



# **Spice Impact Measurement: Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk**

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## Abstract

At the heart of Spice's work there are hundreds of thousands of hours; time earned and spent by our extraordinary members across the UK. People taking small and large actions on a daily basis to make their communities a better place to live. These actions are supported by a new kind of partnership between individuals, public services, community organisations and the private sector. Our evaluation demonstrates that when we work together we can achieve meaningful change.

For Spice it was essential that our values were reflected in the way that we designed and developed our evaluation. The approach needed to give a voice to the individuals involved in the programmes and to support the ongoing learning process for Spice and its partners. The evaluation of our impact involved over 1000 community members, and nearly 300 partner staff who contributed their opinions through three surveys, in-depth interviews and 33 participatory workshops.

In many ways the Spice Time Credit model is a simple concept; an hour contributed earns one time credit that be used to access an hour's activity. What we have learnt over the last 6 years and what has been confirmed through our 2 year evaluation is that this simple model combined with our way of working with partners, creates a wide range of positive outcomes for individuals, services and communities.

Not only are Time Credits an effective way of engaging new people in their communities, they are a way of valuing and recognizing existing volunteers. For everyone it opens up access to spend activities, encouraging people to try something new. The benefits to health, well-being, social networks and individual self-worth speak for themselves throughout the report. Measuring the change in partner organisations has also been key to this evaluation. Our partners are seeing tangible differences where Time Credits are used, enabling them to recruit and retain volunteers, respond better to community issues, support involvement in service settings and achieve better outcomes.

### The results of our evaluation:

#### Levels of participation

1. Time Credits are an effective way to engage people in giving their time to their communities, and community organisations, in a sustainable way. While this is true for many different groups, it is most notable for people who are new to giving their

time, people under the age of 35, and when families are able to earn and spend Time Credits together.

2. Time Credits also motivate people who are already giving their time to continue. The amount of time people regularly give through Time Credits programmes is notably higher than the national average for volunteering. Nationally, only around two thirds of volunteers (66%) give their time at least once a month whereas 62% of Spice volunteers giving their time at least once a week.

### Impacts for individuals and communities

3. Time Credits lead to sustainable improvements in quality of life. 65% of members reported that Time Credits have helped to improve their quality of life within the first year, and this figure rises to 75% for people who have been members for 18 months to three years.

4. Time Credits have opened up many opportunities for people to get involved in new activities. Over 40% of respondents reported that they now regularly do things they didn't do before, and 49% feel more able to do things they weren't able to do before. 95 Spice members also reported that they have been incentivised through Time Credits to start a new community group.

These results are despite the early stage of many Time Credits programmes at the time the data was collected, and reflects the way Time Credits work to support people along a process of change. The 'newness' of the currency, the activities available to people, and the widening of social networks, are all factors that incentivise people to get involved. The associated benefits help to sustain people's desire to give their time.

5. In addition to their value for a wide demographic, Time Credits offer value as a complementary currency specifically for people and families with lower incomes. Among people in this group, Time Credits are seen as a means to do things they couldn't otherwise afford to do, which leads to greater financial and social inclusion.

6. Time Credits improve quality of life in many different ways, most notably by helping people to build their sense of contribution, share skills with others, take part in more community activities, and make new friends and social connections. In a small number of individual cases, the benefits of Time Credits have included helping people into employment.

This means that Time Credits have benefits that can appeal to a wide ranging demographic, and are likely to influence a number of important factors that help to build more resilient people and communities.

7. Time Credits help people to adopt healthier lifestyles and to improve physical and mental well-being. They also help to tackle issues of loneliness and social isolation. For 58% of respondents, greater involvement in new and different activities has helped to build confidence, and for 71% this involvement has helped to expand their social connections. A total of 45% of respondents reported feeling healthier as a result. 19% of people already say that they now have less need to go to the doctor since earning and spending Time Credits. People with a disability were significantly more likely to report that they felt they wanted to do, were able to do, and were now doing new things, since they began earning and spending Time Credits.<sup>1</sup> These are known drivers of improved individual well-being, and factors that contribute towards building more resilient and active communities. Time Credits therefore have the potential to generate greater impact at scale, through more time and focus on realizing benefits at a community level, as well as on an individual basis. By improving people's individual well-being Time Credits already support the work of many organisations and services. Across a community, Time Credits could be more closely linked with wider health promotion, and primary and secondary prevention initiatives, leading to positive impacts for health and social care services over the longer term.

8. Spice continues to focus on developing a currency with sustainable value, which has been difficult for other models to achieve. There are many examples of how valuable Time Credits are to people. The availability of appropriate spend opportunities, which appeal to Spice's target populations, was often highlighted as central to the Time Credits scheme working well. This will be an area that requires ongoing attention as Spice continues to grow and work with different communities. Understanding how people want to spend their Time Credits, and how this desire might change over time, will remain central to a sustainable model. Also important is the support available to make use of spend opportunities, especially for people with higher level support needs. Both of these things – spend opportunities being available and accessible – are closely linked to increasing levels of participation and impact.

### **Change in organisations:**

9. Time Credits generate early benefits in organisations – 78% report already seeing clear benefits as a result of Time Credits. This includes making better use of skills and resources in communities (62%) and being able to deliver improved access to services with the same resources (48%), for example by freeing up staff time. Spice has deliberately been working with a broad range of organisations, developing experience and insight in how to work effectively in different contexts. They are now focusing on how to more quickly translate these early benefits for organisations into longer term sustainable changes, which support the journey towards co-production. This includes helping

organisations to rapidly focus in on the specific aims for Time Credits, and the speed with which Time Credits become embedded in organisations.

10. Time Credits have a positive impact on the range of options that organisations can offer, for example by providing access to new and different activities, and a higher quality or broader range of services without additional cost. However, there is still a journey for many organisations to make, from simply recognising people as assets and resources, to helping those people to become owners of their organisation's assets and resources.

11. Organisations have reported that it is most important for Time Credits to deliver on making volunteers feel more valued (85%), strengthening their reputation in the community (79%), providing more opportunities to give time (74%) and promoting what they do to more people (74%). For more than half of the organisations that provided data for this evaluation, these benefits are already being achieved.

12. Time Credits create opportunities for organisations to collaborate and build stronger networks with each other. They do this by creating a new shared language and framework for co-operation. And while at this stage there are only very few examples of this co-operation leading to the creation of new services, these connections have led to more effective access to existing services with a clear aspiration for greater collaboration in the future.

### **Walking the Walk**

In addition to setting out the result from our 2-year evaluation I will discuss the methodology of the evaluation. For Spice it was essential that the methodology of the impact measurement reflected the three values of the organisation.

#### ***People are Changemakers:***

To reflect this value, our evaluation needed to engage the many. Over the 2 years, over a 1000 members took part in three surveys and 33 participatory workshops. The focus was on capturing the stories of the members, highlighting the incredible journeys that our members have been on.

#### ***Together we Work:***

Our work is built on the principle that to achieve change we need partnerships between community members, professional staff, informal community solutions and formal public services. This evaluation needed to work in partnership with all our stakeholders to truly reflect the multi-faceted nature of

our programmes. Over 300 professional staff took part in 2 surveys and many participatory workers.

### **Change that is meaningful:**

Spice is committed to creating meaningful change in communities. Our evaluation therefore needed to be independent, robust and include a large sample size. We invested in an external evaluation company who delivered quantitative and qualitative research over a two year period.

### **Introduction to Spice:**

Spice is social enterprise based in the UK, running 36 social community currencies. Spice was launched in 2009 and has become the fastest growing community currency organisation in Europe. Founded by Becky Booth and Tris Dyson, Spice now has 34 highly committed and experience staff. Our currencies are based in local governments, housing projects, schools, health and social care organisations. In addition to the public and community sector partners Spice has signed up 800 business venues where members of the community can spend time credits.



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## Introduction:

At the heart of Spice's work there are hundreds of thousands of hours; time earned and spent by our extraordinary members across the UK. People taking small and large actions on a daily basis to make their communities a better place to live. These actions are supported by a new kind of partnership between individuals, public services, community organisations and the private sector.

Spice is a social enterprise in the UK, set up to develop Time-based social currencies. Spice currently runs 36 currencies, hosted by municipalities/councils, schools, housing associations and health and social care projects. We have over 800 organisations who have integrated Time Credits into their work, 20,000 people have earned Time Credits and there are over half a million hours in circulation.

Spice grew out of the Wales Institute for Community Currencies (WICC), a partnership project funded by the European Union (EU) to develop new social currencies for communities in ex-mining areas in South Wales.

When the EU programme ended in 2009, Spice was established to develop the work of WICC into a wider geographical remit, to develop programmes that included the voluntary, public and private sector, and to create a national network of local Time Currencies.

Spice now has a team of 34 staff working across the UK, supporting organisations to design and develop Time Based currencies.

## Spice strategy

Spice's vision is to create nations of connected communities. Spice has three organisational objectives to achieve this vision:

1. Support organisations to deliver high quality, high impact Time Credits programmes
2. Support organisations to develop a more co-productive culture
3. Work with policy makers and funders to foster an environment that supports co-productive service delivery.

## Objectives of Time Credits

Spice has developed Time Credits as a tool for building stronger communities and co-produced services where people are active and equal participants. Spice believes in the power of people to create positive change. Time Credits act as a means to encourage more people to get more involved in their local



community by giving their time. Through this, Spice's projects work towards improved outcomes for individuals, organisations and communities.

**Individuals** — By encouraging people to engage with local community organisations, Time Credits create opportunities for individuals to learn new skills, gain confidence and raise their aspirations. Following increased participation, individuals have better access to peer and community support networks, and feel they have something positive to contribute. By spending Time Credits, individuals can try new activities and improve their health and wellbeing. Many participants have commented that through the Time Credit network they have been able to try activities they could not previously afford.

**Organisations** — Time Credits can be used by organisations to engage with new groups or to encourage more active involvement from service users in the design and delivery of services. Involving service users in this way can bring new skills and insight, and shape services so that they better respond to need. Organisations and providers are connected through the Time Credit network and are able to make better use of community assets. Organisations participating in Spice programmes include local authorities, housing providers, schools, health and social care providers and a wide range of community organisations.

**Communities** — Time Credits connect groups and services across a community and create opportunities to share assets and skills, and to collaborate. Communities are better able to support each other, with more people giving more time in the local community, and with individuals and groups outside of their usual social network.

### **Using Time Credits as a tool for co-production**

Spice Time Credits can be used to engage people in the design and delivery of their public and community services and to support people to take a more active role in their communities. Time Credits support services and neighbourhoods to become more effective agents of change. Whether this is with pupils in schools, tenants in housing associations or local people working with their community anchor organisation, using Time Credits as a tool increases active engagement, reduces dependency and builds community and individual esteem. Through Time Credits, people are encouraged to get involved in their community, to make decisions about how services are run, and to help create and actively deliver services alongside professionals.

Using Time Credits to support a move towards co-production helps services and activities to become more effective, as service users and their

communities increasingly help to design and deliver outcomes. This encourages buy-in and ownership of services by the community, resulting in sustainable projects and services that offer better value for money. People grow in confidence, they build new relationships, and the sense of community increases, leading to increased wellbeing for participants, professionals and communities.

### The Model:

The Spice currencies are fiat currencies backed by the broad range of options that people can spend their Time Credits on.

How Time Credits work: 1 hour = 1 hour



Individuals earn credits by giving an hour of time to their community or service. For example, it could be a Dad going along to a primary school to help run an afterschools club, a school pupil mentoring a young pupil at school, a lady in alcohol recovery services who teaches mindfulness classes or other clients in recovery. In all these instances, individuals earn 1 Time Credit for each hour that they give.

These Time Credits can then be spent in a huge variety of ways. They can be spent in the original organisation where they were earned. For example, the Dad goes to the primary school and spend credits going along to the family film night. The film night is two time credits per person for the two hour event. An individual might spend their Time Credit in another local organisation in the community. For example, they earned it at school but spend it at the local community centre's training course. Individuals can spend their Time Credits in the local and national businesses that are part of the network. This includes local leisure centres, cinemas, theatres, hairdressers, national tourist attractions. There are currently 800 places to send.



We use paper notes with a domination of 1 hour for 1 note. Each project has its own front and all have the same back of the note to allow for exchange between currencies.

### Our evaluation research methodology:

Key to our evaluation was developing a methodology that reflected the values of the organisation. Creating meaningful change is one of key values and investing in measuring the change we were creating is central to our work.

We commissioned an external organisation, Apteligen, to be our evaluation partners. Having developed our organisational theory of change and a outcomes framework with our partner organisations we set out over an 18month period to evaluate all of our programmes.

Over the 18months we ran three surveys for participants and two surveys for professional staff.

We had 1102 unique responses from Spice members. We had almost 300 responses from professional staff. This produced a robust statistical significant sample size for both members and staff.





In addition to the survey we ran 33 workshops to generate qualitative data.

These workshops were made up of members of our projects, staff from the organisations who have integrated Time Credits. There were a mixture of senior project managers, front line workers, CEO's who came along to the workshops over the 18month period.

We used a broad variety of variety of tools in the workshops including individual and organisational journey mapping, asset mapping and casestudy collection.

In the spring of 2015 we repeated the surveys with our members and began to include standard data that will now be tracked over years. Our Summer 2015 results now act as a baseline for all future surveys.

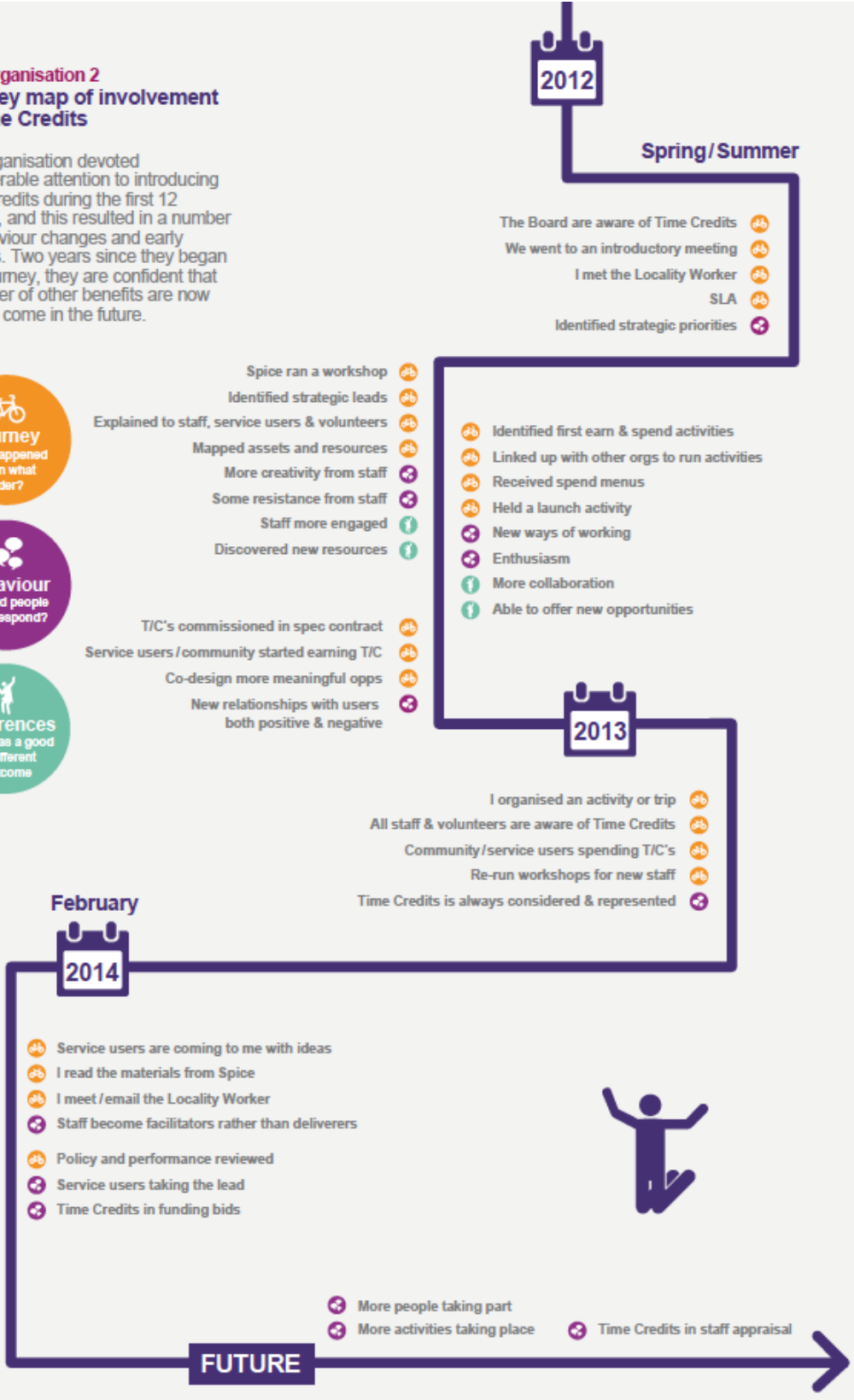
**Host organisation 2**  
**Journey map of involvement**  
**in Time Credits**

This organisation devoted considerable attention to introducing Time Credits during the first 12 months, and this resulted in a number of behaviour changes and early benefits. Two years since they began their journey, they are confident that a number of other benefits are now likely to come in the future.

**Journey**  
 What happened and in what order?

**Behaviour**  
 How did people react/respond?

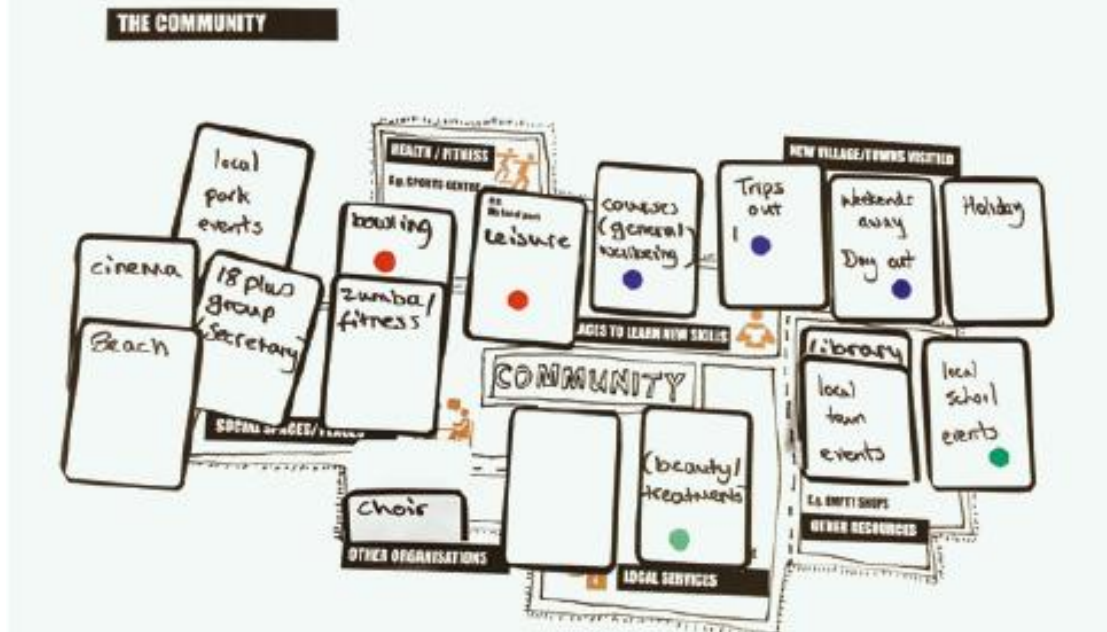
**Differences**  
 What was a good or different outcome



## Case example – Building an individual's assets through earning and spending Time Credits



The following illustration shows the assets that a volunteer identified in their day to day life. The red, green and blue dots indicate those things that have been created as a result of Time Credits. This includes new leisure activities, visiting new and different places, learning new skills and making better use of local services and other resources.



### Sample workshop tools:

1. Organisational journey mapping
2. Individual asset mapping
3. Before and after Time Credits – Relationship mapping

**Case examples – Building relationships through earning and spending Time Credits**



The following illustrations show the positive impact for two typical individuals involved in earning and spending Time Credits. Each circle represents an important relationship that individual has with people and places. The closer to the centre, the more important the relationship is to that person's life. We can see from these two examples that Time Credits have helped each person to develop a number of new and important relationships.

**Person 1  
Before using Time Credits**



**Person 2  
Before using Time Credits**



**Person 1  
After using Time Credits**



**Person 2  
After using Time Credits**

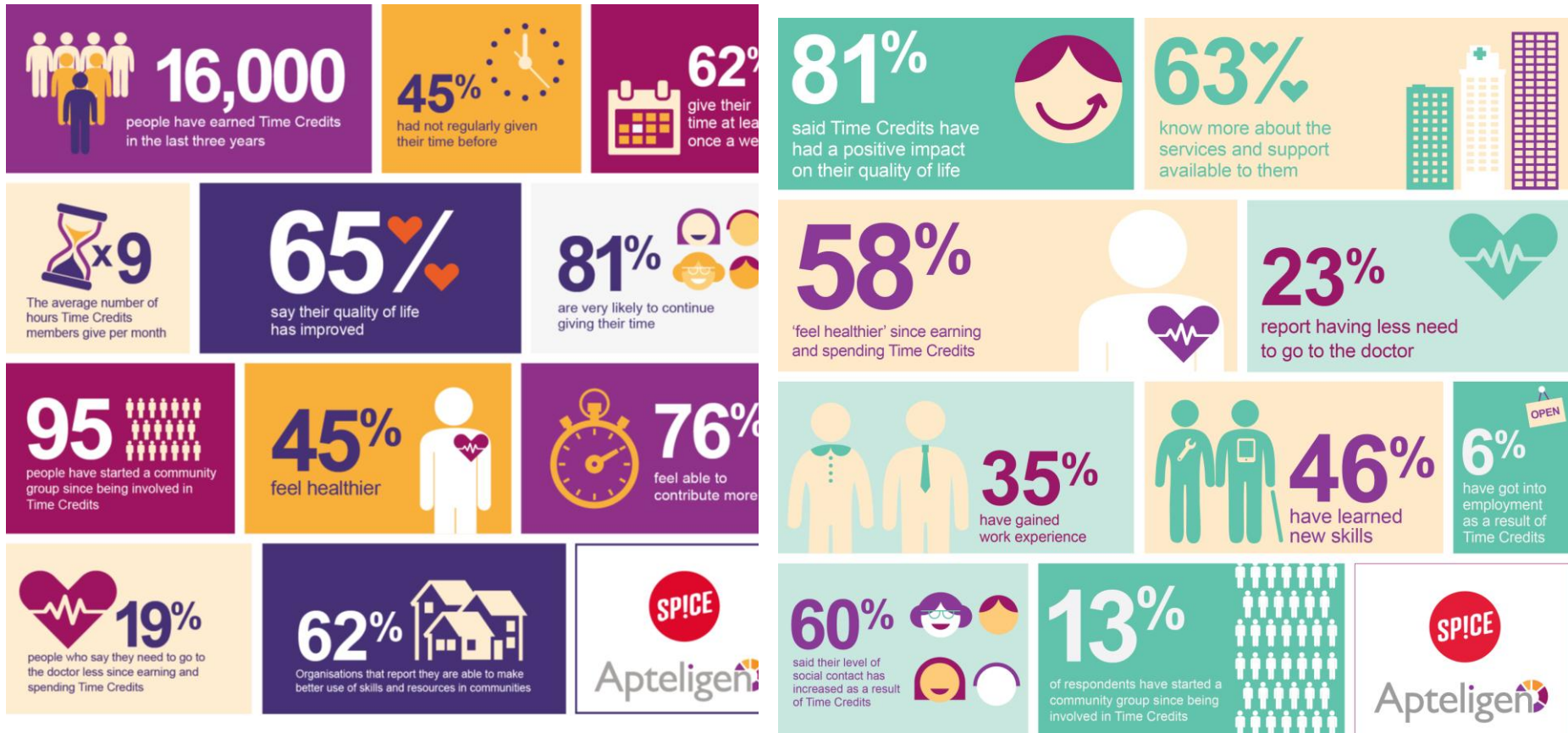


**“Previously relationships that were independent of my family were non-existent. Now it is different, I have good friends who I can be really open with.”**

The Findings of our evaluation:

November 2014

Summer 2015





## Findings: Part 1: Impact on Participation:



Time Credits have supported organisations to Increase the number and diversity of people giving Time to their communities and services and Support people who have not previously regularly volunteered to become actively involved in their communities.



The tool is also supporting organisations to retain volunteers.



The results show that the Time Credits are supporting people give more regularly and more consistently than the national average of volunteers. It is important to note that these results are consistent for individuals who have not previously volunteered as well as existing volunteers.



## Impact on individual's lives:

Across Spice programmes, organisations are impacted by the positive outcomes that Spice Time Credits are having on the lives of the individuals that they are supporting. The evidence has clearly demonstrated that organisations using Time Credits are seeing a broad and tangible set of positive improvements in the lives of their services users/citizens.

These positive changes can be broadly understood under three key areas of impact;

- Quality of Life, health and wellbeing
- Building stronger communities
- Building individual capacity and creating opportunities.

### Quality of life, health and wellbeing:

The findings from the 2015 evaluation were consistent with the results of Spice's previous evaluation, which found that Time Credits improve quality of life, health and wellbeing.

There is a recognition that social contact is an important factor for wellbeing and the research finds that 60% of individuals are increasing their levels of social contact as a result of Time Credits.

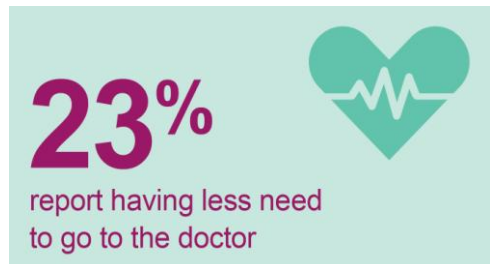
This is consistent with previous findings that Time Credits support people to spend more time with others in the community and build new friendships. The adverse effects of isolation and loneliness are well documented and these findings point to Time Credits supporting key aspects of improving and maintaining independence, health and wellbeing. These are all important drivers of prevention to ensure that people live well in the community for longer.

Currently 58% of respondents report feeling healthier and commentary by participants suggest that many people are spending their Time Credits on physical activity such as gyms and swimming pools.

### Building Stronger Communities

Time Credits continue to support the development of stronger communities with 77% of respondents agreeing that they have taken part in more community activity as a result of Time Credits.

Stronger social networks are creating an environment in which people feel more supported and support others in return. 48% of respondents report being more likely to get important needs of theirs met because they were part of a local community. 13% of respondents reported having



started a new community group as a result of Time Credits. This measure demonstrates the positive journey that individuals are going through and how this results in the creation of new community solutions, a key component of co-production.

### Building Individual capacity and creating opportunities

The previous evaluation found that 'Time Credits offer value as a complementary currency specifically for people and families with lower incomes. Among people in this group, Time Credits are seen as a means to do things that they couldn't otherwise afford to do, which leads to greater financial and social inclusion'. Whilst this is particularly the case for lower income families, this survey found that even in in households on higher incomes, individuals do not always have a lot of disposable income and Time Credits can still make it possible for families to undertake activities together.

Time Credits continue to support individuals to learn new skills. It was found that a third of members had gained work experience and 6% reported getting into employment as a result of Time Credits.



### Findings Part 2: Impact on Organisations

Time Credits support organisations to develop a more co-productive culture. The findings show that Time Credits can have a positive impact at all levels, but in particular play a key role in the development and strengthening of the basic building blocks of co-production. We also found that Time Credits can support investment at a more strategic level, by helping to provide a common language for co-production, and when embedded into commissioning and delivery plans.

### Supporting Organisations to achieve their core aims:

As discussed above, both the Stage 1 and Stage 2 individual research and organisational research demonstrated that the Time Credits were supporting organisations across the network to achieve their core aims. The aims of the organisations in the network are extremely diverse but these aims can be

clustered into generic aims that all of our organisations want to achieve and sector specific/thematic outcomes.

### **Generic Aims:**

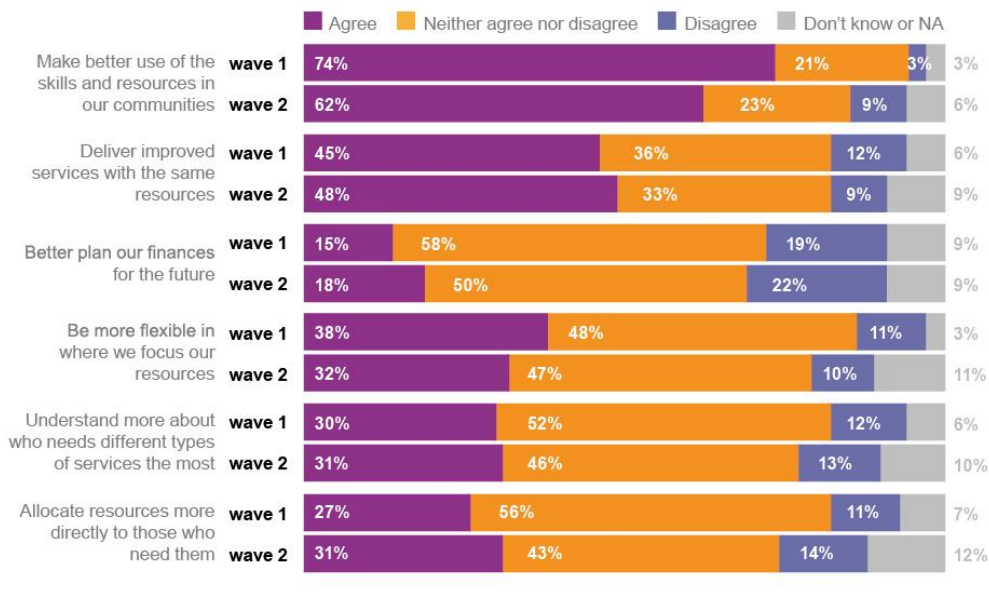
**The following aims are common across all of the organisations Spice works with:**

- Increase the number and diversity of people giving time to their communities and services
- Support people who have not previously regularly volunteered to become actively involved in their communities
- Increase the quality of life, health and wellbeing of individuals
- Build the individual capacity and create new opportunities for individuals
- Build stronger and more connected communities
- Provide access to new activities and services

### **Organisational Objectives**

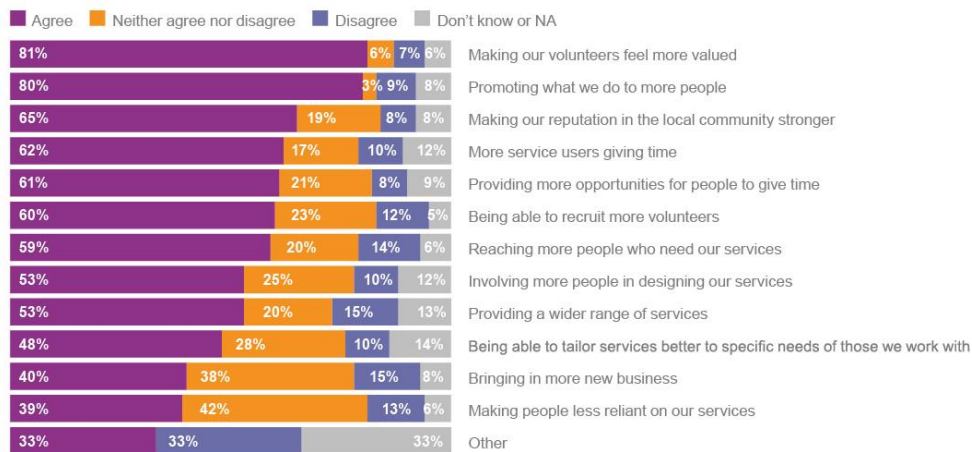
In addition to supporting organisations to achieve their core aims for individuals/clients/service users, Time Credits support organisations to achieve their organisational objectives and support in the cultural and system change needed to become more co-productive.

In our first stage of research we worked with almost 300 staff to identify what they felt had been the impact of Time Credits. In both waves of surveying the main areas of impact were connected to making better use of skills and resources in the community and delivering improved services.



Proportion of partner respondents reporting impact since the beginning of the evaluation

During this first stage of research we also asked partners to identify how Time Credits had supported them to achieve their objectives.



Proportion of partner respondents reporting that different objectives have been achieved since being involved in Time Credits

One of the key strands of impact that came through in this stage of the research was how Time Credits support collaboration and networks.

- 79% reported that Time Credits had increased collaboration between local community groups
- 82% reported that involvement in Time Credits had increased collaboration between customers/service users and the wider population

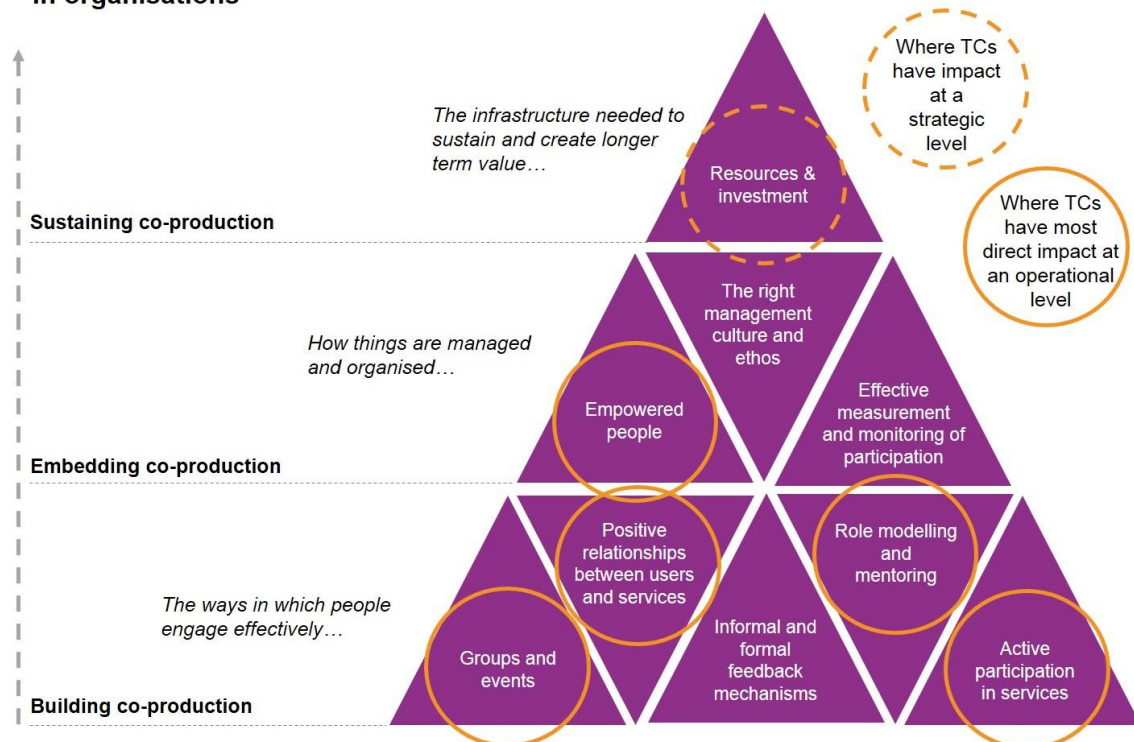
- 69% reported that Time Credits had enabled them to work with other local partners/stakeholders that they wouldn't normally work with
- 61% reported that they had worked with other organisations that provide similar services to them.

These results showed that Time Credits were supporting organisations to develop new working partnerships, both with very different organisations to themselves as well as supporting organisations to work with organisations who provide similar services to themselves. Organisations gave examples of how this had led to better service delivery. For example in Carmarthenshire, the local groups and providers came together to plan the whole summer's activities in order to make the best use of the existing resources and to avoid duplication. They reported that Time Credits had provided a new common language and a different way of working together.

Across the various Spice programmes, networks were being formed between the public, private and voluntary sector. In each of the projects the network was made up of organisations that would not normally come together, for example, the council, the local hairdresser, the mental health services, the youth group, the local leisure centre and the football club were all working together to build stronger communities.

All of our research to date has revealed a very clear and positive direction of travel – in terms of where and how Time Credits support cultural change in organisations. In particular, Time Credits were shown to provide an effective tool for empowering users, increasing and sustaining levels of active participation, and building positive role models. Figure 2 shows the areas which we found were most directly linked to Time Credits.

## A model for building and measuring co-production in organisations



While Time Credits can have a positive impact at all levels, they particularly support the development and strengthening of the basic building blocks of co-production. They also help to embed co-production by empowering staff and service users. Our research also found that Time Credits can help to sustain co-production, by supporting investment at a more strategic level and helping to provide a common language for co-production among stakeholders, especially when embedded into commissioning and delivery plans.

However, change in organisations is often slow to happen and efforts to build and embed co-production using Time Credits need to be ongoing – constantly bringing in new ideas and initiatives – if the benefits are to be fully realised and sustained over the longer term. Some organisations, particularly in the earlier stages of implementing Time Credits, felt as though they needed additional support to develop new ideas and approaches for making Time Credits work.

This is consistent with the findings from our earlier research, in which we found evidence of a positive direction of travel towards co-production, along with opportunities to reduce the 'lead-in' time for trading Time Credits and for Spice to continue developing its expertise to support different types of organisations in different ways. This latest research deepens our understanding of where that support can be targeted, by identifying specifically where Time Credits can support and enable co-production.

## Our Values in Practice:

Spice's evaluation methodology and 5 year evaluation strategy are just one of the ways that we ensure that all aspects of our work reflect the core values of the organisation. For Spice it was essential that our methodology reinforced not only what we believe but the way in which we deliver our programmes.

Spice core values:

## People are Changemakers:

Our evaluation needed to reflect our value that people are the centre of our work. We believe that both members of the community and the staff in the organisations where we work are assets and have the ability to create positive change in their communities.

It was essential that our methodology put our members at the heart of the design. This manifested itself in many ways through the design and delivery of our evaluation.

1. Design – the original theory of change and outcomes framework was designed with our partners. We ran 7 workshops to work with individuals to identify the kind of change we should be measuring and that the indicators of that change are.
2. Engaging the many and sample size: 50% of Spice's members have never given time to their community before. Our evaluation therefore needed to involve those who don't normally get involved in formal evaluation. We address this by creating many workshops that were fun and creative.
3. Easy to read and one to one surveys: Spice works in partnerships with health and social organisations. In these projects participants have a range of learning disabilities and mild to severe mental health problems. In order to engage these members we developed an easy to read survey and ran one-to-one interviews to make sure that we included the voice of this group of members.



## Together we Work:

Spice's projects are built on the principle that it takes strong partnerships between individuals, organisations and sectors to build strong communities. Our evaluation needed to be a partnership reflective the strong partnerships in our programmes.

1. Staff and members – our evaluation included both the members and the staff involved in our currencies. We ran surveys and workshops with members and staff from the organisations.
2. Staff from all levels of the organisations – in order to capture the voices of different members of staff from across the organisations who are integrating Time Credits into their work, Workshops and interviews included front-line staff, middle managers and senior staff and CEOs. This enabled us to understand the impact of the Time Credits programme on different layers of the organisation.

## Change that is meaningful:

Spice believes very strongly that we should only continue our work if we are creating positive change. It is therefore essential for Spice to invest in external and robust evaluation. In practice this means:

1. Investment in external evaluation: We use 3% of our income on external evaluation year on year
2. Staff resources assigned to evaluation: We have a member of staff who works 2.5 days a week to lead our evaluation and internal learning work
3. Whole organisation approach to evaluation: All staff have evaluation work written into their work-plans and are responsible for supporting our external evaluators.

Our evaluation is a key part of our internal learning process. We make decisions about our new business, programme decision and make decisions about investment as a result of our evaluation findings.

Evaluation is key to successful delivery our work and will continue to be central to our ongoing programme design and delivery. As we grow we will continue to invest in evaluation and internal learning process to ensure that Spice continues to create change that is meaningful.