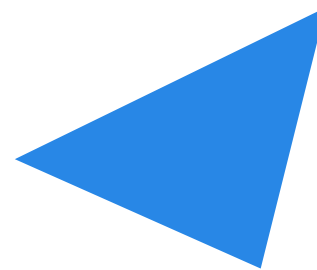# Introduction to Influencing and Social Change

Supporting u3as to engage in their local communities

This training was developed in partnership with Sheila McKechnie Foundation, July 2022

Objectives

- To look at the u3a vision and perspectives around influencing and social change

- To discuss the legal implications and what to be aware of when deciding to raise awareness/bring about change and what actions are appropriate to take

- To look at how you and your u3a might be able to take action and share examples of successful u3a local activity

- To have an opportunity to think about and discuss what your u3a might want to take action on/change in your local area, and how you might do this

Session Overview

Introduction

- u3a movement perspectives

- Developing local activity using the social change grid

BREAK

- Developing local activity using the social change grid (continued)

- How you can get started

Close

Housekeeping – online

We encourage active contributions

- Please amend your Zoom name to include your u3a name

- Please keep your camera on

- Unmute to ask question or share reflections

- Share in chatbox

- Share in breakout room discussions

Breakout rooms

- You will meet in small groups

- Only those in your room can see/hear you or read chat

- Please identify someone from the group to feed back

Introductions & ice breaker

Identify one thing you'd like to come away with from today's training
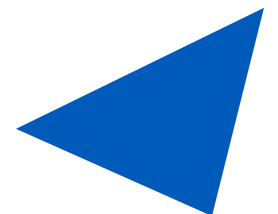
u3a movement perspectives

Introduction from Sam Mauger CEO Third Age Trust

u3a

u3a movement perspective on community involvement

- u3a founders were clear that the movement should have a voice in public policy discussions

  "The u3a movement was originally conceived to play a number of roles – including to have a strong public voice and take action on issues of importance to members and people in later life more broadly."

  Eric Midwinter, u3a co-founder, July 2022

- Community involvement is not new for u3as e.g. Future Lives

- Members want to have more of a voice. Delivering this training is one way to equip members to take action on issues of importance to them

- This work aligns with the u3a strategy and is expected to raise the profile of the movement and attract the next generation of members.

Who said this?

"Campaigning, advocacy and political activity are all legitimate and valuable activities for charities to undertake."

u3a

Legal implications of charity influencing

What's legally allowed

- "Campaigning, advocacy and political activity are all **legitimate and valuable activities** for charities to undertake." *Charity Commission guidance*

- You **can influence public opinion** on an issue, for example by drawing attention to it

- But you **cannot endorse a political party** or encourage people to vote one way or another

What charities think

- Politics is about how we live our lives and charities often have a **moral obligation** to engage in some political activity

- This relates to current debates about the role of charity – Victorian philanthropy versus **civil society in a modern democracy**

u3a Influencing and Social Change Activity Checklist

What does this mean for u3a?

A campaigning activity **checklist** was developed to support u3as to make decisions about whether to support a campaign locally – a form of quality control.

Some of the considerations include:

- Does it **align with our charitable objectives** and strategic direction?
- Is there a clear **intention**?
- What is the likelihood of **success**?
- Is it an effective use of **resources**?
- What are the **risks**? e.g. reputational

u3a

Group discussion

This section has suggested how u3as can begin to consider ways to influence and engage their communities in social change.

Any reflections and/or questions so far?
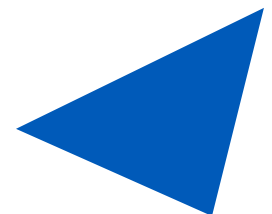
u3a

Developing local action using the social change grid

u3a

How the social change grid works

- The social change grid is a **practical tool** based on research into the activities of 400 people across the UK who have led successful social change action

- It recommends your approach includes **4 types of activity** in order to have impact, including:
  - community-based
  - activity designed to change individual lives for the better
  - public awareness
  - lobbying to influence decision makers

- Where you start your activity is **flexible**, depending on the opportunities & resources you identify

u3a

What the social change grid looks like

Community

Informal
Messy, unpredictable

Public sphere

Where local communities or communities of interest come together

Where public debate and opinion happens

Individual

Societal

Where change is made to an individual's life through support or a service

Where power traditionally resides and decisions are made

Service provision

Formal
Controlled, Measured

Institutional power

u3a
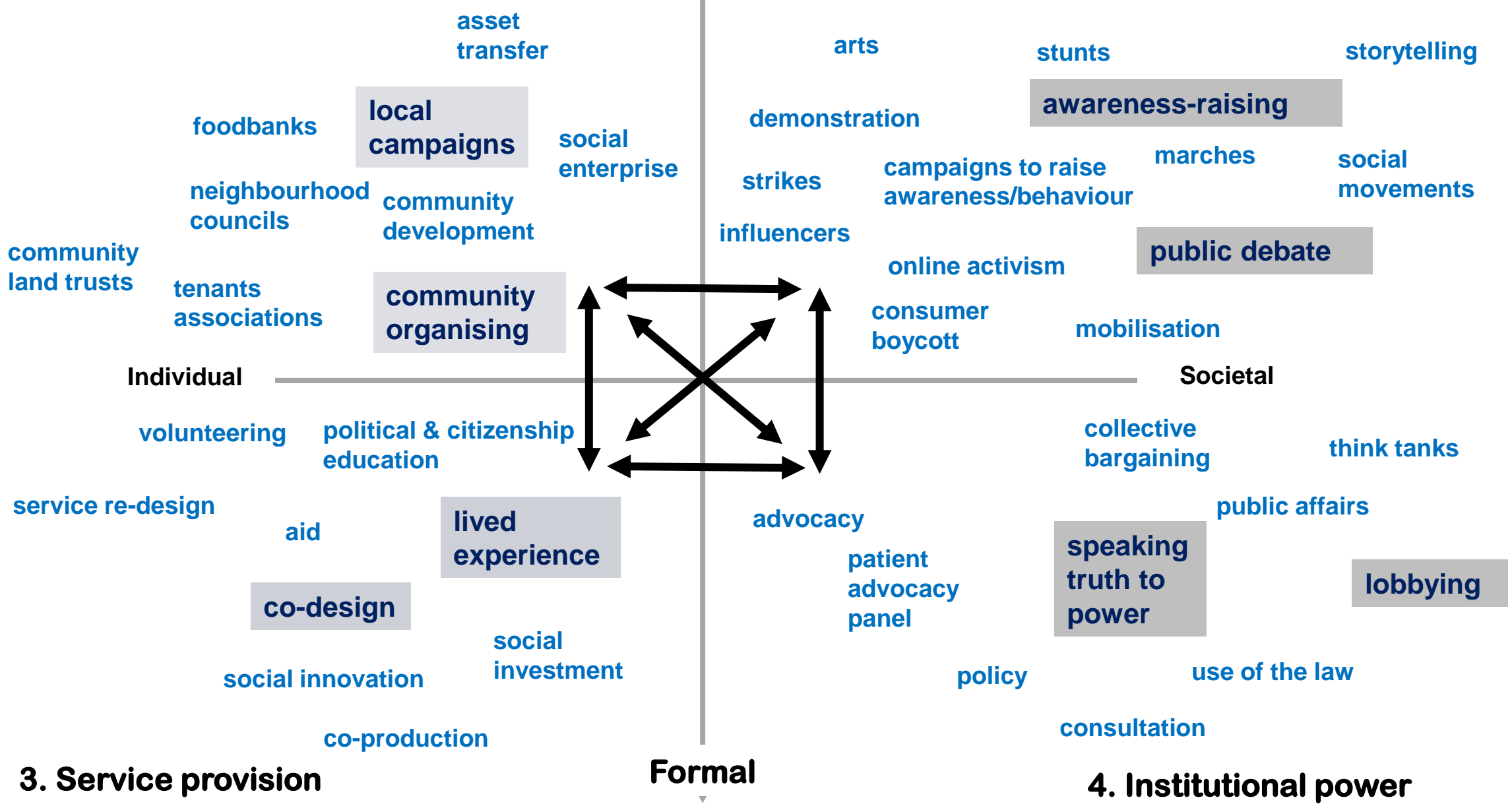
Examples of the many activities people around the UK adopt to make their voices heard have been mapped onto the social change grid.

Informal

1. Community **2. Public sphere**

asset transfer

arts stunts storytelling

foodbanks **local campaigns** awareness-raising

social enterprise demonstration marches social movements

neighbourhood councils community development strikes campaigns to raise awareness/behaviour

community land trusts influencers

tenants associations **community organising** online activism **public debate**

consumer boycott mobilisation

Individual ——————————————————— **Societal**

volunteering political & citizenship education collective bargaining think tanks

service re-design advocacy public affairs

aid **lived experience** **speaking truth to power** **lobbying**

co-design patient advocacy panel

social innovation social investment policy use of the law

co-production consultation

3. Service provision **Formal** **4. Institutional power**

u3a

u3as have made their voices heard
in a range of different ways already.

Here are four examples of their
activity mapped out on the social
change grid.

u3a

Community activity

North Down & Ards u3a group are a member of 'Rubbish Friends', spotlighting rubbish hotspots around Southport in the North–West.

The group identifies where the worst rubbish piles are and meets regularly to clean it up, thereby contributing to a cleaner environment.

'Rubbish Friends' organise via an on-line Facebook page followed by nearly 500 people of all ages.

u3a

Public awareness activity

Building momentum on climate issues was the focus of u3as 'Countdown to COP 26' activity, ahead of the high-profile 2021 global climate conference in Glasgow.

Activity included public workshops held on an electric bus to discuss what intergenerational action could contribute to positive solutions in the future.

u3a

Institutional power activity

u3a member Brenda Ainsley coordinated the movement's 'Countdown to COP26' conference presence.

While at COP26, she lobbied former US Vice President Al Gore on climate action. He was particularly interested in u3a's intergenerational approach.

Brenda (next to the former Vice-President)

Photo credit: The Climate Reality Project

u3a

Service provision activity

As part of the 'High Street Connects Communities' Project, Barnsley u3a members documented their local high street as a way to monitor changes during the pandemic

As a result a year on, the local Council asked them to input on local planning. They are now championing a safe & Age Friendly town for the future.

Social Change Grid

A summary of recent u3a social change activity
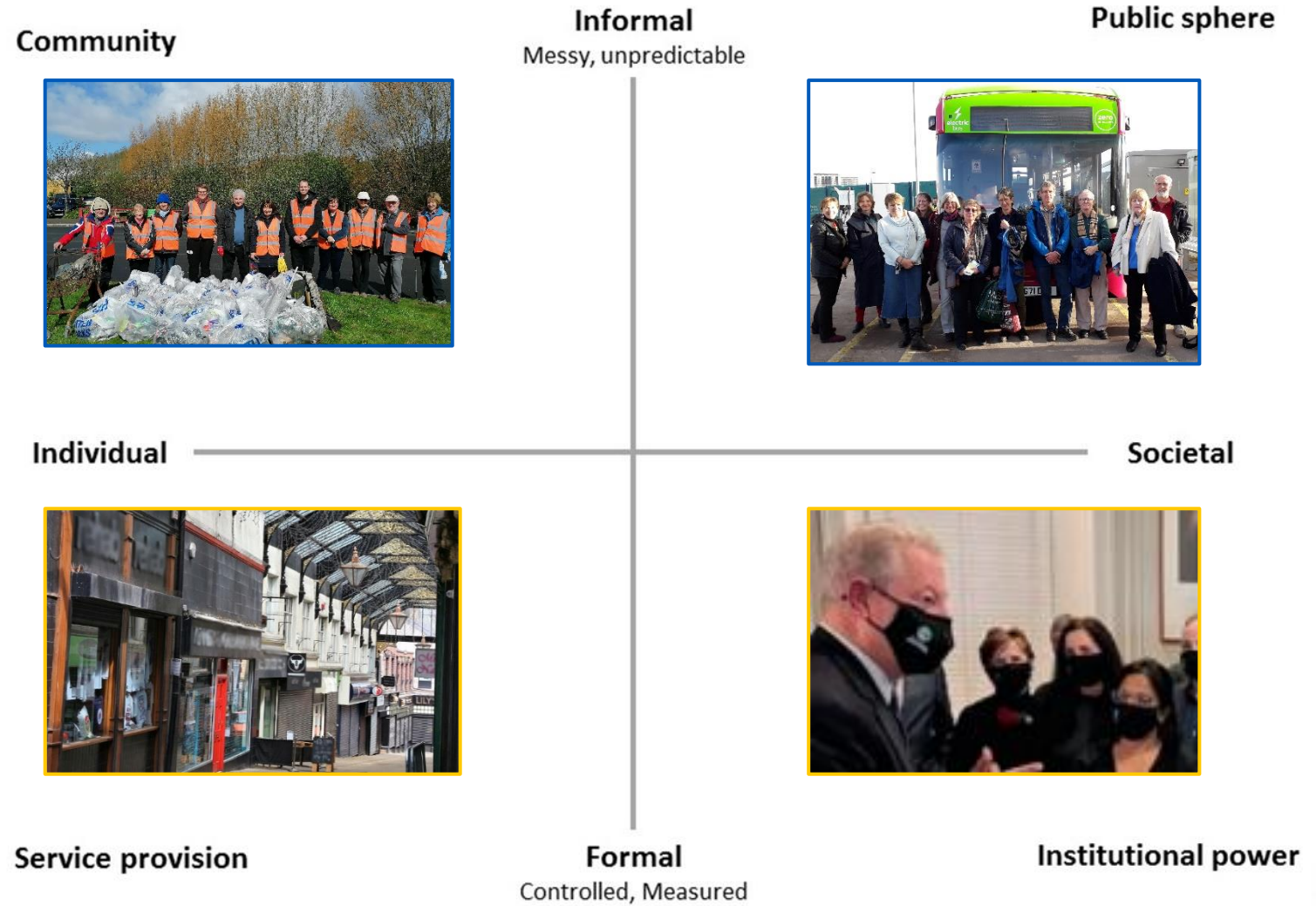
u3a

Short Break

Please return <u>promptly</u>
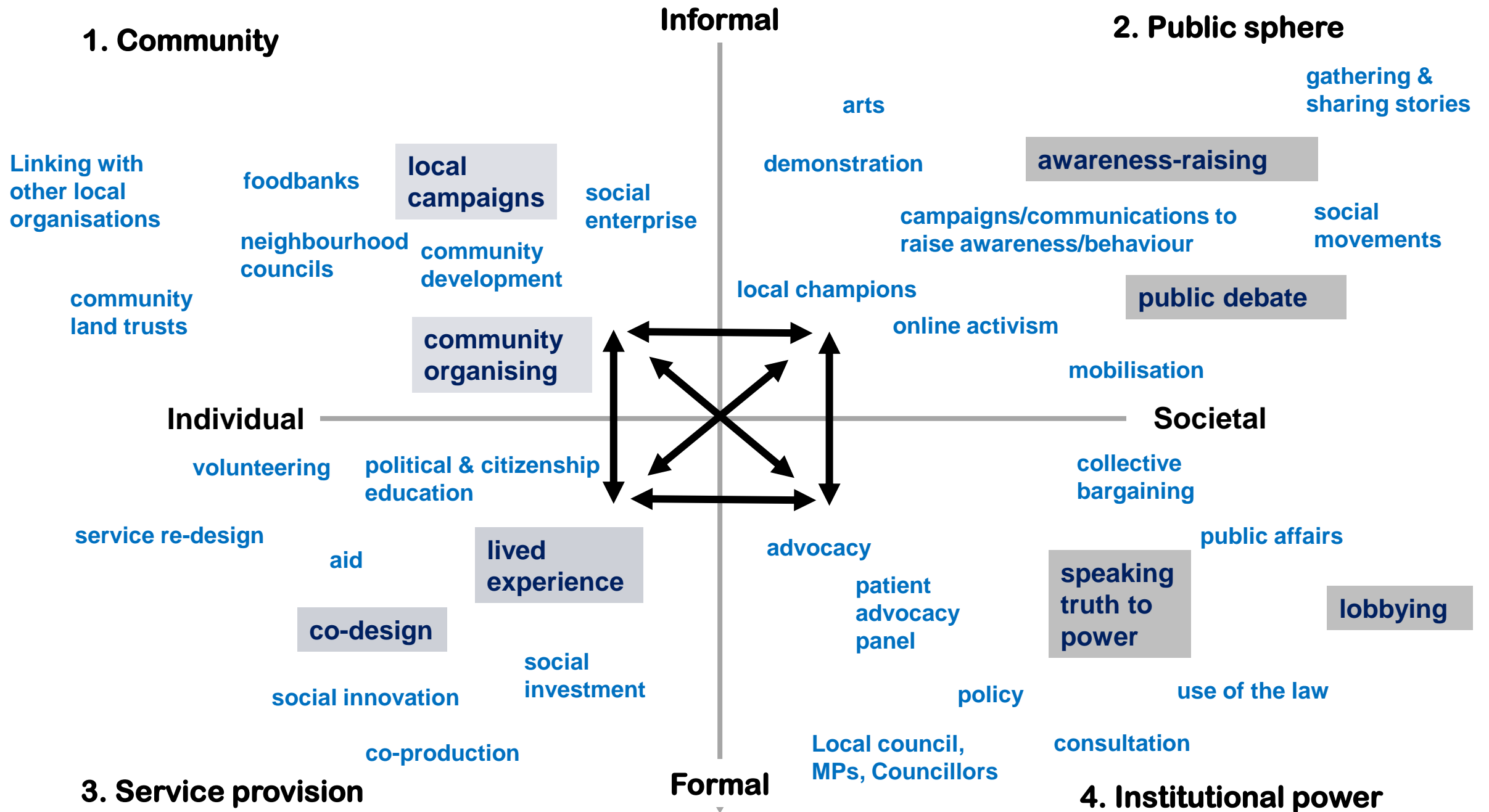
Breakout rooms 1

Scenarios

1. Your u3a group wants to make the impact of the **closure of the local library** more visible.
2. Your u3a is concerned about the **lack of local banking facilities** in the local community
3. Your u3a wants to get involved in **stopping the reduction of community support services for those over 60** and want to raise awareness of their importance
4. Your u3a is concerned about the **lack of seating** in the local community

For the scenario you are given, how would you go about **building awareness and influence** of the issues affecting many people in your community?

Map out your activity – including, if possible, activity in each of the 4 quadrants of the social change grid.

You will be allocated to a group for **20 minutes.**

Each group to identify a **feedback person** to share 4 key actions you could take

Informal

1. Community

2. Public sphere

gathering & sharing stories

arts

demonstration

awareness-raising

Linking with other local organisations

foodbanks

local campaigns

social enterprise

campaigns/communications to raise awareness/behaviour

social movements

neighbourhood councils

community development

local champions

public debate

community land trusts

online activism

community organising

mobilisation

Individual

Societal

volunteering

political & citizenship education

collective bargaining

service re-design

public affairs

aid

lived experience

advocacy

speaking truth to power

lobbying

co-design

patient advocacy panel

social innovation

social investment

policy

use of the law

co-production

Local council, MPs, Councillors

consultation

3. Service provision

Formal

4. Institutional power

Feedback from breakout rooms 1

A staged approach to local activity

u3a

How you can get started

1. Community involvement & working across political spectrum are **legitimate & valuable activities for a u3a**, but activities must align with u3a's charitable object clause. Once you have a suggested area/topic you want raise awareness of and or bring about change, to ensure your activities are appropriate and you have taken all necessary steps, please refer to the downloadable checklist on the u3a website.

2. Whilst activities may be done by a **few members** in a single u3a, **across several u3as, and/or in partnership** with other groups, a u3a committee should approve the activity before getting started. There is more information about this in the FAQ document (shared after this workshop).

u3a object clause

"the advancement of education and, in particular, the education of older people and those who are retired from full time work, by all means including associated activities conducive to learning and personal development."

Breakout rooms

Taking activity forward within your u3a group

Breakout rooms 2

This is an opportunity to consider how you could take local community involvement forward within your u3a group. Two key points to discuss are:

1. What issues do you care about? What do you want to change?

2. What could you do to make a change?

You will be allocated to a group for **15 minutes.**

Each group to identify a **feedback person.**
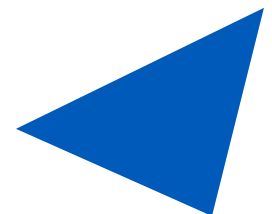
Feedback from breakout rooms 2

u3a

u3a

And finally...

Please reflect on & share:

One thing you have learnt today

One thing you will consider in planning your local activity

Resources, feedback & next steps

- **Please complete an evaluation form.** As this is a new workshop, we would appreciate you taking some time to give us your honest and constructive feedback

- You will also be emailed a copy of the PowerPoint presentation (the final slide includes a list of links to resources), checklist and FAQ document.

- The follow up session will be taking place on **Monday 24 April 2023 at 10am** to network with others who have attended this workshop and discuss action you may be planning to take locally.

u3a
learn, laugh, live

Thank You

U3A
156 Blackfriars Road
London, UK
SE1 8EN

Contact the National Office
Tel: 020 8466 6139
Email: info@u3a.org.uk
u3a.org.uk

twitter.com/u3a_uk
facebook.com/u3auk
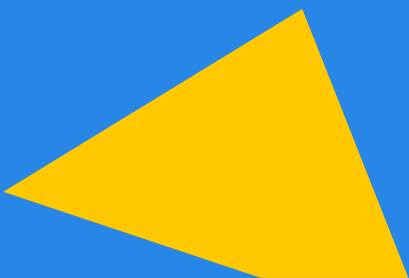
Some influencing and social change resources

SMK
SMK has produced a number of resources in relation to its emerging work on unleashing social power. These include its seminal **Social Power report**, its Social Power **podcast** and its **annual campaigners survey**

Activist leaders arise! by Sue Tibballs, Chief Executive of SMK

u3a movement perspectives
- u3a - Influencing and Social Change
- Influencing and Social Change u3a Checklist
- Liz Thackray and Eric Midwinter In Conversation | Armchair Discussions with u3a | u3a UK - YouTube
- Key resources include the u3a **recruitment and retention toolkit** and the u3a **Impact pages**

Legal implications of campaigning
- Charity Commission **campaigning & political activity guidance for charities (CC9)**
- NCVO KnowHow charity guidance website **campaigning & influencing section**

External environment research
- Civic Power Fund's **Growing the Grassroots** 2022 report .looks at how we can strengthen movements through building local power.