



**REAL  
CHANGE**

# Alternative Giving Toolkit

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# About the Real Change 'alternative giving' model.

## Real Change Toolkit

Setting up alternative giving in your area

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### Real change is a model of 'alternative giving'.

As homelessness and visible rough sleeping have increased in the last decade, public desire to do something about it has also grown. Alternative giving is a method of encouraging people to give money to end homelessness in a way which will have the biggest possible impact.

The Real Change approach has been developed by The Riverside Group alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority with support from Homeless Link. It is based on the Big Change MCR model which has been running in the City of Manchester since 2015, raising over a quarter of a million pounds to directly redistribute to more than 1,000 people.

Over the course of the first year, Real Change projects raised over **£50,000** and supported more than **100 individuals** across **four locations** and **31 frontline organisations**.

Funds raised are used to cover essential costs which help people to move away from the streets or avoid homelessness altogether: things like a deposit for a home, travel to key appointments, or ID to register with a landlord.

This toolkit is the result of the learning from that pilot. The intention of Riverside, GMCA and Homeless Link is that anyone who wants to launch an alternative giving campaign in their area can use the approaches, resources and brand which has been developed for Real Change to do so.

The rest of this toolkit will help you identify whether alternative giving is right for your area, key people to involve, the key components of an alternative giving programme, and how to keep them going. It is a guide only and above all you should be sure to adapt the approach to your own area, according to the specific context and ideas of people locally.

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# A. Principles of the Real Change Campaign

The principles which underpin the Real Change approach are integral to its delivery and the only condition of using the brand and model. They are informed by consultation with people who have been homeless alongside learning from multiple similar campaigns across the UK (both positive and negative). They are:

1. **Co-produced** with people who have been homeless and local partners
2. **Locally owned** by the community and partnership, not any dominant partners
3. **Positive** about what people **can do** to help, not what they shouldn't do
4. **Positive** about ending homelessness, avoiding negative terms or imagery
5. **Lean and efficient** so the public's donations go to the people who need it
6. **Simple and quick** approval process so person in need gets support they need



## B. What impact does Real Change have?

**“All partners felt that Real Change was satisfying a need...for flexible, personalised grants that filled gaps in funding from existing services. They also felt Real Change addressed a need to change the way the public give to people who are homeless.”**

Real Change Pilot Evaluation Report

**Real Change Wigan & Leigh was the first Real Change project to launch in October 2018.** The following quotes and statistics are taken from an internal evaluation looking at the first six months of the programme.



### What difference has Real Change made?

Ex-army Sean, 31\*, was sleeping at a night shelter having exhausted the generosity of his friends following the loss of his own tenancy. Although holding down his job, the lack of somewhere to wash, change and get a proper night's sleep was seriously affecting his work.

The shelter and the Council's housing team applied to Real Change to get Sean the ID required to apply for private rental accommodation. They then went to various national organisations for funds to help him pay the deposit and first month's rent on a flat. Falling short of just £100, they asked Real Change to cover the remainder to get Sean his own place.

The small top-up Real Change provided meant local partners could take advantage of what was available outside the area, at the critical time for Sean. For want of £100, Sean's stay at the night shelter would have continued, increasing the risk of him losing his job and spiralling further – as well as increasing the pressures on public services.

\*Names and details have been changed to protect the individual and his family

### Key statistics - Wigan & Leigh

- **54** applications submitted
- **47** approved
- **44** individual recipients
- **11** Registered Partners
- **£11,223** raised
- **£9,860** given out

Figure 1. Sleeping situation of grant recipients at application (%)

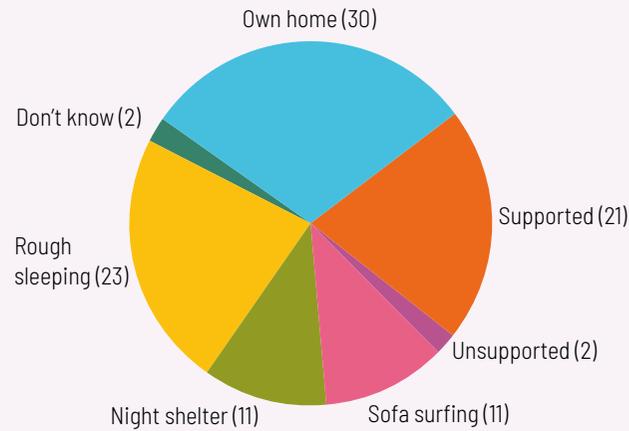


Figure 2. What were applications for

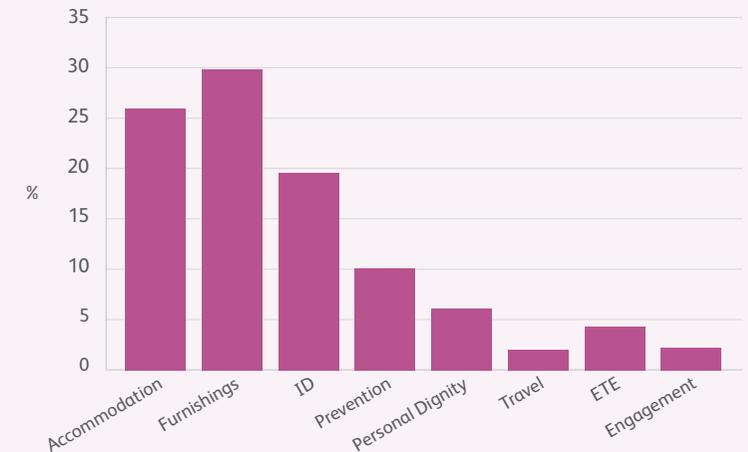


Figure 3. Accommodation type

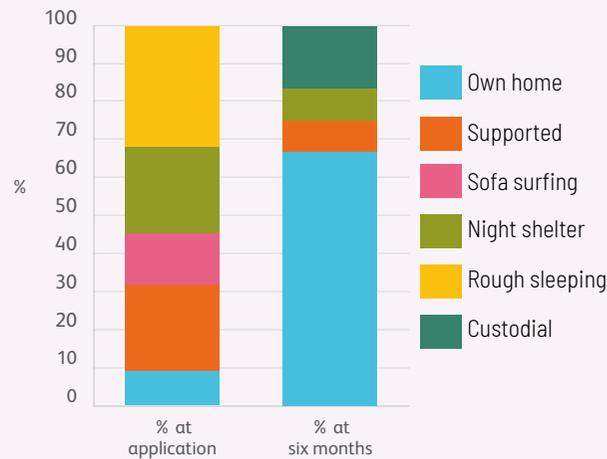
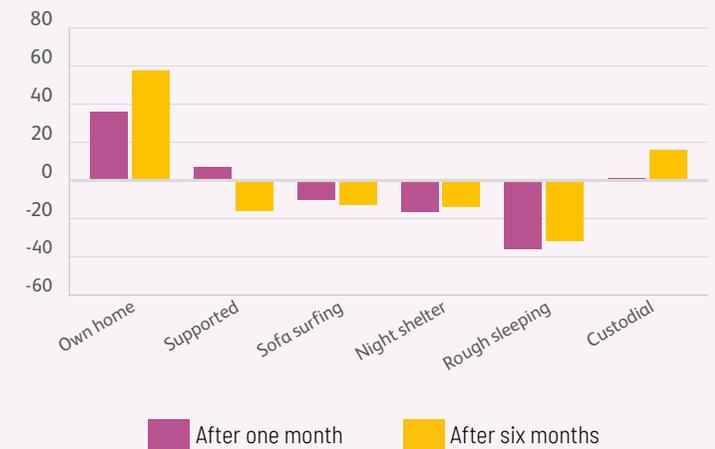


Figure 4. Change in sleeping situation



## What kind of needs can Real Change grants meet?

ID to start the process of finding a home: applying for accommodation, opening a bank account, securing utilities, etc.

Smaller grants to pay for mobile phones which helped facilitate the rehousing process

Needs which are less about rehousing and reflect the need for personal dignity e.g. clothes for a funeral

Smaller grants to cover the cost of temporary accommodation and aid the transition to rehousing

Larger grants to cover essentials related to rehousing – rent deposits, white goods and furniture

**“It has made partners aware of what other partners do, where their activities overlap and how they complement each other.”**

## Impact

There are four areas where alternative giving schemes can have a positive impact on ending homelessness in your area:

### 1. Directly on individuals who are experiencing homelessness...

- ... by covering essential costs
- ... by overcoming barriers
- ... by restoring hope and trust that things can get better
- ... by supporting people's recovery, progressions and transition into better housing or environment

### 2. Building stronger partnerships amongst local providers...

- ... by providing a focus for joint working and understanding other's work practices and internal pressures
- ... by identifying where activities complement and overlap
- ... by sharing a neutral, non-competitive project which benefits all

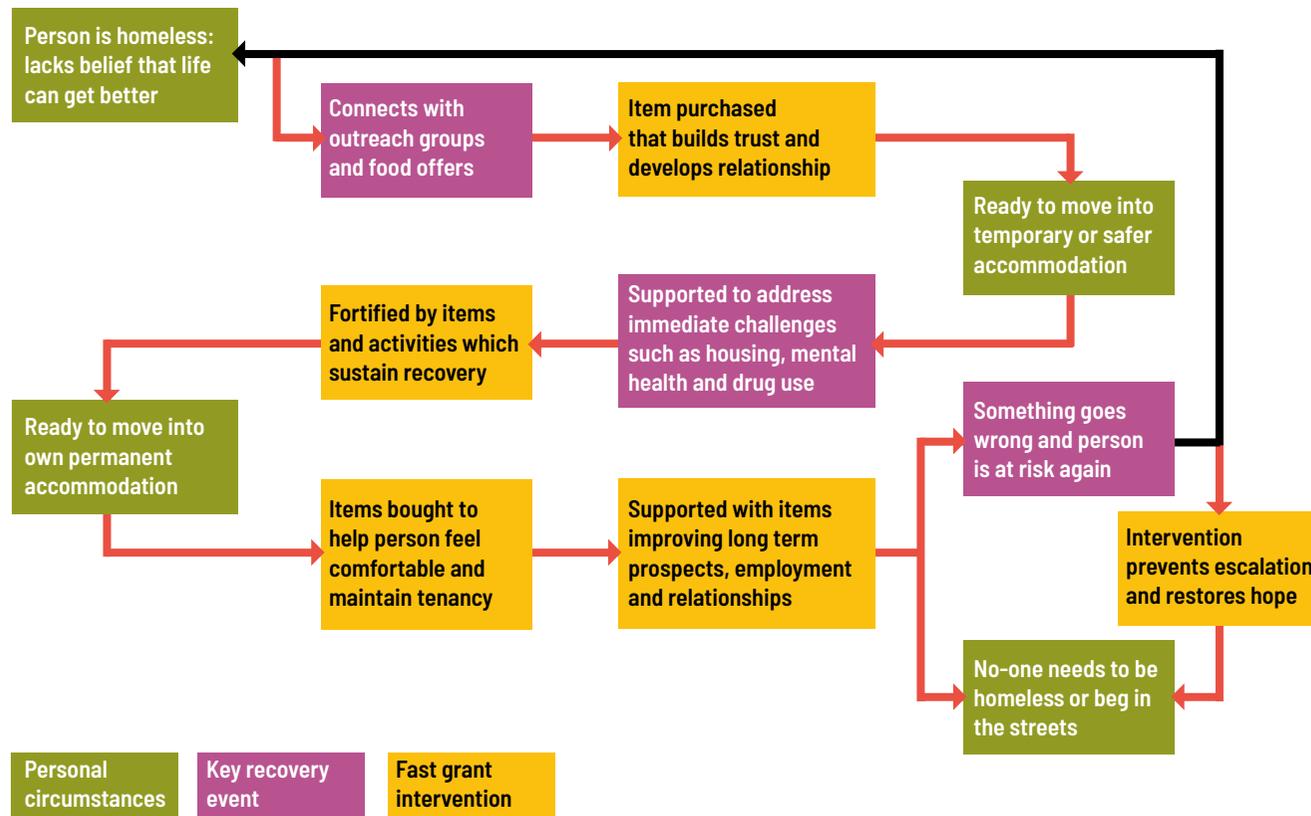
### 3. Addressing street begging in town centres...

- ... by enabling people who are homeless to access cash for essential costs without jumping through hurdles
- ... by creating more touch points for people who are on the streets to connect with support
- ... by offering a positive way for the public to give if they are worried about homelessness
- ... by targeting the 'supply side' of people who give in the street (without taking punitive measures against people begging)

### 4. Change public perceptions about homelessness...

- ... by inviting them to get involved in the answer before they complain about the problem
- ... by offering positive stories of people who've been homeless
- ... by providing a platform to people with real experience of homelessness

Figure 5. Flexible Funding Theory of Change



# C. Is it the right time for alternative giving in our area?

If there aren't the right conditions and right people in place then embarking on an alternative giving scheme is unlikely to be the best use of resources for anyone.

There may be the need for alternative giving but not the conditions for it to be effective, or vice versa. If one or other is absent, then you should seriously ask yourself whether it is the best use of time and resources to end homelessness.

**“The lack of a previous history of partnership working may have acted as a brake on the development of Real Change.”**

This section outlines what we think you'll need for alternative giving to be the right priority in your area at this point in time. Use the scorecard at the end to gauge where you are at once you've had a good read through.

Real Change is not the only model for alternative giving. If it doesn't fit with what you want to do in your area, then we recommend you explore the 'Greater Change' offer by going to their website [www.greaterchange.co.uk](http://www.greaterchange.co.uk) or contacting Jonathan Tan at [jonathan@greaterchange.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@greaterchange.co.uk)

## 1. External context

| Key Question   | What does this mean?  | What might have a bigger impact?  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Is there are significant concern about begging and street activity?</b> | <p>Alternative giving raises funds by selling the public a different way to give to end homelessness, other than in the streets.</p> <p>If there isn't a demand for the product, then it is unlikely to sell.</p> <p>In areas where homelessness isn't very visible and has low concern amongst the general public, it is unlikely this 'demand' will be sufficient for messages to work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop good practice principles for outreach groups so that when people do end up on the streets, they are more likely to get the right support.</li><li>• Establish channels for people with lived experience to input into service design and decision making.</li></ul> |

| Key Question   | What does this mean?  | What might have a bigger impact?  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Is there a good foundation of partnership working amongst local groups?</b> | <p>A network model like Real Change relies on spreading the weight amongst a number of partners who will work well together for a common cause.</p> <p>If an alternative giving scheme is the only place these partners are coming together, it's unlikely the communication and collaboration required to make it work will be possible.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish or refresh a regular discussion forum, community of practice or local network where all involved can interact and learn about what others can offer.</li> <li>Focus on a smaller joint project like a one-off public event or joint drop-in advice sessions.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Are there existing sources of flexible funding for individuals?</b>         | <p>A lot of personalised funds to cover essential costs already exist that groups can access.</p> <p>Re-inventing these will drain time at the expense of people who are in need of support.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign up to the <b>Street Support Network</b> to increase awareness of services that are available in your area.</li> <li>Focus on systems change to reduce barriers to existing funds that prevent people accessing them.</li> <li>Put your energy into ensuring there is good provision of food or items which can help prevent homelessness and reduce poverty.</li> </ul> |

| SCORECARD   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Score yourself 1-10 for your own area. Be honest!</b><br/>There is an 'opportunity cost' involved with Real Change and if it isn't the right time for your area then other things may have a bigger impact.</p> |  |  |
| <b>1. External context</b>  | a) Level of public concern                   |  |
|   | b) Depth of partnership in the public sector |  |
|   | c) Access to flexible funding pots           |  |

## 2. Key players

Even if the environment is right, it is not guaranteed that the people in the vital positions to make an alternative giving campaign work will consider it the right approach. Securing support from the following quarters (or someone with an equivalent brief) is strongly recommended.

| Stakeholder                                      | What's in it for them?   | What is the ask?  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Cabinet member for housing / homelessness</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-empt public criticism that 'nothing is being done about homelessness' by inviting people to join in a response to ending it</li> <li>Generate outside income to support cash-strapped statutory services</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get an objective into the Council comms team's official workplan of at least one item of marketing every month</li> <li>Make introductions to other Council departments who can help spread the word (e.g. Culture &amp; Leisure; Facilities; Street Cleaning) or raise funds (e.g. Procurement; Business &amp; Skills)</li> </ol> |

### How do we reach them?

- Commissioning Manager for the Council
- Local members of the political party running the Council
- Ask directly on social media

### Who else could do this?

- Departmental Director in a paid role at the Council
- Prominent elected Councillor (not in a cabinet position)
- Devolved bodies

| Stakeholder  | What's in it for them?  | What is the ask?  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Primary service provider(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing</li> <li>Day centre</li> <li>Food/ outreach group</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open up new fundraising channels for their own activities (and avoid competition with their own efforts)</li> <li>Create a new resource for the people they work with</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign-up at executive level to co-operate with the programme even if not on a fundraising level</li> <li>Provide an identified contact to liaise with the campaign</li> <li>Support awareness raising about homelessness with volunteers, service users and knowledge of local provision</li> </ol> |

### How do we reach them?

- Homelessness forum or Strategic Housing Partnership
- Frontline contacts working on joint contracts or with shared clients
- Community Liaison posts involved in volunteering or development projects

### Who else could do this?

- Trustees of the organisation who are also involved in other projects
- Commissioners who hold influence over service providers

| Stakeholder   | What's in it for them?  | What is the ask?   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Town centre management / Business Improvement District (BID)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address concerns of businesses about begging without penalising people who are on the streets</li> <li>Provide a positive narrative</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate the campaign into existing networks and events</li> <li>Use communications channels to promote to members/ customers</li> <li>Identify and engage potential donors and ambassadors from the business community</li> </ol> |

**How do we reach them?**

- Council officials within licensing, business enterprise, apprenticeships or similar
- Attend open networking events listed on Chamber of Commerce and similar websites
- Neighbourhood development partnerships or major infrastructure project group meetings

**Who else could do this?**

- Leisure, tourism, night-time economy or other 'Visit...' type group
- Individuals involved in local entrepreneur/small biz networking groups
- Prominent business person with good connections amongst local business people

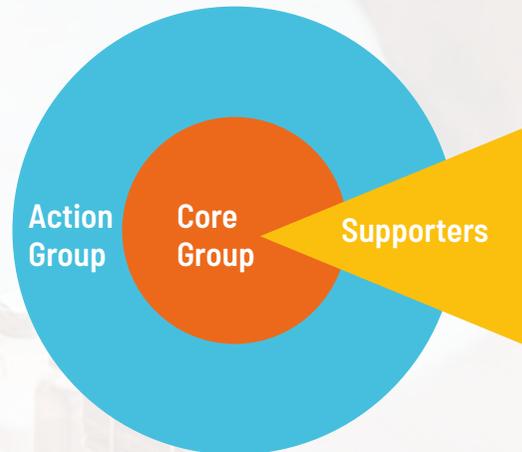
| SCORECARD   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Score yourself 1-10 for your own area. Be honest!</b><br/>There is an 'opportunity cost' involved with Real Change and if it isn't the right time for your area then other things may have a bigger impact.</p> |   |  |
| <b>2. Key players</b>   | a) Cabinet level sponsorship                |  |
|   | b) Main provider co-operation               |  |
|   | c) BID/town centre business network support |  |

### 3. Building the partnership

If the key players are on board, the next objective is to establish the partnership which will be the basis of the campaign.

This section outlines the steps you might want to take in getting everything together once key actors are on board. The key players and how they fit together are depicted in the diagram below.

Figure 6. Partnership Model



#### i. Core Group

The Core Group is the main driving force behind the Campaign, and should be in contact outside of Action Group meetings to ensure actions are being completed and plans developed for sharing with other partners.

Roles in the Core Group could well be played by the same person or organisation, as long as they are able to put aside sufficient time and won't centralise decision making to the extent the partnership as a whole is undermined. There are template role descriptions for each of these key roles in the Resource Library.

- **Chairperson(s):** The Chair is the primary contact and anchor for the Action Group, driving the Campaign, keeping partners involved, following up on actions and connecting people to others they need to speak to.

**The ideal person for this would be:** a local service manager, CVS partnerships manager, or respected faith leader.

- **Local Authority Lead:** This person maintains the link with the Council, using their position and connections as appropriate to make connections and remove barriers.

**The ideal person for this would be:** commissioning manager, head of housing options, senior councillor.

- **Admin:** To process new applications and communicate with the Panel (if you are using one) so that people get the support they need when they need it. This role would also include monitoring and evaluation.

**The ideal person for this would be:** housing association team member or other desk-based role at head office with regular internet connection.

- **Banking:** Accept donations on behalf of the campaign and make payments to partners for approved applications. This role could effectively be combined with the administration if the resource is available.

**The ideal person for this would be:** a local community foundation, CVS organisation or other local charity with finance team (especially if they already distribute grants).

- **Lived Experience Lead:** Involves people with personal insight of homelessness in developing, making decisions and representing the campaign.

**The ideal person for this would be:** someone who has been homeless in the area, accessed services and is now volunteering or working. Alternatively, a frontline worker from a volunteering programme, day centre or recovery group working daily with people at different stages of their journey.

- **Fundraising/Community Lead:** With connections to local business networks and community groups, this role is focused on connecting with groups and getting along to events to get the word out and money in.

**The ideal person for this would be:** Town centre management/Business Improvement District or organisation not working in homelessness.

- **Marketing Lead:** ideally within the Council communications team, this person has a strong grasp of communications and marketing and can take the lead on producing and sharing content to get the campaign visible on and off-line.

**The ideal person for this would be:** Council communications team, or other public sector communications officers with the right skills and an understanding of how homelessness impacts on people's lives.

## ii. Involving people with lived experience of homelessness

Representation of lived experience at the Core Group is important for a number of reasons, not least the principle of 'nothing about us, without us'. People with lived experience could be involved in any of the roles, but a few are particularly relevant, powerful and suited to the possible skills and experiences.

### **Panel Chair/Administrator**

Personalised grants are about getting the things for people that they need, when they need it, not deciding for them what this is. People with lived experience are ideally placed to understand this.

They would need to be set up with a computer/phone to have ready access to emails, and be tech savvy as well as trained on record keeping.

### **Spokesperson/Ambassador**

The message of what can make a real change to homelessness is most powerful and authoritative when it is delivered by someone who has been there, done that and knows themselves what makes a difference.

This could be a team of people willing to speak in person (with appropriate training and support), via videos or even online/in print.

### **Event Volunteer**

Real Change is about everyone helping to end homelessness, including people who are homeless. Current residents and service users may still have challenges of their own, but participating in awareness or fundraising events can be beneficial to their own recovery as well as the campaign.

### **Marketing and Comms**

A key principle of real change is to give only positive messages, including about people who are homeless to avoid further stigma.

People with lived experience can help identify the most powerful messages, as well as avoid anything which might alienate potential beneficiaries.

### iii. Action Group and Supporters

Beside your key group, you'll need an Action Group to help make things happen and supporters who can get behind it.

Roles the Action Group should take on include:

- Sharing marketing materials, press releases and updates via their own networks on and off-line
- Involving people with lived experience in the campaign
- Providing volunteers to attend activities and events on behalf of the campaign
- Nominating members to be on the Independent Panel (if outlined in the Dispersal Policy)
- Making connections and introductions to people who may be able to help get the word out or get money in

Supporters are those who are helping the campaign achieve its aims but not active beneficiaries or stakeholders. Supporters may also be more independent, focusing on getting the word out or getting money in having occasional involvement with activities. Potential support might include:

- Wider staff and residents/beneficiaries from partner organisations
- Faith, youth or community groups with similar aims
- Public sector or housing association staff who understand homelessness and what causes it
- Universities, colleges and schools with active volunteering and community engagement programmes
- Elected officials with an interest in the area

### SCORECARD

**Score yourself 1-10 for your own area. Be honest!**

There is an 'opportunity cost' involved with Real Change and if it isn't the right time for your area then other things may have a bigger impact.

#### 3. Building the partnership

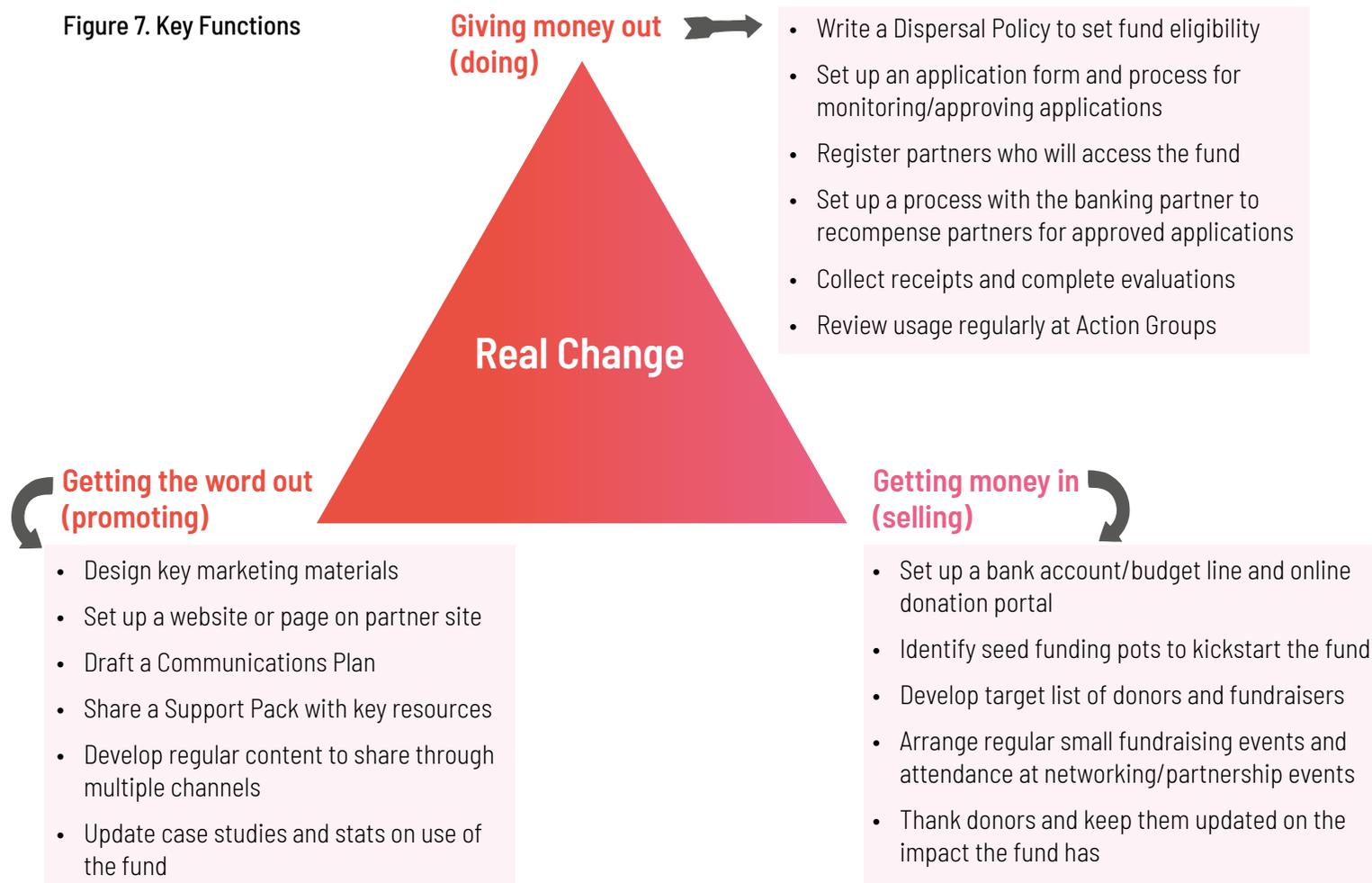
a) Core group to lead on main functions

b) Involvement of people with lived experience

c) Active participation from a minimum of three voluntary sector and two non-homelessness partners

## 4. Making it happen

Figure 7. Key Functions

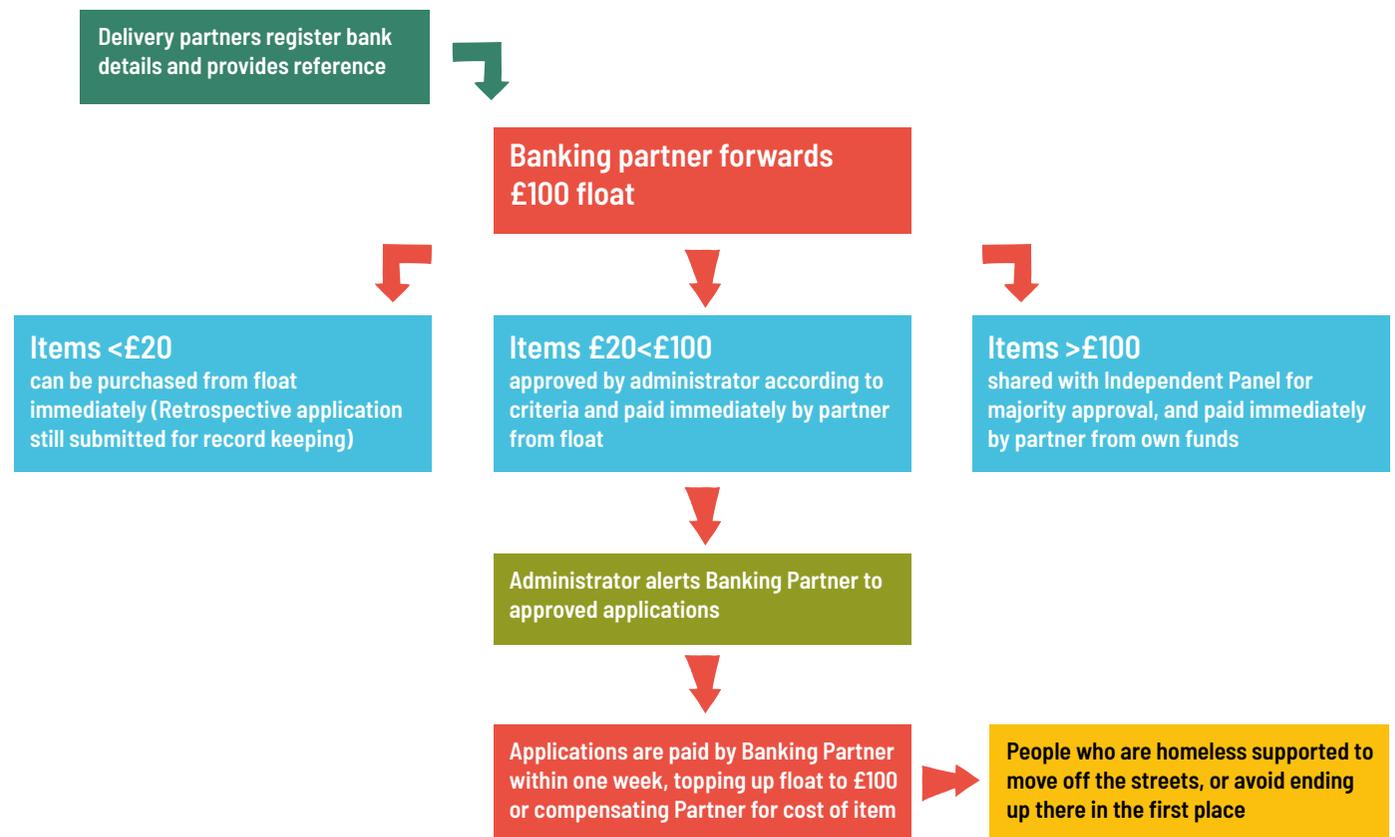


### i. Giving money out

In each location Real Change has been launched it has taken on a slightly adapted form based on the local circumstances and people involved. Based on these experiences, the approach outlined below is recommended as a starting point, to be adapted to your own context.

A more in depth process guide for **Administering Real Change** is provided in the Resource Library, along with templates for all the documents you might need.

Figure 8. Recommended Model for Administering Grants



## ii. Getting the word out

An alternative giving campaign is premised on giving the public another way to donate to ending homelessness other than to people they see in the street. It is essential then that people know about this alternative option, and it is visible at the times and in the places where people encounter street activity.

The method for doing so will be dependent on the channels, skills and individuals involved in your area, but should encompass physical marketing, press and internal media, social media and awareness events. Further ideas are included in the Resource Library, along with a template Communications Plan and Social Media Plan.

The basic marketing suite recommended to develop before launching the campaign is listed opposite. Examples of the key items from Greater Manchester alongside editable Adobe Illustrator (.ai) files are in the Resource Library.

### Print

- A3 poster
- A5 leaflet
- Pop-up banner
- A3 'Prop cards' (for photos)
- Window stickers for shops/ high street properties
- Vinyl Banner

### Digital

- Social media graphic (1200 x 650px & 1000x1000px)
- Localised campaign logo
- PowerPoint slide template (1920x1080px)
- Web banner (320x50px)

## Online presence

Having an online presence is essential for several reasons. There are two approaches you could take to this:

### 1) Page on a partner's website

This should be a neutral third party so it doesn't look like the campaign belongs to any one partner, e.g. a voluntary sector infrastructure group.

### 2) Standalone website

Existing campaigns all have their own website built by the Street Support Network on the Real Change Wigan & Leigh model. If you'd like to use this template to do the same, there are several options which you can negotiate with them directly by contacting [dev@streetsupport.net](mailto:dev@streetsupport.net)

- Access the Github depository for your own developer [free]
- White label version in your own campaign colours [£600, if development capacity is available]
- Depending on the availability of the developer team, further development work may be possible for an additional cost.

Once the website is built, you will also have to purchase the domain locally, and update the website as you go.

Examples of what has worked in getting the word out for existing Real Change campaigns include:

**Groundwork School Assemblies,  
Real Change Wigan & Leigh**

Wigan & Leigh teamed up with the local Princes Trust volunteering project run by national charity Groundwork.

The young people on the project developed their own material and delivered an assembly to a local primary school about homelessness and Real Change.

**Town Crier Launch,  
Real Change Guildford**

To mark the official launch of the Guildford campaign, the town crier was hired for an hour to go through town announcing the campaign.

Doing something different caught people's attention and cemented the other media and online awareness activities which were arranged.

**Business Involvement Showcase,  
Real Change Oldham**

After two local businesses backed the Real Change campaign through their high street shop and property group, a press release was prepared to showcase their involvement.

As well as being shared with local news outlets, this was included in the Council's 'Business Community' newsletter.

**Bus Station Street Stall,  
Real Change Rochdale**

A group of volunteers secured the permission of Rochdale bus station to set up a stall and talk to commuters.

Over the course of a morning, the volunteers (including current residents of the night shelter) handed out leaflets and talked to local people about their experience of homelessness and how to make a Real Change in their community.



### iii. Getting money in

Fundraising activity for Real Change is closely linked to awareness, but eventually, money does need to be raised. Aside from getting the infrastructure in place for people to donate (e.g. a Just Giving or Go Fund Me page) and a place for their donations to go (e.g. a partner's bank account), concerted activity needs to be put into generating funds.

Further ideas, tools for tracking fundraising activity, and a Supporter Pack to send out to partners, is included in the Resource Library. Examples of what has worked in existing campaigns includes:

#### **School Dress Down Day, Real Change Wigan & Leigh**

A pro-active head teacher at a local Wigan primary school arranged a dress down day for as many of the 45,000 students in the borough as they could sign-up.

The Mayor of Greater Manchester was invited to speak at one assembly, and a massive £12,000 was raised in one go.

#### **Sponsored Walk, Real Change Rochdale**

Local partner Sanctuary Trust arranged a sponsored walk through the borough, engaging local churches and even a rugby club.

More than a dozen walkers took on the challenge, and were able to raise over £1,000 doing so.

#### **Arts Benefit Exhibition, Real Change Oldham**

Oldham Youth Council wanted to support Real Change by doing something different.

They developed their own artwork and then sold them off for Real Change at community events. They've already raised over £100 with more to come!

#### **Fusion 21 Foundation Grant, Real Change Wigan & Leigh**

Via partner relationships, an application was made to procurement group Fusion 21's foundation to get the campaign up and running.

Stories and stats were provided in return so they could see what their impact their donation had.

## SCORECARD

### Score yourself 1-10 for your own area. Be honest!

There is an 'opportunity cost' involved with Real Change and if it isn't the right time for your area then other things may have a bigger impact.

#### 4. Making it happen

a) Ability to distribute funds quickly and effectively

b) Marketing support to spread the word

c) Potential fundraising champions to get money in

# D. Scorecard

**If you've been scoring yourself as you go collect the scores into the card below, otherwise take some time to think about where you are against each of the four key areas.**

**Score yourself 1-10 for your own area.**

**Be honest!** There is an 'opportunity cost' involved with Real Change and if it isn't the right time for your area then other things may have a bigger impact.

Add up your score and average it across all 12 points. Highlight anything below a **1-3 in red, 4-5 in orange, 6-10 in green.**

**Average 1-3 or <4 Red =**

The timing probably isn't right.

**Average 4-5 or <6 Orange =**

You might be ready to launch soon.

**Average 6-10 or >6 Green =**

Everything is stacking up. Go for it!



|                                    |  | SCORE |
|------------------------------------|--|-------|
| <b>1. External context</b>         | a) Level of public concern   |       |
|                                    | b) Depth of partnership in the public sector   |       |
|                                    | c) Access to flexible funding pots   |       |
| <b>2. Key players</b>              | a) Cabinet level sponsorship   |       |
|                                    | b) Main provider co-operation  |       |
|                                    | c) BID/town centre business network support  |       |
| <b>3. Building the partnership</b> | a) Core group to lead on main functions  |       |
|                                    | b) Involvement of people with lived experience   |       |
|                                    | c) Active participation from a minimum of three voluntary sector and two non-homelessness partners |       |
| <b>4. Making it happen</b>         | a) Ability to distribute funds quickly and effectively   |       |
|                                    | b) Marketing support to spread the word  |       |
|                                    | c) Potential fundraising champions to get money in   |       |
| <b>Average</b>                     |  |       |

## Are you ready to go for it? >>>>

The Real Change brand, model and resources are free to use for any partner who wishes to set up a campaign in their area and signs up to the core principles of the campaign. To access, please contact Robbie Cowbury...

**[robbie.cowbury@riverside.org.uk](mailto:robbie.cowbury@riverside.org.uk)**  
**07976 924 793**

**Real Change Toolkit**  
Setting up alternative giving in your area

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