

# Strategy Refresh Insights

Community Listening  
Activities Summary Report

**Co-production Team –  
Insight and Improvement**



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# Purpose of the report

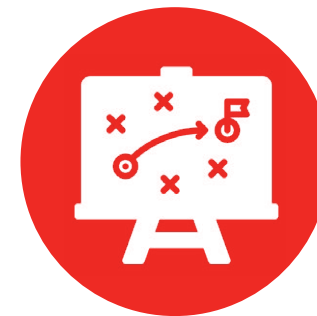
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## This report aims to:



**Provide a summary** of the community listening activities we undertook to inform the strategy refresh in 2024



**Reflect on how and why** we took the community listening approach



**Highlight the top recommendations** and potential roles for the British Red Cross



**Capture the communities'** insights on the strategy refresh outcomes and key cross-cutting themes



**Summarise actions** and commitment from the British Red Cross

# Summary of approach

## What did we do?

In 2024, the British Red Cross refreshed and reviewed its [2030 strategy](#).

To shape the strategy's approach to service delivery in the UK, we engaged with people in six locations across the country.

We asked people what matters most to their community before, during and after crisis. We also asked what the four concepts of **dignity, safety, choice** and **connection** mean to people. These four concepts were the **draft outcomes** that our services would look to measure up to 2030.

## Engagement

By the end of August 2024, we had spoken to **128** people across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 6 different cities in pop-up activities and creative workshops.



It was a safe environment that built confidence among participants as everyone felt valued.

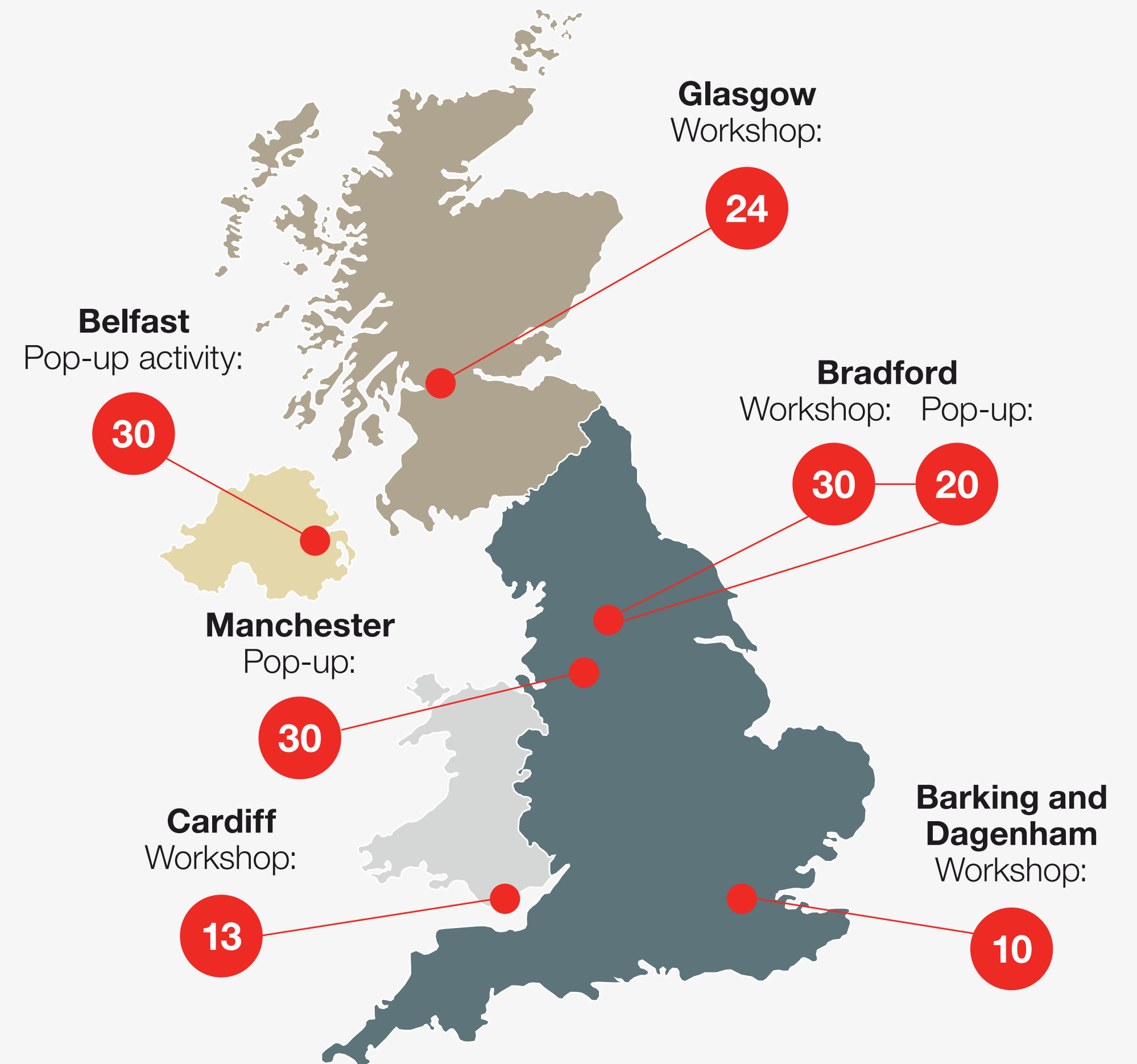


A lot of great collaboration – seeing that harmony was beautiful and to work together was so heartwarming. People are really committed.

Total Engagement =

128

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# Why did we take this approach?

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## Creative and inclusive methods

### 1 To add to feedback we gather

Our draft outcomes of safety, dignity, choice and connection were already generated from a deep understanding of **feedback collected from:**

- regular surveys from people accessing our services across health, migration and displacement and emergency response
- bespoke and regular evaluations of our services and work in the UK
- our insight and foresight functions that bring together relevant external information to inform our work

### 2 To follow good practice principles of safe and meaningful involvement

To complement this, we wanted to hold focused but creative conversations with people at a local community level, who may or may not have accessed our services, to deepen our understanding of these concepts and of what matters most to communities in topics relevant to BRC's work.

This meant we weren't just hearing from people with one specific lived experience relevant to our work or asking for narrow feedback.

We took a **trauma-informed approach** to encourage people to participate in creative de-personalised conversations in venues they were familiar with and through people with whom they had existing relationships and trust.



# Summary of methods

## Creative and inclusive methods

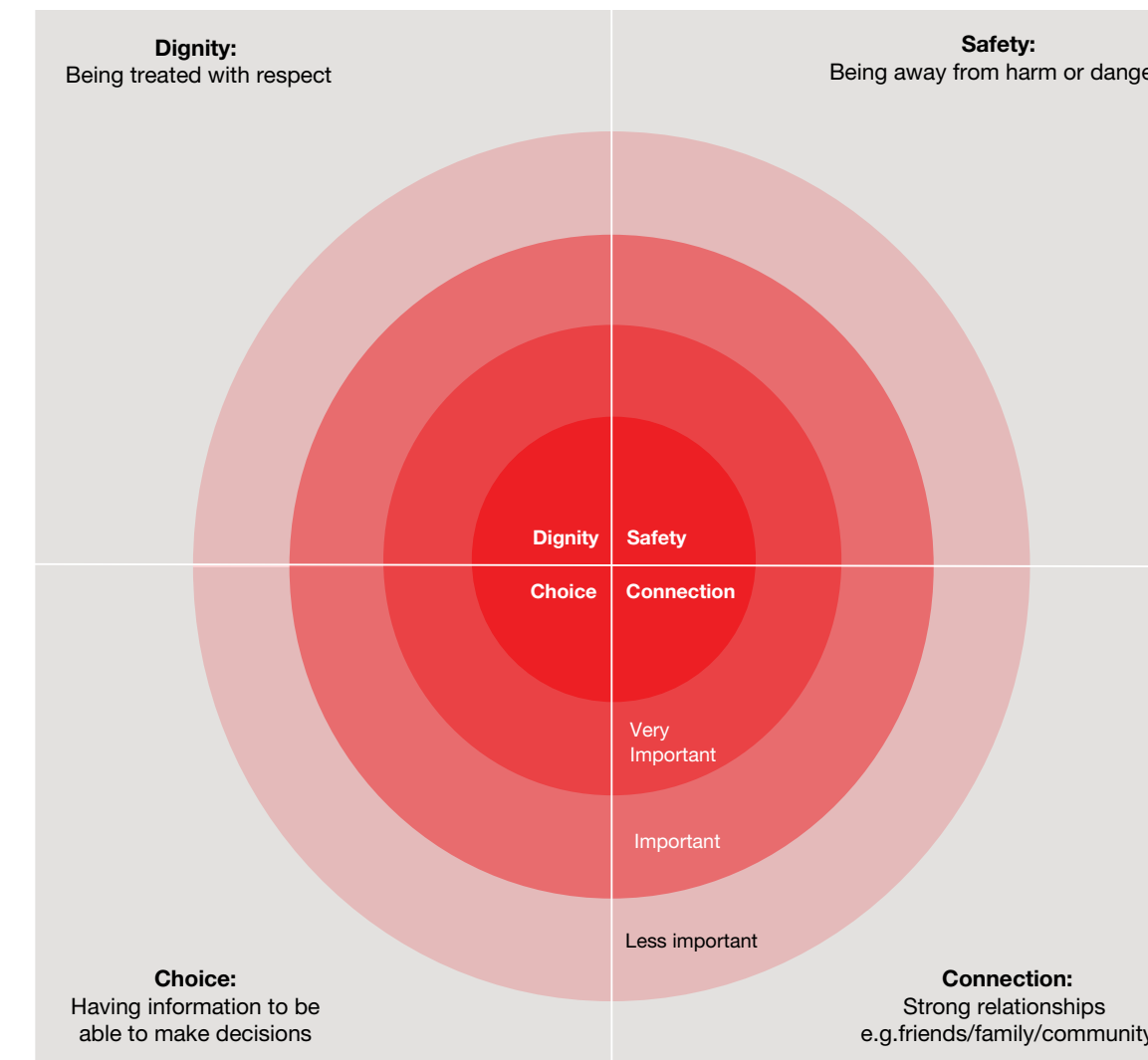
We used a range of methods to help us have complex conversations in a safe, engaging and accessible way. These were inspired from collaborative art exhibitions:

- **Connectivity Web (Icebreaker):** Using movement and spoken word to create a web of connections
- **Words Connection and Timeline Voting:** Allowing individuals to vote, explain their choices, and adjust their views through discussion
- **Dignity and Safety Shields:** using art and craft with paper shields, collages and prints for people who like to express their ideas and feelings with arts
- **Voice Reflections:** using postcards or voice cards for people who prefer writing over speaking to express themselves

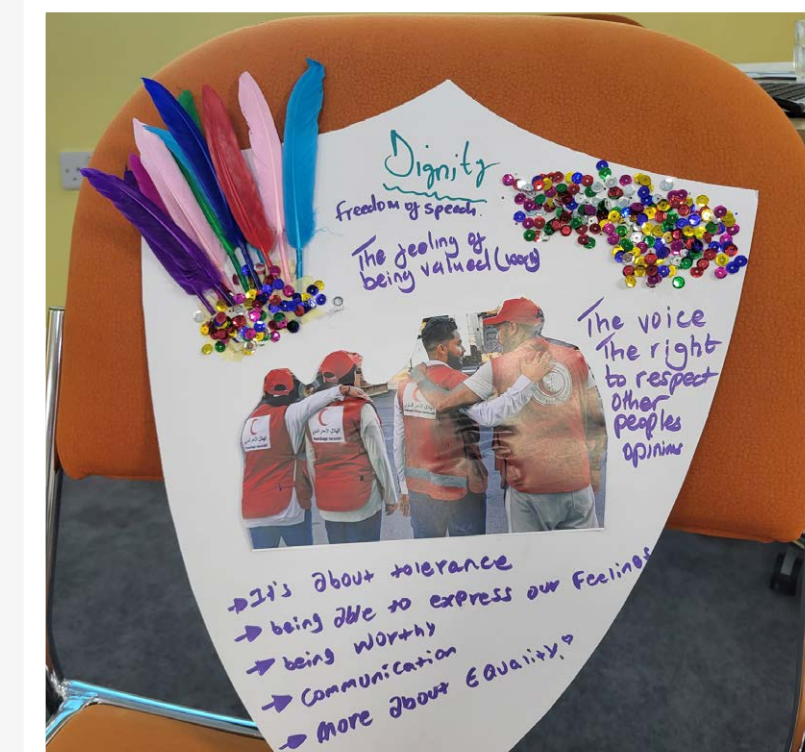
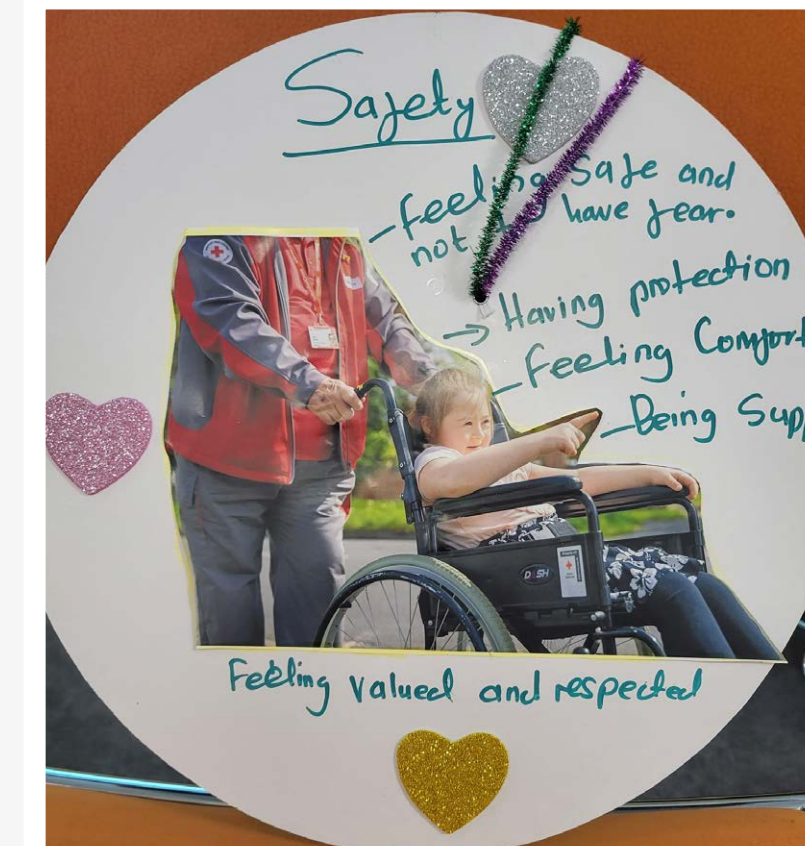
For a more in-depth view of the strategy refresh community listening activities insights and themes, you can [visit the following link](#).



What do the following concepts mean to your community in a time of crisis?



The British Red Cross Society, incorporated by Royal Charter 1908, is a charity registered in England and Wales (220949), Scotland (SC037738), Isle of Man (0752) and Jersey (430).



I liked the voting a lot, it distilled the core ideas of the groups. It demanded debate, compromise and agreement which made it very engaging. I saw everyone was very enthusiastic.

**Claudia, Voices Ambassador who co-led workshop in Glasgow**

# Reflecting on our creative and inclusive approaches

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## Important ingredients for good practice involvement



**Investing in relationships:** This engagement was built on existing reciprocal relationships of trust between BRC and communities. To do more of this, we need to invest in and resource relationships with communities for trust and authentic engagement.



**Infrastructure and processes:** These activities require structures, processes and budgets to be in place (e.g., expenses, childcare, travel) as well as an approach to value and recognition. To do this more easily, we need to create these as business-as-usual and be clear about a reciprocal offer of mutual benefit with people.



**Planning for impact:** This was a one-off activity that happened in the summer of 2024. Building this into ways of working, being clear about the aims and impact of engagement and making this part of the life cycle of how we work would ensure we have more impact.



**Deepening engagement and skills sharing:** Communities and facilitators value long-term engagement, skill-sharing, and co-facilitation opportunities. Many people we spoke to were interested in being more engaged in activities and had many skills and strengths to offer.

# Summary of insights

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## Summary of what we heard: are the draft outcomes right?

People felt that dignity, safety, choice and connection were **very important to their communities** during crises.

These concepts were strongly **interconnected** and supported each other.

\*Quotes are included as they were supplied to us, to avoid altering any intentions, including any errors.

“

Choice is freedom, it's about expressing what we believe in, our choice in our life really matters. It's what takes us where we want in life.”

“

How can we have a choice, when our language and culture is misunderstood everywhere!”

“

[Dignity is] Feeling in control of yourself, your own circumstances and feeling that I am stable and can cope.”

“

I am because I was – this is not my first day on earth”.

“

Connection: making relationships, sharing information, being a part of your community, being part of 'something'.”

“

Having dignity is having hope that something will happen. Assurance that when we are in a situation something will happen that will bring us out of the situation.”

“

People's **smiles** help me feel **connected** and make it easier to **integrate**.  
It makes people more approachable to ask for advice and support which makes integration easier.”

“

I would want to be able to make **choices** for my family treatment and for their **safety** before my own and I know what's best for my family and would want to be with dignity to make those **choices**.”

“

Safety is freedom of speech, the feeling of being valued, tolerance, being safe to express your feelings, equality and communication.”



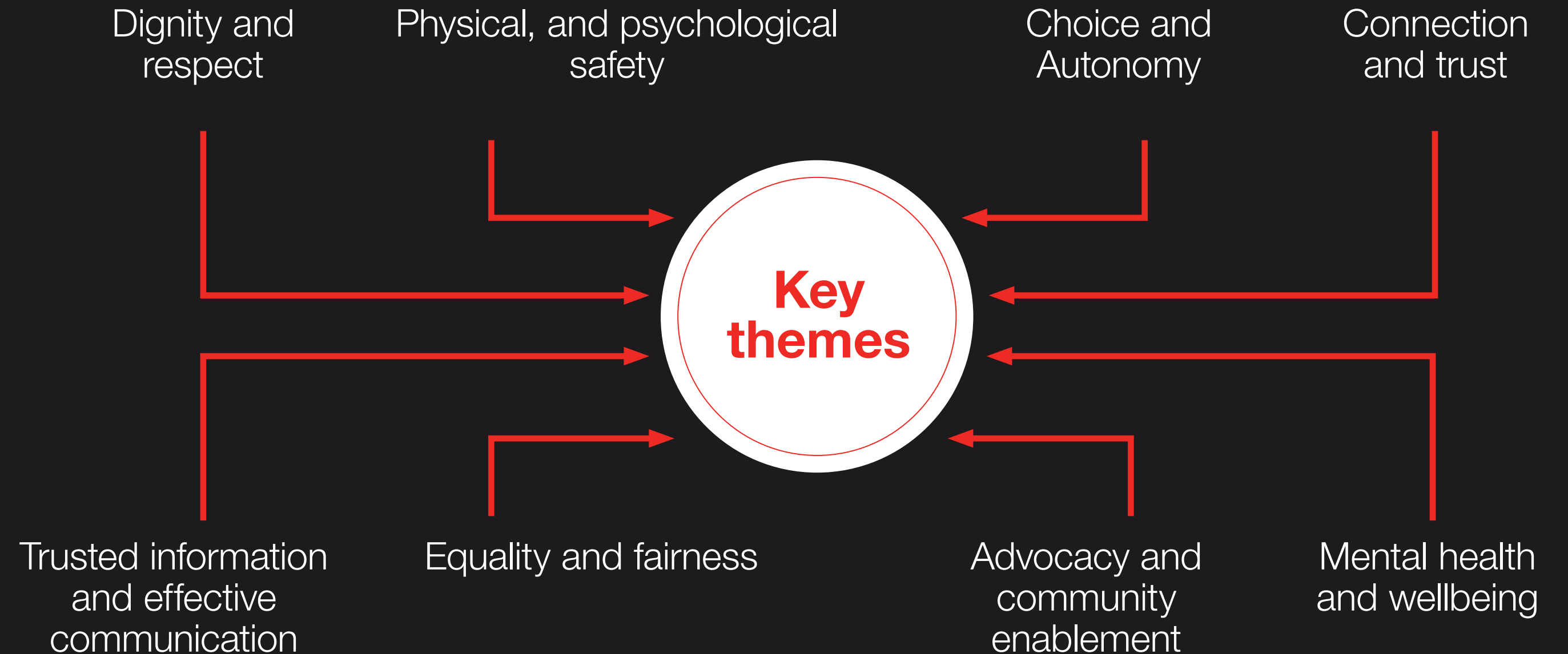
# Summary of insights

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## Summary of what we heard: Important cross-cutting themes

Eight key themes emerged through our analysis, four around the proposed outcomes of **‘dignity and respect’**, **‘physical and psychological safety’**, **‘choice and autonomy’** and **‘connection and trust’**. And four additional themes: →



“

Dignity means treating the community as the most important asset.”

“

Ensuring **equal opportunities** for everyone and treating people how one would like to be treated.”

“

Ensuring equal **rights and opportunities** for everyone to make their own choices while promoting fairness and non-discrimination in the ability to make choices.”

“

**Accessible information** and asking questions about hopes, views, fears, preferences.”

# Summary of insights

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## Summary of what we heard:

a desire for more focus on prevention, preparation and community power

We also heard that people want more focus on prevention and preparedness before a crisis, with active involvement from them and their communities.

There was a strong desire to focus on building long-term solutions, working with people in the communities to do this and ensuring hope was always present, even in moments of crisis.



“

There are two kinds of crisis – there’s the fire/big event... it grabs everyone’s attention and then all resources are mobilised...there’s no question over funding... Then there’s the other kind of crisis, the slow chronic one happening all the time in the background, to do with chronic ill health, or planning schemes... politics, the environment, the wildlife... These second ones aren’t visible. They don’t demand attention. Very little resources are put on those.”

“

It’s not right that the Red Cross has to take people home from hospital or do shopping for people – we have lost that community connection. We should do that for each other. To feel useful. We have things to give and want to give.”

“

Even in a crisis, hope is important. Thinking about recovery, resilience, and the future helps people cope with the immediate situation.”

“

The immediate safety concerns are then replaced with all the other things about living a good life beyond the crisis and how it feels to be part of a society that connects and supports and treats people with dignity.”

“

You [the British Red Cross] need to build community power within the community by residents and small community groups. This has been missed in your strategy. The risk is the Red Cross end up disempowering communities and increasing inequalities because you do not start from within communities.”

## Summary of what we heard relating to the racist riots in summer 2024

We held these community conversations right after the riots in August 2024. This led to many discussions about the riots. We presented these conversations to the recovery co-ordination group which was set up to look at how the British Red Cross can respond to and support people after these events.

These insights are being considered to inform a longer-term response to how the British Red Cross prepares for and responds to similar incidents.

For a more in-depth view of the strategy refresh community listening activities insights and themes, you can [visit the following link](#).

“

It's not right that the Red Cross has to take people home from hospital or do shopping for people – **we have lost that community connection**. We should do that for each other. To feel useful. We have things to give and want to give. Food connects people and people like to cook for each other and give something.

We shouldn't have to rely on these services. **We should strengthen the community to connect to each other and support each other**. Just things like knowing if your neighbours need some blankets or some food or a lift. The more connected we are to each other the safer we will all feel. We will be less scared and more trusting when things like this [the riots] happen too.

Since the (riots) crisis, everyone is scared. My 5-year-old granddaughter is scared and doesn't want any of us to go out anymore. **Doesn't want us to wear**

**the headscarf, doesn't want her dad to go to work or go to the mosque because she's heard it's not safe. We don't feel safe in our own homes now**. Told the kids not to answer the door to anyone they don't know. A few weeks ago, we had no fear, and the kids would run up to anyone. They used to call our local postman Post-man Pat and have a chat and now we don't know who to trust.

I've told my **daughter to start carrying an alarm**. We don't feel safe anymore but don't want to stop going out. We will only go out with other people to places we know.

**It's restricting our choices again and it's taking away our connections and our dignity and we don't want it to. I want to help people and get the community to connect again – don't want to be scared of not being safe and lose all of the trust and connections.”**

# Summary of recommendations and actions

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## Summary of what we heard about the potential role of the British Red Cross

### People want the British Red Cross to:

- Provide **reliable** and **impartial** information at both local and national levels.
- **Trust and support communities** to prevent and prepare for crises, using their strengths in response and recovery.
- Use our influence and size to **promote messages of humanity** and advocate locally and nationally for long-term positive change.
- Address ongoing crises in specific communities by recognising the impact of **continuous and generational trauma** and focusing on both their needs and strengths.
- **Define our role** including through partnerships with communities most at risk of continuous crises.



## Action the British Red Cross has taken so far

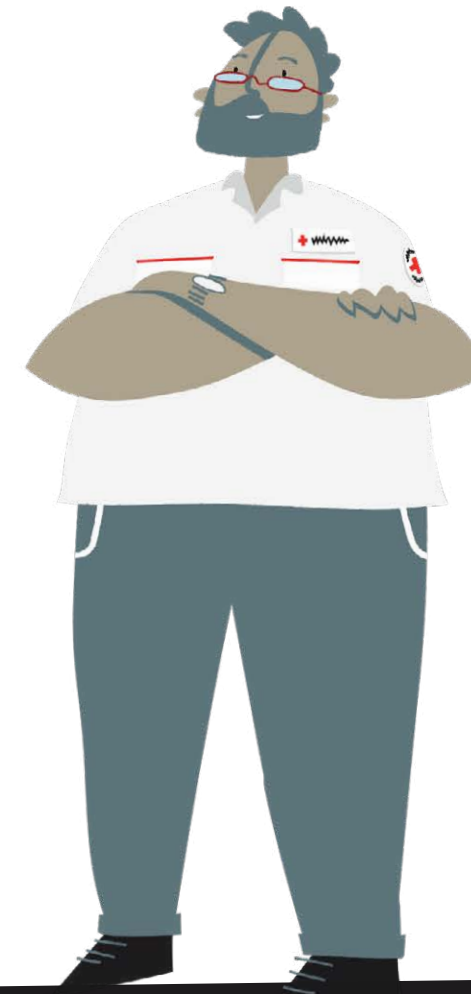
### Here is what the UK Leadership team committed to as next steps:

- The final insights to be presented to the **UK impact board** to ensure that people's voices are at the heart of the strategy refresh.
- To publish a **report** on the project internally and externally.
- To use the insights to inform and change our **language and messaging** about community engagement.
- To look into how the insights can inform the **design of services in our crisis response** to make sure they are person-centred.
- To set the outcomes of dignity, safety, choice and connection as the outcomes for 2030 and use the insights to develop how these are **defined and measured**.
- To work with our evaluation team to develop how we **measure** these outcomes of dignity, safety, choice and connection in our evaluation.
- To use the insights in our action plan for the **response and recovery group**.
- To use the insights in our work on the **Marmot Health Equity project**.

# Longer term themes for working alongside communities

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In terms of what matters most to communities who are likely to experience continual and chronic crisis, these long-term themes emerged. The BRC and other organisations may wish to consider them in how they structure and develop their work alongside communities in the longer term:



Be actively involved in preparation and prevention and work in partnership where possible to tackle the continuous cycle of crisis

Acknowledge that the impact of crises are not the same for all people or communities and that many people we work with are part of communities disproportionately experiencing continuous, generational and chronic crises

Acknowledge that people want to be part of preparing for and preventing crises in their communities and they possess the skills, strengths and knowledge to do this

Invest in listening to people and communities with lived experience relevant to our mission and using what we hear to change what we do and how we do it

# Acknowledgement

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## Message of gratitude

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the Strategy Refresh community listening activity.



## Special thanks to

- VOICES Network in Wales: Ambassadors Bukola Dolapo Salako, Onyinye Tete Ekpenyong, Judith Nkwopara and participation officer Jess Moser
- VOICES Network in Scotland: Ambassadors Ahmad Murad, Mada Basbous, Claudia Palacios, and participation officer Doaa Abuamer
- Yorkshire and Humberside Refugee Support Service: Susan Morley and Madiha Rauf
- British Red Cross Retail Shop, Belfast
- Thames Life Community Development Trust, Barking and Dagenham
- Bevan Community Benefit Society, Bradford City of Sanctuary
- Manchester St Bride's Church, Stretford.



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