



Building on Learning – Turning the System Upside Down

**Local Area Coordination Research Meeting
Summary of Conversations 15th February 2018**

Executive Summary

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Background

On 15th February research and evaluation organisations working with Local Area Coordination programmes across the country came together on the Isle of Wight for workshops focused on sharing methodologies, approaches and learning from data gathered so far.

Workshops

The workshops started conversations around reflecting on the opportunities, potential power & influence of a research network, including thinking about...

- How a Local Area Coordination evaluation and research meeting network can build on learning to influence wider systems outcomes and reform
- How leaders, practitioners and academics can create a closer community of knowledge transfer



Below are notes from group conversations relating to 3 key questions:

1. To what extent is continued learning and practice development relevant to the work we are doing at present?

Are we in danger of there being a gap between research and practice?

Good Evaluation Practice – what we will do or want to be in place

- Help design from the beginning
- Enlist Local Area Coordinators in developing and conducting evaluations
- Emphasise transparency and accountability
 - Empower Local Area Coordinators and their participants to have a voice in and shares in their own evaluation and sustainability
- Instil culture of evaluation as cultural, relevant and helpful
- Help self-improvement and reflection
- Allow Local Area Coordinators and individuals to let programme and behaviour evolve naturally while documenting the process
- Emphasise benefits of evaluation
 - Refining and changing approach
 - Remembering/reflecting on progress/adaptation

- Empower the ability to have one’s voice heard and know your input has led to change
- Ask people what they’d like their information to accomplish change.



**2. We have the evidence now...what can we do with it and what do we want to do with it?
How can we translate it more practically for all involved?
Is it reciprocal and representative of those on the ground?**

Evidence – our role in building it

- Local Area Coordination Interest Group for research and evaluation
 - ‘pool of data’ literature
 - Knowledge around data sources
- Contribution of Local Area Coordination Interest Group in supporting ‘use’ (from start)
- Places to take and share research and evaluation – how and where we communicate to others.
- Build stakeholder capacity (in understanding metrics, methodologies, methods, evaluation approaches, design, modelling and Interest Group)

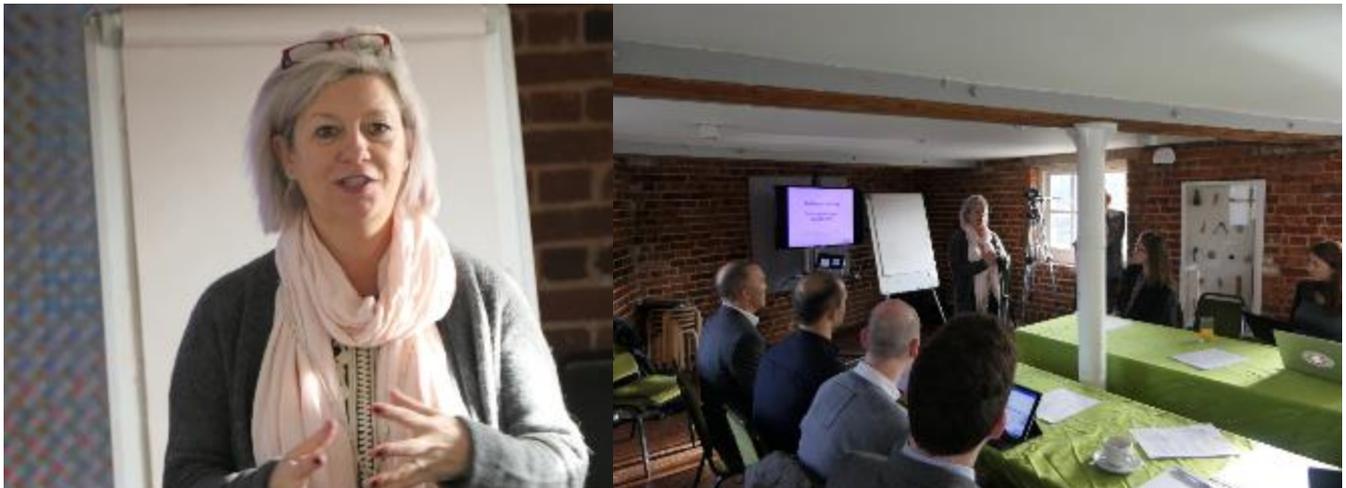


3. Where do we go from here?

Is there anything we can take from today to harness the knowledge and understanding of the Local Area Coordination knowledge that is being fleeced through the evaluations? Are there other communities of practice or interest that share similar interests or approaches to us that we might align to?

Actions for us as researchers or evaluators to take away

- Clear narrative about the change – relating it to the audience, both problem and solution. Common problem e.g. fragmented system.
- What's the USP – listening, trust and time
 - How does this solve the problem? (silos, demand, finance, culture and way of working, happy productive staff)
- Who is the audience for the evidence and how and why would they engage with it?
- Other networks and organisations disrupting the system e.g. locality models, 3 conversations, Shared Lives, 21st Century Public Servant.
 - Moving from margins to mainstream
 - Examples of success to replicate.



Summary and Next Steps

The importance and value of involving politicians at all levels

In her introduction to our day, Councillor Clare Mosdale (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and local authority Mental Health Champion) talked of the importance and value of involving politicians at all levels, to “push the difference Local Area Coordination makes (especially to mental health), the money saved and reinforce how Local Area Coordination is doing something very different” (from traditional services).

*“If we continue doing what we have always done,
we will get what we have always got” (Cllr Mosdale)*

The above is true for all aspects of Local Area Coordination and transformation, including how we evaluate and use learning to inform and create new, innovative and more relevant ways for future evaluations that will help shape services and drive better outcomes for citizens, communities and services.

This collaboration between universities, research partners and the Local Area Coordination Network provides a unique opportunity to influence and shape.

Reflections and questions from the group

- Are we engaged with LGA National Conference – political leaders/chief execs?
- Changing the system – people’s expectation of the system
- How can we attach a value to prevention and the multiple outcomes at individual, family, community and systems levels?
- How do services recognise Local Area Coordination – seen as a function of one silo or part of an integrated system?
- Importance of integrated working (power dynamics)
- Can we share ideas/approaches for coding the stories – sophisticated analysis
- Evaluation of Local Area Coordination can help to demystify the black box of social change and apply across the system as part of wider transformation and improvement of services
- How can we pull across data from health and social care systems?
- Can we compare/contrast areas without Local Area Coordination to areas where it is strong?
- Are we really engaged with the Local Area Coordinators in the process of evaluation? – practitioner involvement in reflection
- To what extent does the evidence inform practice – where does it go?
- Another event in the year, maybe late Autumn
- Mailing group – research and knowledge exchange.

Further questions the group wanted to consider as part of evaluation

- Is the system actively nurturing and supporting or inhibiting Local Area Coordination and strength-based approaches?
- Is the role clearly defined, across age groups and service labels, combining a range of traditionally separate roles and across the service pathway (prevention, crisis, reducing dependence)?
- Is Local Area Coordination an integrated part of a transforming system, or just added to an already cluttered and disconnected service system?
- Is there a rebalancing of existing resources, bringing resources closer to Local Area Coordination, communities, prevention and capacity building, or still a focus on crisis, assessment, eligibility and funded service provision?
- Is there evidence of joint working and funding between Local Area Coordination and statutory and funded services?
- Is there evidence of positive outcomes for individuals, families, communities and services?
- Is there evidence that people are building resilience through Local Area Coordination, or being temporarily “fixed”

Actions for the group

- Establish an accessible, online “resource hub” to share correspondence, resources, evaluations and learning between Local Area Coordination Network Research Partners
- Aim to meet twice yearly, next meeting in Autumn 2018. Although all acknowledged conversations are richer when people are in the same room (face to face), suggestion to also provide opportunities