

Local Area Coordination Network Newsletter



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Welcome



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Welcome to Issue 2 of the Local Area Coordination Network Newsletter.

A big thank you for the great response to the first issue and offers of contribution and support for forthcoming issues.

In each issue, we aim to introduce organisations and approaches that recognize and build on the inherent strength of local citizens and communities, with opportunities for positive partnership working with Local Area Coordinators.

This reflects some core principles of Local Area Coordination—raising awareness of, and connecting people to, local resources that may help in pursuing their vision for a good life or in building stronger, better resourced, more inclusive and more welcoming local communities.

In this issue, the spotlight will be on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and Shared Lives Plus.

We also look at developments in Derby and Wales and some key aspects of making LAC work well — commitment to the 10 Principles and the central role of relationships and mutually supportive communities.

Cormac Russell (Director, Nurture Development and ABCD Europe Institute) gives an overview of building strong

communities and the partnership with LAC

As CEO of Shared Lives Plus, Alex Fox is both leading local, innovative, flexible community living opportunities for local people and contributing to national discussions around building stronger communities and reform.

LACs will support people to connect and build partnerships with organisations like Shared Lives to support greater choice, mutual support and contribution, choice and control. We thank Alex for his continued support and commitment.

Bob Rhodes (LivesthroughFriends) reflects on early discussions and opportunities in Wales

Neil Woodhead talks about the values and commitment to local people and communities that is driving LAC and reform in Derby City.

In Derby, there are some really exciting partnerships and possibilities emerging. Additionally, LAC is being increasingly seen as a catalyst for making progress in the things we have all been talking about but not achieving over many years.

Choice, control, contribution, belonging, mutual support and stronger communities.



News

LAC Network—Learning and Development Opportunities

The LAC Network, in partnership with Nurture Development and the ABCD Institute will be developing and running “learning sets” for Local Area Coordinators later in the year. These will provide opportunities to learn more about LAC and Asset Based Community Development approaches, share experiences, problem solve together and learn about innovative, local approaches to

We will also co develop future learning sets, with opportunities for areas to showcase and share innovations. Watch this space for more information in future issues

Welcome to East Midlands

Conversations are now starting in East Midlands around developing Local Area Coordination in a number of sites. A big welcome to David Gardner and East Midlands to the LAC “Family”!

“From Service Users to Citizens”

The new paper about Local Area Coordination and reform in England and Wales will be published in April. There are some great contributions and stories from Alex Fox, Brian Frisby (Director, Derby City), Neil Woodhead (Derby City), Carol Taylor (Middlesbrough) and Patrick Graham (Stroud)

Getting it Right—Guidance and Resources

Inclusive Neighbourhoods and the LAC Network are developing information and resources for participating sites. We hope to have the National Local Area Coordination Framework and Guidance Notes available later this year

Tinker or Transform? The Choice for Social Care and Health. See Cormac and Ralph’s discussion piece about LAC and Asset Based Community Development at <http://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Blog/ReformingServices/> or <http://localareacoordination.wordpress.com> for the full version.

What Really Matters? The Relationship is Central

Traditionally, services wait for people to fail, place them in a queue to assess eligibility and parachute experts in to “intervene” or solve their problems.

What we have learned over the years is the long term value building a valued, trusting relationship, having positive assumptions about local people and communities and respect the natural authority and skills people have to make decisions about their own lives assuming.

A common aspect of the multiple LAC studies and evaluations is that people highly value having **someone alongside** who will

- Take time to get to know them well
- Listen, rather than tell or judge,

- Be accessible and approachable
- Explore issues and possibilities together,
- Work together to help people to find their own solutions, rather try to “fix” them with services
- Help to imagine and plan a better future, rather than only assess, wait or compete for services
- Do what they promise

Local people and families place great importance on the development of a relationship based on trust, respect and openness (Broad et al 2012)

LAC—The Ten Principles

Local Area Coordination has an underlying belief and assumption that all people have inherent strengths, abilities and capacity for lifelong learning and contribution.

It is underpinned by a number of guiding principles, relating to

- * The right to citizenship, responsibilities and opportunities
- * The importance of valued relationships and personal networks
- * The importance of access to relevant, timely and accessible information to inform decision making
- * Recognising and nurturing individual, family and community gifts and assets
- * Recognising the natural expertise and leadership people labelled as vulnerable and their families
- * The right to plan, choose and control supports and resources
- * The value and complementary nature of formal services as a back up to natural supports and practical solutions

The 10 Principles below guide the development and operation of LAC (adapted from Disability Services Commission, 2004):

1. As citizens, people vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs have the same rights and responsibilities as all other people to participate in and contribute to the life of the community.
2. People vulnerable due to age, disability or mental health needs and/or families supporting the person are best placed to determine their own goals, and to plan for the future either independently, as a family, or supported by advocates of their choice.
3. Families, friends and personal networks are the foundations of a rich and valued life in the community.
4. People vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs and their families have natural authority and are best placed to be their most powerful and enduring leaders, decision makers & advocates.
5. Access to information that is timely, accurate and available in appropriate formats enables people to make appropriate decisions and to gain more control over their life.
6. Communities are enriched by the inclusion and participation of people vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs and these communities are the most important way of providing friendship, support and a meaningful life to people and/or their families and carers.
7. The lives of people vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs and/or their families and carers are enhanced when they can determine their preferred supports and services and control the required resources, to the extent that they desire.
8. Services and supports provided through Local Area Coordination complement and support the primary role of families, carers and communities in achieving a good life for people vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs. These services and supports should not take over or exclude the natural networks that already exist or could be developed.
9. Partnerships between individuals, families and carers, communities, governments, service providers and the business sector are vital in meeting the needs of people vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs.
10. People vulnerable due to age, disabilities or mental health needs have a life-long capacity for learning, development and contribution.



The Only Thing That Needs Analysis is Needs Analysis: Introducing Cormac Russell & Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)



Many thanks to Ralph for making space in this edition, for me to share with you a little about where I think Asset Based Community Development is at, and where I hope its going to in the UK. Having spent the last 10

years developing ABCD policy and practice throughout Europe, Africa and other parts of the world it has been a great privilege to spend the last year almost exclusively travelling the highways and byways of England.

In my role as Managing Director of Nurture Development, Faculty member of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute at Northwestern University, Chicago, and more recently as director of ABCD Europe I've spoken with thousands of people across the UK about the potential of using asset based community development to address some of the most challenging

social fabric issues of our day.

**"Every
community has
more gifts,
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can know**

I have been deeply struck and hugely encouraged - by the extent to which the ABCD approach has become embedded in the work of the Big Lottery, and in Public Health where most practitioners are now choosing instead to speak about Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessments, in preference to Joint Strategic Needs Assessments - though I believe we can go further with such reforms, we

must embrace and encourage progress.

The asset based approach is also evident in the Government's recent Community First Programme, promoted by the Office for Civil Society, where 600 panels in Local Authority areas are working toward citizen led action and planning. The Communities First panel, with the support of the Community Development Foundation, are also piloting matching grants (inspired by the work of my colleague Jim Diers in Seattle).

I am also really struck by the extent to which LGA have endeavoured to spread asset based approaches. The work of Trevor Hopkins and Jane Foot deserves special mention in this regard.

One of the highlights of the year was working with

the Wiltshire Assembly and Wiltshire County Council, watching how they are adopting the thinking at a strategic as well as at operational levels. It's early days, but they are off to a great start.

Another point of personal interest for me was how NESTA's Neighbourhood Challenge embraced asset based community development as a central approach to mobilising citizen led action.

Notwithstanding all of the above, I am most inspired by the work of residents and front line practitioners, and so I have spent significant time working in neighbourhoods, and in developing a practical and clear approach to ABCD, which addresses two questions: a. 'but it's different around here, how is this [approach] relevant to us and our area?'; and having answered the first, b. 'what do I do (with this approach) on Monday morning?'

There are now 20 trail finder sites across England that are clearly demonstrating the powerful impact of an asset based approach. I do not have space here to share the detail on each of them, so instead I will simply share the Thornton Heath story to give you a sense of things on the ground.

Thornton Heath

In mid 2011 Croydon NHS and Croydon Council jointly decided to commission an asset based approach to ageing well. The process that followed involved Croydon Voluntary Action taking a lead role in developing an asset based approach, I took a mentoring role. From the outset the rules of engagement were intentionally turned upside down. We start by looking for people we call connectors' who are deeply respected and connected into the centre of community life. CVA recruited 23 connectors who in turn conducted hundreds of individual conversations with their neighbours and with the social networks in the Thornton Heath.



Asset mapping in Thornton Heath.

The results have been hugely impressive with people

coming together on their own strengths to broker for better shopping arrangements in local supermarkets, groups coming alongside vulnerable neighbourhoods,

and scores of other citizen led initiatives which see people using their capacities and resources to address a range of challenges and work on an array of possibilities for strengthening communities. All this effort is leading towards the development of a neighbourhood plan, the potency of that plan when published will be that it will be truly citizen led, and will have involved the voices and collective agency of the entire community and not just a chosen few. So, it will not sit on a shelf, but instead be a living account of real citizen empowerment and simply stand as a record in answer to the three questions residents in Thornton Heath have been asking themselves and each other:

1. What can we do with People Power to make Thornton Heath, healthier, safer, more inclusive and prosperous? (Citizen-led)
2. What help do we need from outside? (Co-productions)
3. What do we expect systems/institutions to do unilaterally? (Systems-led).



Sept 18, 2011:
Thornton Heath Street
Festival

Sarah Taylor programme manager for Croydon Volun-

tary Action, who have facilitated the process, along with her colleague Paul Macy, has this to say: 'The 'glass is overflowing' in Thornton Heath with riches that can't be bought. It's incredibly fulfilling working with people who, despite challenges, have an abundance of skills, knowledge, energy and commitment to give to their area and community.

Local people and what they bring, their 'assets', are so often under valued at a cost to us all. The next steps in Thornton Heath are for Community Connectors and groups of neighbours in Thornton Heath to continue to develop their plans on what they want to act on together with a view to coming together again soon for a community planning session. Along-

side this a Community First Thornton Heath Panel will take form, with support from CVA, to help local people who are developing inspiring community projects in Thornton Heath to access small grants to enable their work.'

So, what is Asset Based Community Development?

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD), established in 1995 by the Community Development Program at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, is built upon three decades of community development research by Jody Kretzmann and John L. McKnight.

The ABCD Institute spreads its findings on capacity-building community development in two ways: through extensive and substantial interactions with community builders, and by producing practical resources and tools for community builders to identify, nurture, and mobilise neighbourhood assets.

Challenging the traditional approach to solving urban and rural development problems, which focuses service providers and funding agencies on the needs and deficiencies of neighbourhoods, towns and villages, Kretzmann and McKnight have demonstrated that community assets are key building blocks in sustainable urban and rural community revitalisation efforts.

These community assets include the:

- * skills of local residents
- * power of local associations
- * resources of public, private and non-profit institutions
- * the physical and economic resources of local places.

The Core Principles:

1. We cannot know what a community needs until we first know what it has.
2. Every community has more gifts, skills, talents & resources than any one person or organisation can know.
3. These gifts, skills, talents and resources need to be identified, brought together and converted into innovative action to improve people's lives and economic opportunities.

NEXT MONTH

ABCD and LAC—Powerful Partners
ABCD and Commissioning



LAC and Strengths Based Thinking —Turning Values into Actions & Outcomes

Neil Woodhead (Derby City)



Neil Woodhead is Social Capital Development Manager in Derby City and is leading the development of Local Area Coordination and asset based approaches in the region. Neil reflects on the new thinking and local insight into nurturing asset based thinking in local communities and the social care system.

“Over the last few months I've attended a number of workshops with a focus on the role of social capital/ community capacity building in relation to what we

do in "serviceland". These conversations have left me thinking about the implication of my interactions with people and communities both through the course of my Local Area Coordination work or at home with my family.

The question that I keep on coming back to is – What's my role in this? I mean this on both a personal and professional basis. For many people, our community

starts and stops at the end of our driveway or the silo we work in.

We may well interact with our communities of interest, but many people, myself included, have forgotten or lost the wherewithal to engage meaningfully with our immediate community. If we are going to re-engage with our communities we have to work out how.

Services also need to understand their place in this process, if through the course of our work in the LAC project we take a traditional approach we will end up replicating what has gone before us and the people we support will end up with "service lives", we have to take time to understand our place.

Last month we welcomed John O'Brien to Derby to

help us kick off a conversation about building community capacity in the city. It was a truly inspirational day and whilst none of my issues were solved it did feel like we were given the keys to unlock the door. During the course of the day John shared with us the following thoughts:

In order to be an active citizen in my community I need to feel that:

I belong to this place & I act from responsibility for it

My contribution is welcome

And so am I

I am able to contribute actively

I can see how to contribute

I can get what I need to make my contribution

I can invite, welcome encourage and assist other to contribute



I think this provides the LAC project in Derby with a real focus to the community development part of our role, at individual, community and service levels, as we look to come alongside people

in the communities we work in to build sustainable communities person by person.

If all goes well in the next couple of months, we will hopefully look to build on this conversation with the citizens of Arboretum and Alvaston wards, including those labeled, vulnerable or isolated, to help them build a vision for a stronger, more welcoming, inclusive community where all are valued and have opportunities for contribution. This will require us to continue to reflect on our role and contribution as LAC's in the process—nurturing not controlling, alongside as partners, not “doing to or for.” As a resident of Alvaston myself, I might also sort out what my part in the jigsaw is too!



Shared Lives and LAC—Partners In Supporting Opportunities

When funding is tight, it's easy to think of the service you offer as being in competition with other services. What's much more valuable though, is to keep looking for the ways in which different kinds of intervention can connect with each other.

In Shared Lives, registered and approved Shared Lives carers are matched with disabled and older people who need support and/or accommodation. So instead of going to a day centre, an older person with dementia can become a regular visitor to the Shared Lives carer's house. A young adult with a learning disability or mental health problem might even move in with the Shared Lives carer and their family for a short period whilst they gain independent living skills, or as a long term arrangement, if their goal is to find somewhere they can feel settled. Either way, participants share family and community life. Shared Lives is used by around 15,000 people in the UK and that number is growing as councils realise that Shared Lives can help people to achieve better lives at a lower cost.

Registered Shared Lives carer, Sheila and her family have recently started to support Paul, who is in his late forties. Sheila has helped Paul to apply for a free bus pass, learn basic road safety and to use public transport – with the help of Birmingham City Council's 'Community Options'. Paul can now go out and



enjoy his time at the allotments and in the community more. Paul has now bought his

first bicycle and enjoys long bike rides through a local country park with Sheila and her husband, Tony, on Sundays. As a result, Paul is now a visible and popular member of the community, having been supported to join a number of clubs and to get to know local shopkeepers who "look out for him" when he gets the bus to his allotments or goes for walks on his own. Although Paul doesn't have a lot of speech, when asked if he understands what 'independence' means, he smiles happily and says 'walk'.

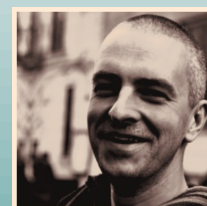
Paul also joins in with activities and parties with Sheila's family and with support from Tony has found a real talent for painting.

Paul's experience shows the ways in which Shared Lives could sit very well with Local Area Coordination. Successful Shared Lives arrangements both draw on the local community's strengths and help the individual and the Shared Lives household to add to those

strengths. Paul needed a web of connections in his community to be able to experience what he considers real independence, but he also adds to the life of the community, as well as to Sheila's family. The photo shows Paul with Sheila's daughter, Sam, and the painting he did for her entitled 'cabbage patch', which now hangs in pride of place in Sam's hall.



Alex Fox FRSA is CEO of Shared Lives Plus, the UK network for small community services, representing Shared Lives carers and schemes and working with Community Catalysts to support social care micro-enterprises. Alex sits on the board of Think Local, Act Personal, the Standing Commission on Carers and co-leads on prevention for the social care White Paper. He blogs at <http://alexfoxblog.wordpress.com/> and @AlexatNAAPS.



Learning and Sharing in Wales—Bob Rhodes

It was Vanguard Thinking Systems that initially contacted LivesthroughFriends to find out more about the strengths-based, 'much more to life than services' approach and Local Area Coordination - subsequently inviting the consortium to contribute to their work in Stroud.

That collaboration has burgeoned into joint work with a growing number of public services in Wales and since Christmas we have supported the first stage an exciting and influential adult social care reform initiative in Monmouthshire and begun conversations in Powys and Neath Port Talbot.

While, inevitably, the starting points for local public services differ, it is apparent that there is a common core agenda for those who appreciate the limitations of systems grounded primarily upon needs assessment and funded service solutions. These include addressing:

- * Investment in prevention rather than crisis support
- * Systems change resulting in genuine citizen choice & control and an evolving local culture of 'personalisation'
- * Systems change resulting in more efficient and effective use of finite resources and abundant community assets as a consequence of first base (front end) contact with skilled and accessible professionals

- * Increased independence/self sufficiency – stronger and more connected citizens
- * Stronger families and communities
- * Sustainable reductions in loneliness and isolation
- * Greater opportunities for inclusion in local communities
- * Improved access to helpful information
- * Better access to specialist supports
- * Support to people not previously supported
- * Focused attention on what matters to the people who seek our assistance – a 'Good Life' - rather than a 'needs and deficits' modus operandi.

And we have observed that where we apply the principles and approaches of Local Area Coordination to redesigning the front end of social care the wider reform or redesign agenda is concurrently served.

A 'learning set' comprising mainly statutory agencies in Wales and the West of England who grappling with these issues, facilitated by Bob Rhodes and Ralph Broad has been convened and meets for the first time in Monmouthshire on April 19th. For further details contact bob@livesthroughfriends.org



Bob Rhodes is Director of LivesthroughFriends

Next Issue—Summer 2012

1. The Local Area Coordination Operational Framework—Putting Principles & Values into Action
2. Getting it Right—The Importance of Leadership and Design
3. Assessment—Moving from assessing “deficits and labelling” to “strengths & practical solutions”
3. Spotlight on....Sian Lockwood and Community catalysts
4. Richard Davis—Vanguard
5. Cormac Russell—ABCD & LAC, ABCD and Commissioning
5. News Updates— Also, please forward any stories and reflections you would like to share