

# Support through sunflowers: Growing a community's awareness of hidden disabilities

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Lead for Compassionate Isle of Man



**Slide 1**

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**CL1**

**Send me the image file**

Challis, Lonan, 21/09/2021

# Isle of Man



CL2  
CL12



Images: Visit Isle of Man, <https://www.visitisleofman.com/>  
Bike Adventures, <https://www.bikeadventures.co.uk/product/isle-of-man-cycling-holiday-2020/>

## Slide 2

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**CL2** Do you have any other IOM photos?

Challis, Lonan, 21/09/2021

**CL12** Where was this photo sourced from?

Challis, Lonan, 22/09/2021



# Origin of the Hidden Disability Sunflower



Image: Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme Limited, <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/what-is-a-hidden-disability>



# Hidden disabilities: What are they?



**A hidden disability is a disability that may not be immediately obvious.**

“Hidden disabilities don't have physical signs and include learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. They can also include asthma, COPD, and other lung conditions as well as chronic illnesses such as renal failure, diabetes, and sleep disorders when those diseases significantly impact day-to-day life.”<sup>1</sup>

CL13



## Slide 4

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**CL13**

Is this definition copied from somewhere? If so, you will need to reference this

Challis, Lonan, 22/09/2021



# What are the potential impacts on the person, their families and the community?



- Living with these conditions can make daily life more demanding for many people.<sup>1</sup>
- Without visible evidence of the hidden disability, it is frequently difficult for others to acknowledge the challenges faced by people.<sup>1</sup>





# How has Covid-19 impacted people with hidden disabilities?



The needs of vulnerable people were often overlooked:

- Masks made **lip reading** impossible
- People living with COPD struggled with **breathing**
- Vulnerable unable to **access home delivery**
- Heightened levels of **anxiety** due to uncertainty, causing fear and trepidation
- As medical/mental health staff were **re-deployed**, people felt more anxious – felt adrift





# What drives us to promote change?

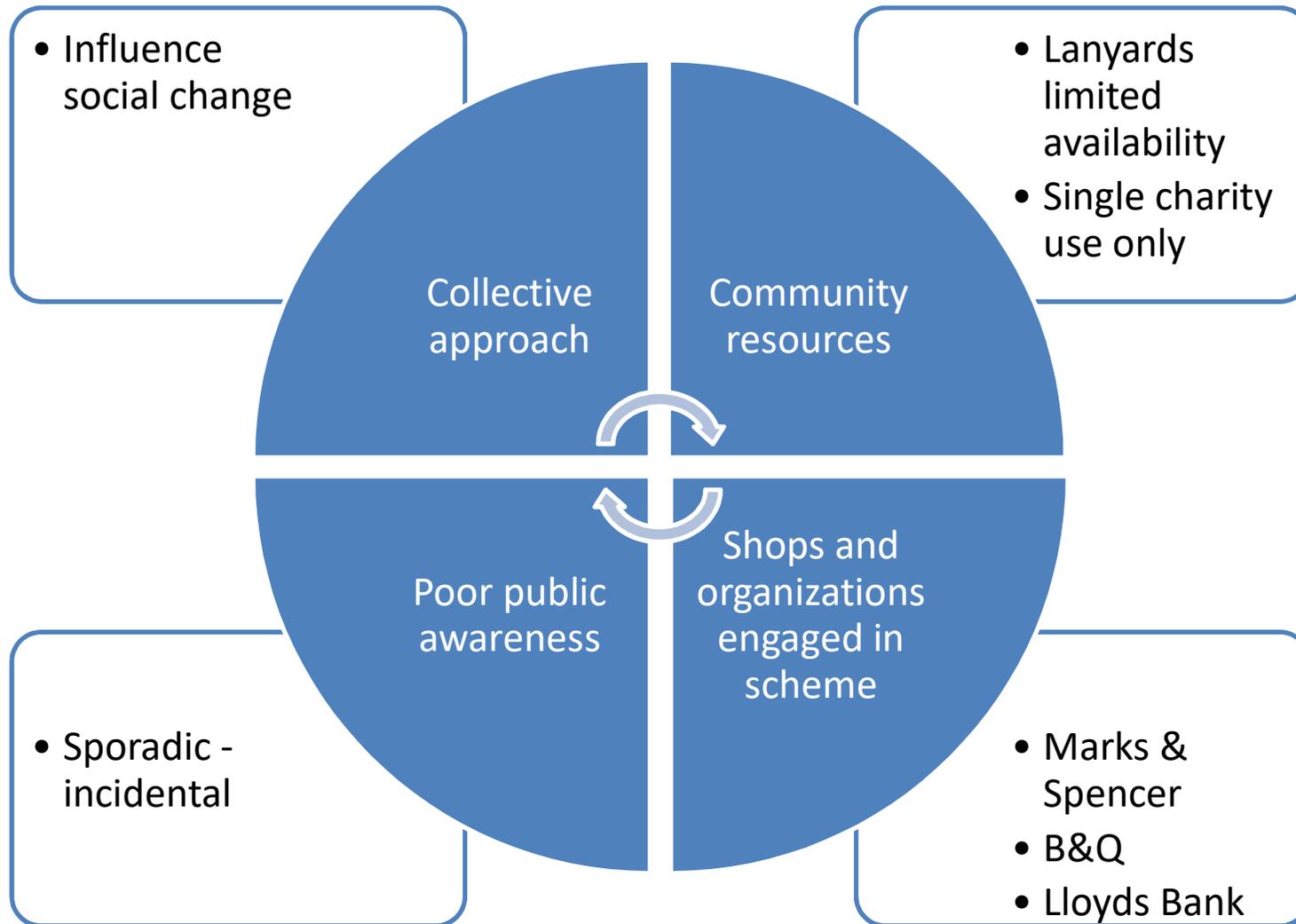


- Collective power to influence social change
- Equity
- Values
- Social inclusion
- Advocacy



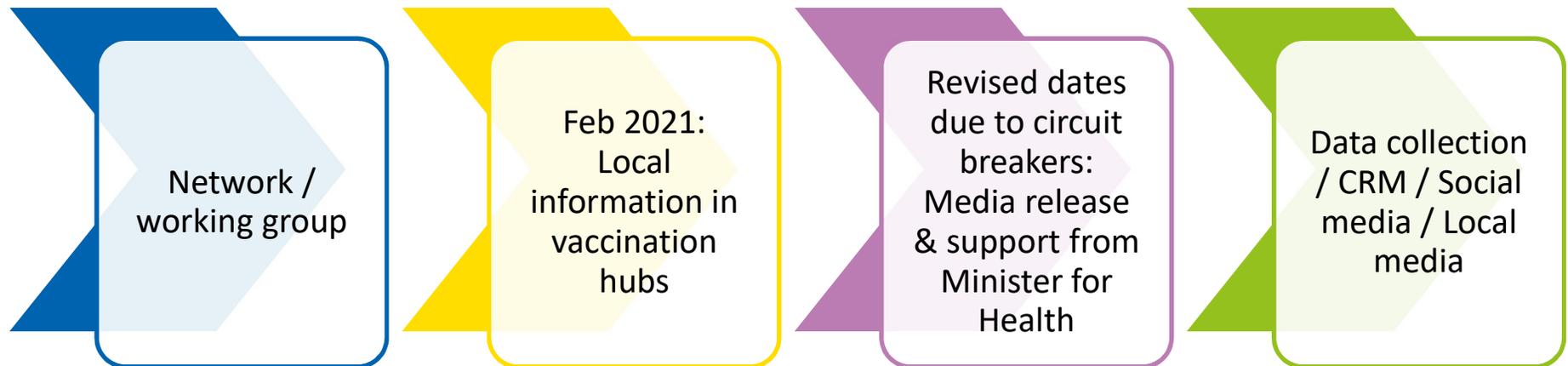


# SWOT





# Early conversations: Engagement



- Early 2021: Contacted re: Campaign
- Feb 16 2021: First conversation
- Feb 18 2021: How to create a Sunflower Friendly Island





# Partnership between CIOM and Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Ltd



Online training event - data and results of survey:

Over **200 businesses and individuals** registered for the course over the 3 days.

**50%** were '**extremely satisfied**' with the training with the other 50% in the top 3rd of the range. No dissatisfied attendees.

**100%** were happy with the **date and times** of the webinars.

**100%** were happy with the **length** of the training.

**100%** were happy with the **Q&A** section

**84%** were **very likely to recommend** the Sunflower training to other businesses and associates. The other 16% were in the middle of the range with none in the 'unlikely' area.





# Building community capacity



- Building resilience
- Reciprocity
- Small acts of kindness
- Building community
- Compassion enacted more widely (at work, at home)

**Not every disability is visible.**

**Some are just not obvious.**

**HIDDEN disabilities**

People choose to wear the Sunflower to discreetly indicate that they have an invisible disability and may need help, assistance or simply more time.

1. Ask if you can help
2. Be kind
3. Listen closely
4. Have patience
5. Do not judge
6. Show respect





# Unanticipated results



Santander  
(including  
Jersey)

Manx Utilities

Isle of Man  
Transport

Vaccination  
Hubs

Facebook

ME Support  
Group





# Conclusions



Whilst we can adopt the scheme and promote it, we are unable to identify the long-term cultural and social impact on the community

Positive uptake and response to the Sunflower training programme. In future, this may promote further awareness of hidden disabilities in the community.





## Comment...



**“Companies and organisations can make tangible differences to build stronger relationships, develop wellbeing, organisational resilience and engender a compassionate ethos.**

**Retailers can make the shopping experience less stressful and more enjoyable and accessible, encouraging people to return.”**





# Thank you

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Stay in touch, sign up to our newsletter at  
[www.hospice.org.im](http://www.hospice.org.im)

Reference:

1. Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme Limited. What is a hidden disability [webpage on the internet]. [cited 2021 September 21]. Available from: <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/what-is-a-hidden-disability>