital as part of the toolkit for health and wellbeing

4

Develop relationships with local GP's, community organisations and schools

4a

Increase the pool of volunteers. Peers understand better than anyone

5

Keep improving the offer, learning from what works and what doesn't work

Before you start

Looking for a premises

If you are starting from scratch then look to find an asset that is in the right place. We had a disused butcher's shop on the high street. It is important to find somewhere in an area that people already spend their time and therefore has a natural flow of people in its immediate vicinity.

Already have a premises but want to change it

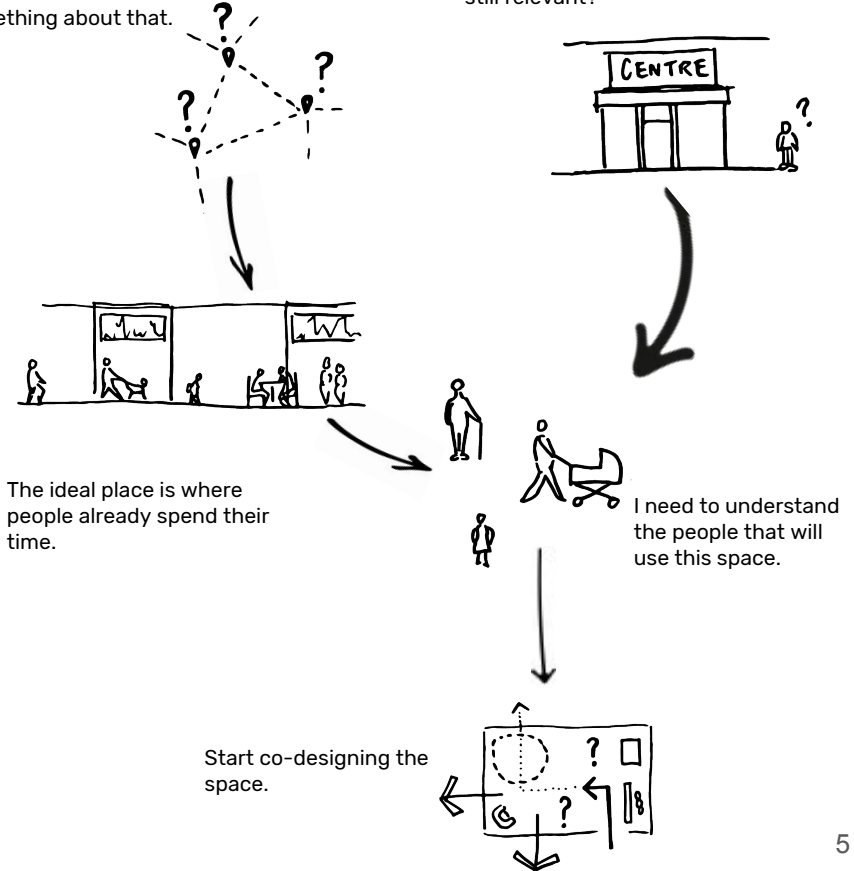
It can be difficult to take a fresh look at a community asset that is working. After all, it may have been successfully delivered things for a long time. So why change? This process will help sense check that the building is still being used for what is relevant to the community it serves and help you make some changes.

In both scenarios it is useful to look at the demographics of your area so you can understand who your customers will be. This will then give you an idea of the sort of place you might be designing.

A digital health hub is a concept. It's shape and activities will be individual to your area, demographics and resources.

There doesn't seem to be any community assets here. We should do something about that.

I have ran this community centre for a long time. Is it still relevant?



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STAGE 1: Design the Place

There are two stages to designing the place.

Stage 1: Talk to your users / potential users to find out what a space could be for them.

Open the place up (if safe) for a few days and ask people what they need in the community. Give them a blank slate. Even if their ideas aren't feasible you will get insights as to what is important to people and why. They may not want to discuss health. We found that the term 'health' put some people off.

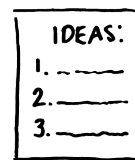
This activity isn't about taking people at their word or trying to recreate every idea that they share. It's about understanding why they would need it. For example:

- People may say they need a free coffee shop, but when you dig further it's because they need a place to sit and talk.
- People may say they need more clubs and activities but when you dig further it's because they aren't aware of what is going on in the area and need a way to find out.

You want to find out how people participate in things now (physically and digitally) and what problems go unsolved in their lives at present.



Open up the premises as a pop up place. Talk to as many people as possible.

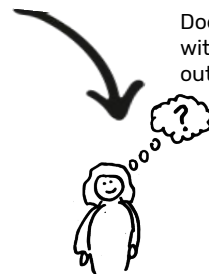


Find out what your community needs - take ideas to a deeper level of understanding.

Remember your mission. Digital inclusion and health are very emotive and scary prospects for excluded people to talk about.



Does your mission fit in with what you have found out?



STAGE 1: Design the Place

Stage 1a: Designing or redesigning the space.

From your user research (stage 1) you will have an idea of how the place could work. Take this insight and think of the journeys people will take.

[We thought about four parts of their journey:](#)

Outside - how do you make a place welcoming and show what the place is for?

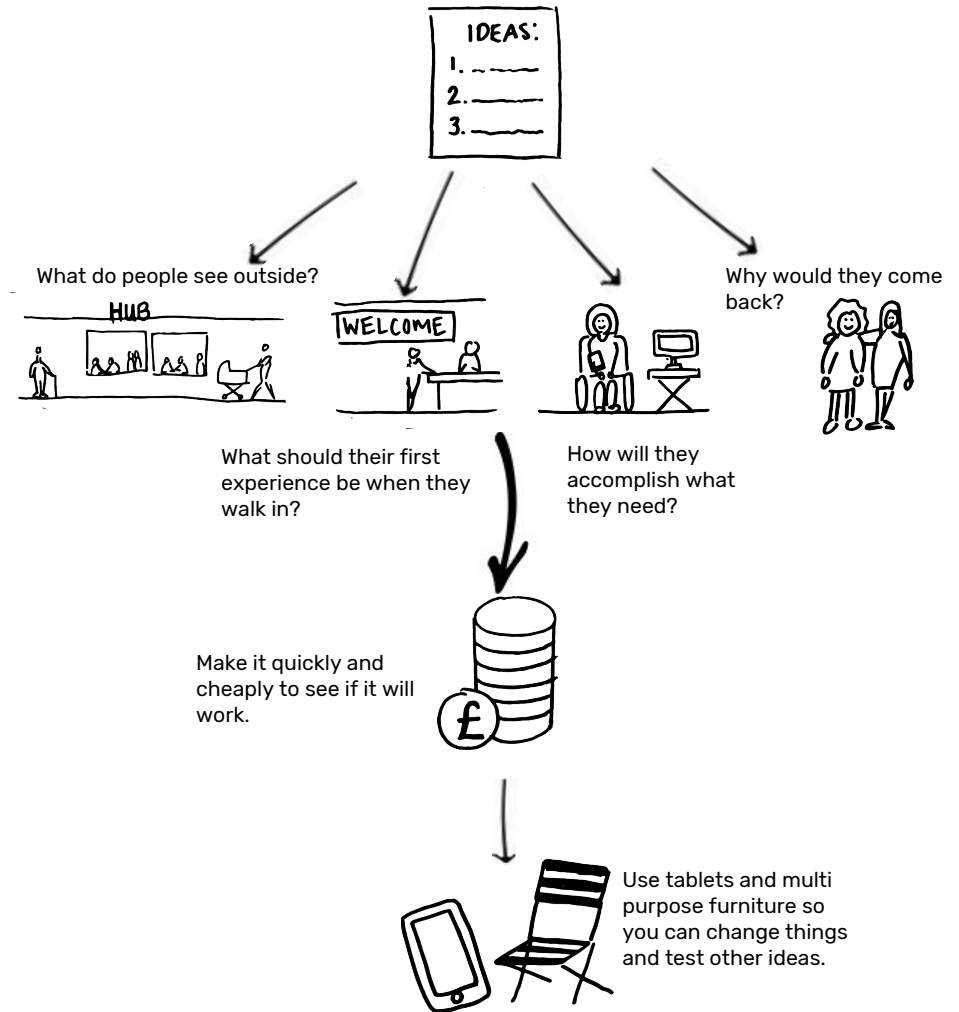
First Experience - what will people think when they walk in, do they need guidance or is it self explanatory?

Stay Longer - how will people spend time there and is this enough to accomplish what they came for?

Repeat Visits - what makes someone a regular? How do they become a champion of the place?

Test your work in a lean way - make it usable (not perfect) in the beginning to see how things go before you invest too much money.

Think of your available spaces as multi purpose and use the most portable equipment such as tablets and portable furniture like fold-away chairs so you can adapt to the new things that you learn.



STAGE 1: Design the Place

People who are needed (not exhaustive)

A centre lead this could be the manager of an existing centre or the person who is looking to start a new premises.

Local Council sponsor to be able to back the process and start building relationships.

Volunteers who can help open the place up during the design phase.

People who are walking past so you can gain insights.

Resources that are needed

Stationary to capture insights that you get during the design phase. This can be put up on the wall for people to contribute to in their own time.

Folding furniture cheaply sourced so you can test different set ups and room configurations.

Free coffee and tea so people have a reason to come in.

Places to sit so conversations can be as in depth as they need to be.

Signs for the outside so people can see what is happening and know what to expect if they come in.

A list of the community activities and groups that can start people thinking about other local assets.

STAGE 1: Design the Place

Don't:

- Try to make the space perfect – this can make it hard to change if you've spent a lot of time and money setting things up at the beginning.
- Start by talking about people's health. Health is private and often sensitive subject. Give people other reasons to come in.

Do:

- Ask people what matters to them and take the conversation from their.
- Be flexible in your approach. Use paper for signs, chalk pens to write on windows and use whatever furniture you have to hand to begin with. You can invest in more permanent things once you know they work.

Don't:

- Start with digital. Introduce it once you get to know what the person needs. Show them first and encourage them to take over when they're comfortable.

Do:

- Be experimental. Try multiple things and change them regularly to gauge people's reactions. Leave what doesn't work and keep what does.

STAGE 2: Physical and Digital

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STAGE 4: Stay relevant

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STAGE 2: Physical and Digital

65 High Street has been successful because it doesn't overtly mention health nor does it suggest digital can fix everything.

It simply asks the people who come in – 'what matters to you?'

People's wellbeing can be improved using a blend of physical (e.g face-to-face activities, group membership, spontaneous interesting conversation) and digital (e.g skyping a family member, looking up new skills, learning about conditions) and a digital health hub can offer all of this.

We found that people in Nailsea don't know about all of the brilliant activities and groups in the town so we made 65 High Street the place to either attend a group or find out about one. Similarly if you don't want to come to 65 High Street you can still find these things out on the new Nailsea Town Council website.

Providing access to tablets is important as it allows people to explore things at their own pace, when they want to.

The volunteers at 65 High Street don't distinguish between physical and digital, they just use whatever works in a given scenario. No labels necessary.



STAGE 2: Physical and Digital

People you need

A centre lead to set the tone of the place.

Local Council sponsor to visit and be an advocate of the place.

Some committed volunteers who are willing to learn and have open conversations with people.

Local group members to start meeting there and spread the word.

People who have things they want to talk about or have a problem they need to solve.

Resources you need

WiFi so people can use the place free of charge for their own needs.

Tablets placed on tables for people to explore.

Screens up on the wall to show people what is happening in the area.

Tea and coffee so people and volunteers can relax.

Community organisations / groups list to show what is going on in the area.

STAGE 2: Physical and Digital

Don't:

- Expect people to come in and start opening up about their health needs or their lack of digital skills. They will need another reason to come in first.

Do:

- Give people time and space for them to feel comfortable first before asking them to do something.
- Admit when you don't know something – if you don't know the answer, take the time to find out with them.

Don't:

- Be too specific about the help you can offer. Just a space to talk and be listened too can help people even if you can't solve their problems.

Do:

- Make people feel welcome without any pressure for them to stay or do any more than they feel comfortable doing.
- Spend time looking for information with them – help them find what's right for them in their own time. Don't take over.

STAGE 3: Relationships

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STAGE 3: Relationships

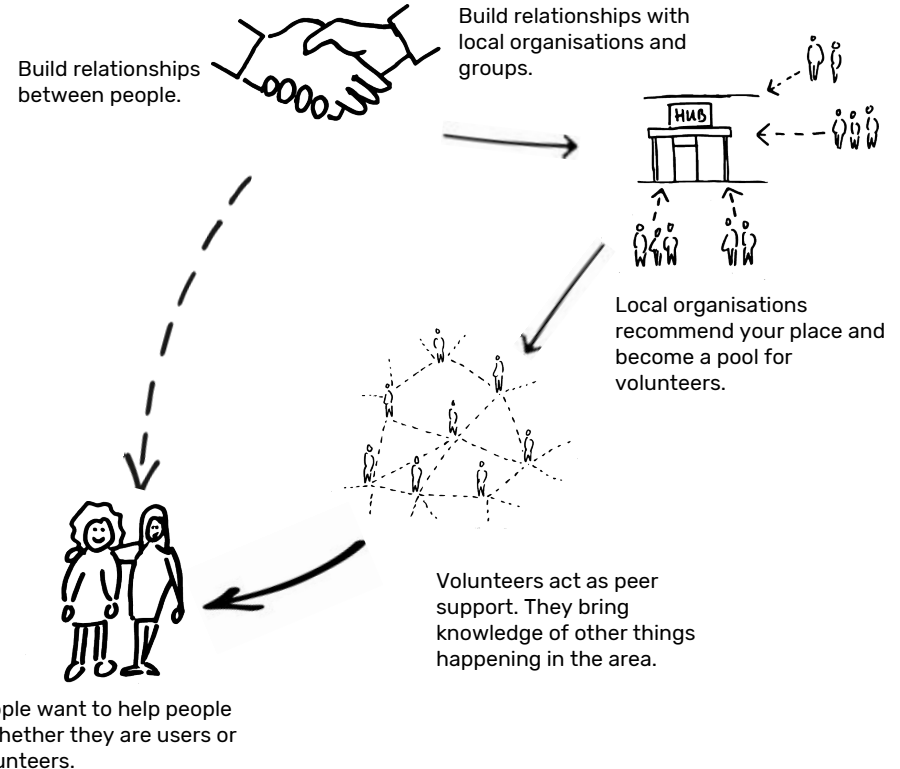
There are two types of relationship that are important:

Relationships with other organisations – between your place and other local service providers such as councils, colleges, local community groups and GP Practices.

By building relationships with other organisations you can grow your reputation and volunteer pool. Reputation attracts more activities, opportunities for your place to be recommended and volunteers who can bridge the gap between structural advice and peer advice.

Relationships with people – between volunteers, people using the place, group members and other people in the community.

Be a place that encourages relationships between people. A place where anyone who enters will want to help if they hear a conversation and think they can add something to it. These organic conversations can lead to some exciting improvements (see stage 4).



STAGE 3: Relationships

People you need

A centre lead who can build relationships with local organisations.

Local Council sponsor to broker introductions to local organisations.

Volunteers from new places who can bring their knowledge and advertise your place.

Local CCG to help broker relationships with GP practices in the area.

People who will use your place and help spread the word.

Resources you need

Time to invest in these relationships.

A facebook page so you can get involved with online communities.

Referral mechanism from GP's or other public sector organisations.

STAGE 3: Relationships

Don't:

- Limit the relationships with other organisations. If they're similar to you, they will be able to share their experiences. If they are different, they will have other perspectives and opportunities for you to learn from and work on together.

Do:

- Be open to other organisations using your place for their activities. Sharing assets will help to grow a better support offer to the community and help your reputation.

Don't:

- Try and force relationships. People will naturally build their own relationships with people they trust and share values with. You'd may be surprised how much school children and pensioners have in common.

Do:

- Spot opportunities to introduce people to others who you think they may share interests with. A shared problem or hobby can be a great way to start conversations.

STAGE 4: Stay Relevant

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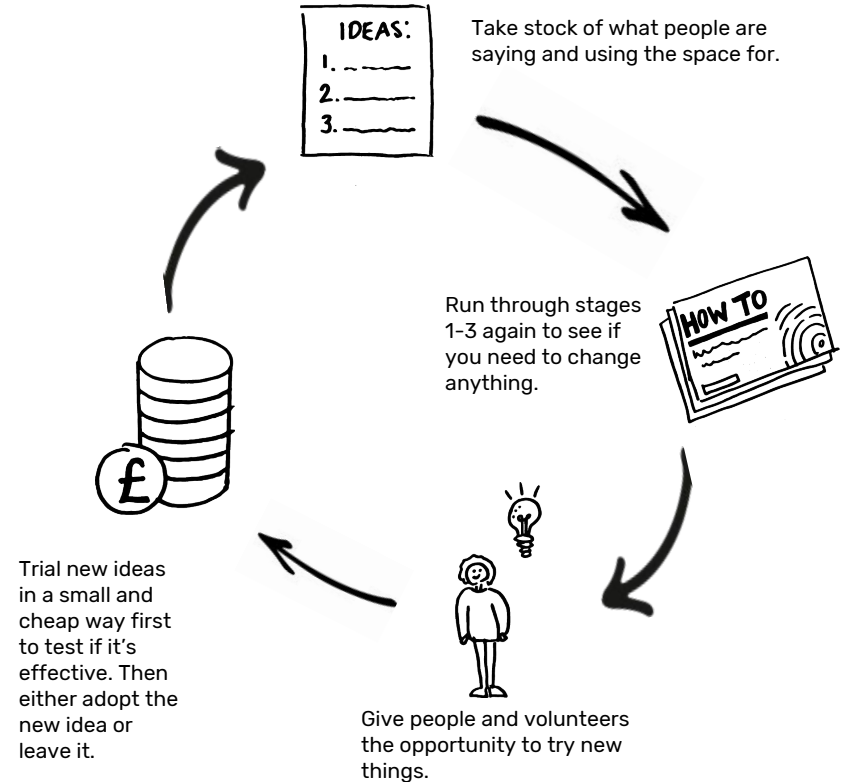
Following stages 1-3 you will notice that a big part of creating a digital health hub is being able to adapt when needed.

This can be designed into your transformation by having a multi purpose space, taking note of ideas from people who come in and letting them try something themselves.

Staying relevant can be achieved by periodically going through these steps again to check things are right for what you want to achieve.

This doesn't have to require lots of money. It could be as simple as changing the schedule or activities that are offered or making sure the website is kept up to date with local activities etc.

The main thing is to keep new people coming in and providing an place for them to explore the things that matter to them.



STAGE 4: Stay Relevant

People you need

A centre lead who is willing to take stock of things and run through the process again

Local Council sponsor to talk about local priorities

Volunteers who are empowered to try new things

Local CCG to talk about local priorities

People who want to help and have ideas

Resources that are needed

Time to keep checking things are working and still relevant

STAGE 4: Stay Relevant

Don't:

- Dismiss people's ideas. If it is something they think will improve your place, try it and see if it does.

Do:

- Encourage people to suggest changes and new ideas.

Don't:

- Try to be all things to all people. Keep the space flexible so that it can be changed for different activities and different people's needs without having to make wholesale changes each time.

Do:

- Be transparent about any new ideas or changes. Keeping people aware of what you're thinking can help them embrace changes and help you try to make them successful.

In your area

This is how we did it in Nailsea. We have tried to make the model as flexible as possible allowing for local context and local needs

To embed this into another area we recommend;

- Finding a council sponsor for creating a digital health hub
- Adopting the set of principles

If you would like to discuss how you might be able to try something in your area please contact tim@goodthingsfoundation.org

Assets

[Evaluation](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Design Workshop Stakeholders](#)

[Design Workshop Pop up shop \(user research\)](#)

[Alpha Review](#)

[65 High Street Micro Blog](#)

[Nailsea Place Website](#)