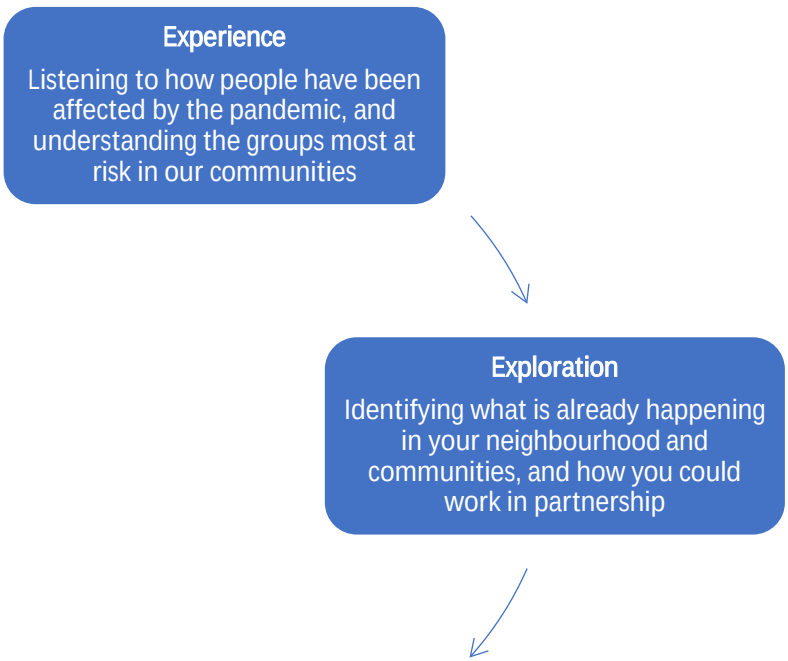
New Reality, Same Mission: A stimulus to renewed community engagement as we emerge from the pandemic



Exploration

Identifying what is already happening in your neighbourhood and local communities, and how you could work in partnership with others

The challenges in our local communities and wider society, exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic, are bigger than anything we can tackle alone. We will need to work in partnership with other agencies and faith groups to make a meaningful difference.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

- **What have we learned about what makes for good partnership work, both in the past and during this crisis?**
- **Who have we worked with before, and what do we know about how they have been responding to the situation?**

Working in partnership

If you haven't already done so, investigating which local initiatives are already supporting local people is vitally important in order to avoid duplication of activities or services, and to offer to collaborate and potentially partner with local agencies working for the common good.

Action: Contact your local councillor(s), Churches Together group, other faith leaders and community organisations to build an understanding of what is already going on locally in response to the crisis.

Action: Identify a shortlist of 3-4 local groups, organisations or networks that you might work in partnership with in developing your response. Have a conversation with each of them to see if they are interested in working in partnership, and what you could each bring to the partnership.

Supporting one another

One encouraging feature of the response to the pandemic was the way that many 'mutual aid' groups sprung up. These have a much more effective approach than traditional models of community service with their unhelpful, sharp distinction between 'helpers' and those being helped.

Question for reflection and discussion:

- **What are the benefits of a 'mutual aid' approach?**
- **How can you ensure that whatever you do enables and empowers individuals and local communities to flourish together, for mutual benefit?**

Action: Investigate what mutual aid groups already exist in your neighbourhood and encourage church members to join them.

Reflection

What does God ask of us?

As with all important questions, there are no quick, easy or set answers about what local churches, groups and individual Christians should do in their neighbourhood and communities in response to the current crisis. But it is abundantly clear that the mission to which God invites us is

Action

Ideas for responding