

LAC — Stories, Stories, Stories



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Summer is here...sort of. Welcome to the Summer issue of the LAC Network Newsletter!

This issue is all about stories.

Stories

With the forthcoming paper on Local Area Coordination stories due out in late summer, we thought it would be good to focus on stories in this issue.

Stories are important—they help us to stay focused on what's important. People, families, communities and mutual support

They also remind us of what is possible if we listen, learn and work in genuine partnership. They show the value of fully embracing the Local Area Coordination values, principles, approach and design.

Conversations around Local Area Coordination and the value of individual, family and community gifts, skills and experiences is starting to gain momentum.

This Issue

Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

In this issue, we continue to reflect on important aspects of LAC—this time it's starting at the start with **3 questions!**

Les Billingham reflects on the conversations, challenges and cultural change emerging in Thurrock alongside LAC.

Archie Rose, who led the development of Local Area Coordination in Stirling, reflects on the complexity (and joy!) of “a day in the life” of a LAC.

We have 2 great stories from Thurrock about citizen led recruitment and an innovative social enterprise led by people who have a learning disability.

Finally, check out the article by Sam Clark about forthcoming “Tomorrow's Leaders” Course. **Enjoy!**

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Staying Strong—Asking the Right Questions

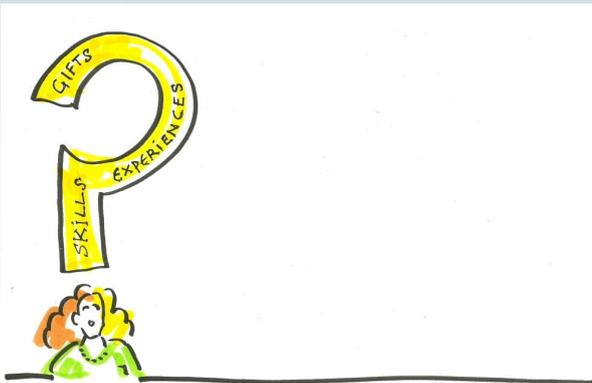


Get a life or get a service?

There are “whispers” that lobbying is underway to remove reference to “strength based approaches” in the forthcoming Care Bill. Imagine that! Do we really believe that waiting for crises, assessment, services and regulation are the best approach to supporting people? I sincerely hope not—citizenship is about more than services.

If we are starting with conversations about strengths, contribution, building non service responses, it opens up a rich array of conversations and possibilities **ALONGSIDE** local people. **It keeps people strong and reduces “demand.”**

Below are 3 questions that Local Area Coordinators and local people think about when building a vision for the future and finding ways of getting there.



What can I do for myself, using my gifts, skills, passions and experiences?



How can my friends, family, neighbours and community help?



What is the role of services and money?

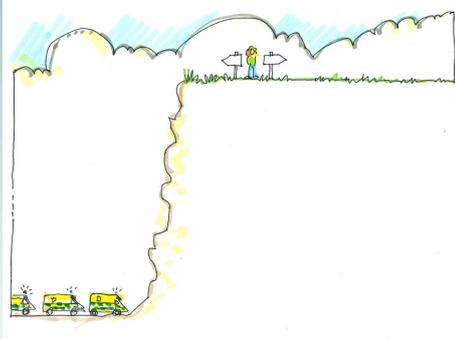
What is the role of services + Funding?



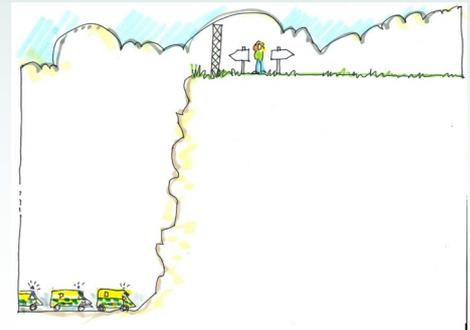
Services, Prevention or Staying Strong?

Much the same as our conversations alongside local people, we also have some big questions to answer when we think about the role of services. Eddie Bartnik (who originally developed LAC in Western Australia and has supported our local developments in England and Wales) talks about the purpose of services being “to support people to build and pursue their vision for a good life.”

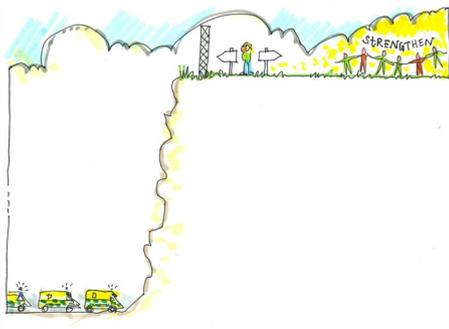
We therefore need to ask ourselves 3 questions about how services operate



Do we wait for people to fall into crisis/off the cliff and have (a diminishing number of) ambulances/services to intervene?



Do we build fences at the top of the cliff to stop people falling over or getting to services (prevention and eligibility)?



Do we strengthen citizens and communities further back from the cliff – helping people stay strong and reduce need for services?

The truth is that we need a bit of all three – we need to “re balance” our service system to support people and communities to stay strong (reduce demand) and have strong, local, flexible supports and services as a “back up” or “safety net”.

With continuing cuts to services and the predicted increase in need across age and service types in coming years, we are faced with some big challenges and questions. Do we

- ***Increase the size of services*** to deal with increasing demand from people in crisis or vulnerable to needing service intervention? Not likely is it, nor should we be waiting for crises before listening!
- ***Manage demand*** by further tightening eligibility, but leaving higher levels of crisis, unmet need and vulnerability? Not desirable—unless you like excluding people!
- ***Reduce demand*** by intentionally working to support individuals, families and communities to stay strong, diverting people from formal services wherever possible through sustainable, local, flexible individual and *community solutions*? *Long overdue!*

It's time to get real—as citizens, we should be supporting people to stay strong and connected and building mutually supportive communities. But we also need to have personal, local and flexible services for when we need them., as a back up to local solutions *If you follow the link below, you can see the original poem!* <http://www.transformationhurrock.com/Articles/353921/>

Reflections on the Leadership Challenge



In an extract from the forthcoming paper on Local Area Co-ordination, Les Billingham (Head of Services, Thurrock Council) talks about the challenges to leaders that Local

Area Co-ordination and strength based thinking is generating.

Thurrock is still in the early stages of introducing Local Area Co-ordination, but already the new way of thinking is having a profound impact on the way we have approached things over the last 6 months.

At Thurrock we pride ourselves in Adult Social Care for being innovators. As long back as 2005, the NESTA Report, The Art of Exit, profiled Thurrock's approach to transformational change through its service decommissioning strategy:

thinking about safeguarding vulnerable people... services can only do so much, and it is often the social isolation of vulnerable people that puts them at risk.

'...in 2005, it closed down 3 day centres for adults with a disability and replaced the service with a community based solution offering much more choice, control and independence through Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC - a social enterprise run by

and for service users'.

'At Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions, the team is staffed by service users who are not only engaged in, but lead the design and development of new services for adults with disabilities. The service is fully co-produced, recognising people's assets and the skills they can bring to improving Thurrock's market of care providers. It is through the advocacy and peer networking supported by the social enterprise that Thurrock was able to build a coalition for change, and to instigate the

closure of less effective day centres.'

It may be that background in being prepared to make radical shifts in service provision and a long held commitment to the personalisation agenda, that has prepared the ground for Local Area Co-ordination, but what I note as Head of Adult Social Care, is a paradigm shift taking place – challenging many of our professional beliefs.

Thurrock is an exciting and challenging place to be right now and as the senior manager leading this change, the challenges are both personal and professional.

Mutually supportive relationships are central

On the professional level, one key role is freeing up professional thinking around risk. We are all trained to put risk at the centre of what we do and this can create rigidity in how we respond – we need to think more in terms of risk enabling and less about risk restriction, as this focus reduces the opportunities for creative solution finding. This rigidity frames our thinking and can lead to some very perverse logic.

One example is the harrowing stories in the media regarding institutional and systematic abuse within various regulated establishments. We assume safety because of professional involvement at our peril. Inclusive communities (in the broadest sense), with a strong ethos of shared responsibility, offer the greatest possibility that vulnerable people will be protected; and for them to enjoy a quality of life superior to that found in even the very best regulated service settings.

So in thinking about safeguarding vulnerable people, we need to challenge ourselves to realise that services can only do so much, and it is often the social isolation of vulnerable people that puts them at risk. If we can help facilitate better connections in hospitable communities, then the chances are people will be less at risk. This line of argument naturally causes all sorts of professional anxieties and we need to be open and debate them. What is clear however, is that hiding behind our "duty of care" to excuse restricting people's freedom or denying them a quality of life, is contradictory to the spirit of personalisation and choice, the Mental Capacity Act and a plethora of other policy and best practice exemplars,

that we now have to take into consideration when undertaking our roles.

Another challenge, as senior manager has been to start doing things in very different ways – taking my own professional risks in terms of credibility and competence.

Two recent examples come to mind: we invited our community representatives and voluntary sector colleagues to design our recruitment process for our Local Area Co-ordinators. How our HR colleagues would respond to this was a cause for concern, as indeed was what would happen if it all went horribly wrong.

At the first stage of the process, officers turned up to be briefed on the details and there were a few who were clearly concerned that there was an element of chaos built in. However an ability to embrace such uncertainty is a characteristic of Thurrock and the process worked wonderfully well and led to very positive feedback –



even from those who did not go through to the next, more traditional stage – the formal interview.

A new way of thinking and acting

Another example is a training event that I organised in close cooperation with our training team. The concept I presented them with was brutally simple - that anything they had done before, was not what I was after. What emerged was an extraordinary half day event that we ran four times for everyone working in adult social care. As you would expect some staff struggled slightly with the

event, especially the dreaded role play, and they may never forgive me! However, others jumped in with no hesitation. What everyone came away with – whether they liked the training event or not, was the experience of applying asset based thinking to a series of case study scenarios.

Furthermore, and this is the potential released when creative energy is unfettered, a number of other thought provoking and significant challenges emerged in terms of the whole way in which assessments are delivered and the nature of the relationship between the worker and the citizen. Needless to say I am very appreciative of the work of the training team and the way in which they embraced what must have been a very difficult brief. .

As a leader of adult social care, I don't know where this will take us in terms of how we will organise and structure our services in the future – and this is not easy to admit when we are all supposed to have our strategic vision, our implementation plans, our targets and business cases.

There's a lot of evidence and stories!

Of course, I have done my homework and the evidence from numerous reports indicates that Local Area Coordination is effective in terms of diverting people from formal services and reducing costs by 35%, and the research shows many other benefits relating to quality of life for individuals and their families.

So, what I am clear about is that strength based and asset based thinking lies at the heart of what we will do in the future.

We are embarking on something that is pretty radical, but in a sense familiar in terms of developing the kinds of communities that we all rightly or wrongly associate with a “golden” past. To allow this to grow naturally, I need to step back from over-prescribing the results I want as this would stifle the possibilities for change. So instead of coming up with a set of pre-determined solutions with their associated metrics to confirm our success, I am attending to the whole eco-system of our communities with the long term aim of creating resilient and resourceful places where people can connect and flourish.

Watch this space.



News

27th June 2013 Building Positive Futures in Thurrock.

Read the report from Sue Williams as part of Housing LIN case studies in innovation. Local Area Coordination contributing to

positive change in Thurrock http://www.housinglin.org.uk/library/Resources/Housing/Practice_examples/Housing_LIN_case_studies/HLIN_CaseStudy72_Thurrock.pdf

21st June 2013.

Read the Monmouthshire Annual Report, including reference to LAC, ABCD and strength based reform. Love the description of strength change and prevention as a “leap of fact”. Says it all—time to move forward!

http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/fileadmin/Downloads/to_mcc_downloads/Carers_Support_and_Social_Services/Director_s_Reports/The_Director_of_Social_Services_Annual_Report_2013_v1.0.pdf

18th June 2013 Care Bill Analysis

Check out the paper from Shared Lives Plus, Community Catalysts, Inclusion North, Inclusive Neighbourhoods, In Control and Partners in Policymaking around “Strength Based Approaches in the Care Bill” <http://sharedlivesplus.invisionzone.com/index.php?files/file/190-strengths-based-approaches-in-the-care-bill/>

14th June 2013

Simon Duffy and Kelly Hicks of the Centre for Welfare Reform have recently been thinking about how social work needs to get back to its roots and move away from some of the unhelpful patterns and adopt more positive models like LAC. Simon recently wrote the following blog which may be of interest

<http://swscmedia.com/2013/06/stand-up-for-social-work-by-dr-simon-duffy/>

12th June 2013 West Sussex Care and Support Summit

Great day in Worthing on 12th June exploring the possibilities of Local Area Coordination, ABCD and strength based action.

A big thank you to Philippa Thompson for the invitation and opportunity to hear what is happening in West Sussex. It was a great opportunity to start a conversation, explore ideas and share learning.

Some real passion and commitment to local communities in West Sussex – helping people to stay strong, building supportive communities and building partnerships. **Better Together!!**

12th June 2013 What older people need is not choice of services, but companionship

“The government’s aim is to give older people a wide choice of care options, but what they really need is to be included in society”, says Alex Fox. Read the great blog by Alex via the link below

http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/jun/11/older-people-need-choice-company?CMP=tw_t_gu

Choice is about much more than services. It’s about valued and supportive relationships, being in control, having confidence in the future, contribution, citizenship – It’s about having a LIFE!

4th June 2013 Community Catalysts Win European Innovation Fund Award

Sian Lockwood (Chief Executive at Community Catalysts) reports below on their success at the



News

European innovation awards

“Our winning proposal was to extend the reach and impact of their work with micro social care providers by establishing a managed network of business mentors throughout the UK via an on-line

platform. The platform will connect talents in business and communities, creating jobs by helping people to use their creativity to set up sustainable, small-scale social care and health services. This in turn will create real and affordable choice for people who use care and support services in response to the personalisation agenda.”

May 2013 Derby City Mid Point Report

Huge congratulations to Neil, Simran and Rajeev for their great work as Local Area Coordinators in Derby City. Although still early days, they have

- * taken time to get to know local people and communities well
- * developed positive relationships, partnerships and understanding of the abundant resources and connections locally
- * come alongside local people to find positive and practical ways of overcoming issues, building resilience
- * helped support people to not need/divert from formal services, through local solutions

The mid point report shows some really powerful stories and very positive feedback from people who have come into contact with Neil, Simran and Rajeev.

They are helping people to stay strong, build supportive relationships, be part of and contribute to their local communities.

Local people are also having exciting conversations about how, together, they can build a positive vision for their communities and think of the range of ways they can get there.

Some of the stories from Derby City will appear in the forthcoming paper on Local Area Coordination.

May 2013 First Local Area Coordinators in Thurrock!

Following a community led recruitment process, Thurrock now has it's first LACs ready to go!

A real collaboration between local people, voluntary sector organisations, Thurrock Council and statutory partners resulted in a highly interactive recruitment process.

We are really looking forward to now all working together to come alongside local people and communities to work together to build a positive vision for the future and support all people to be part of the journey

We'll introduce you to the new LAC's shortly.

The Local Area Coordination Network—It's Moving Forward!

Conversations are now starting with leaders in LAC sites to continue to nurture and build the LAC Network . It aims to support opportunities for shared learning, problem solving, mentoring, training and information sharing at the LAC, LAC Manager and leadership levels. **Stronger together**

This will help us all to build on the strengths and experiences of LAC, nurture reform and build mutual support. We'll let you know as things move forward.

A Day in the Life of a Local Area Coordinator



Archie Rose led the development of the innovative Local Area Coordination programme in Stirling Scotland, recognised as a site of best practice and positive outcomes for local people. In this article, Archie reflects on a "day in the life of" John Oswald, a Local Area Coordinator in Stirling.

My sincere thanks to Archie for his continuing contribution to developments of Local Area Coordination in England and Wales

It's varied, challenging, positive! It's fast and furious. It's great



8.45am

Open Blackberry when walking to office for texts.

Log in to the Computer. Check and reply to emails.

Phone number from a poster for a local Zumba class to check times/ requirements/ suitability for persons supported by LAC. Add to database. Continue with emails. Share information with colleagues. Discuss new referral who had received initial introductory visit – agree most appropriate team member for allocation to build relationship.

Agree team member to meet up with Youth Services staff over a possible referral/ discuss appropriate resources for the young person's worker to consider with him if more appropriate.



10.30am

Phone call from local Volunteering organisation for update phone number of a new trainee volunteer to confirm attendance (possible transport problems identified). Reminder how best to ensure response- communication issues. LAC Colleague discussed developments of ASD group and cooking group regarding person I supported to attend.

Adapt recent referral reports (to Community Care Intake and to GP) on the mother of a youth with Asperger's Syndrome to emphasise/ clarify the criteria for DLA which she demonstrates, and send to Benefits Officer who is preparing an Appeal, after LAC had facilitated her engagement with him. (The lady had requested my contribution to Appeal).



11.30am

Take call from an individual previously supported due to mental health difficulties with social inclusion, housing etc who requested I speak to his friend to make self – referral.

Friend then spoke - has severe health and mobility difficulties and seeks support/ advice on appropriate resources and wish to develop a better quality of life.

Encouraged to self – advocacy with Community Care which may be appropriate – still awaiting assessment – and advised on eligibility/ prioritisation/ operation of Community Care system. Contacted LAC colleague and called back to agree time for initial home visit to consider LAC.

Continue DLA Appeal report.

A Day in the Life of.....



12.30pm Lunch with Community Development colleagues (co – located).
News of proposed expansion of small community club for older persons in community centre.



1.00pm Complete on – line survey by Scottish Government for mapping resources under the National Autism Strategy.

Opportunity to comment on suitability of the LAC person – centred approach for the highly variable individual expression and needs of Autism and the role in partnerships - attempting to influence organisations and services to provide “reasonable adjustments” to encourage social inclusion/ employment/ quality of life

with ASD.

Admin e.g. go over the work’s Blackberry bill to report any personal calls.



2.30pm Type notes of meetings / visits onto the database shared with Social Services, taking care the record includes only information agreed to be shared, e.g. progress towards or barriers to goals, tasks agreed for LAC, person or a third party to action.



3.30 pm Home Visit to person in rural village (transport problems).

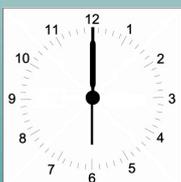
Follow – up his progress on household management with encouragement and clarification over appropriate support by his Home Support worker, awaiting outcome of Community Mental Health Team assessment visit, concerns/ level of understanding of ex – partner’s moves over Court action, grieving over loss of contact with son and developing his strategy for managing future access.

Rehearsed issues to discuss with his solicitor.

Discussed difficulties attending new Adult Literacy class – LAC to liaise with Adult Learning.

Due to literacy difficulty, we talked through the information sent by a Volunteer Agency, which seemed very appropriate for local activity/ inclusion and helped to complete application form. Agreed LAC would be referee.

The form permitted him to identify skills, experience and interest and he was left with improved self – esteem and confidence.



6.00pm Return Council fleet car—think about tomorrow

From Equal Opportunities to Real Citizens Recruiting

Thurrock Council has just started the journey of building Local Area Coordination alongside local citizens, services and communities as part of their vision for building more welcoming, inclusive and mutually supportive communities.

Local Area Coordination is about citizenship, inclusion, contribution and leadership, therefore finding your preferred LAC must be about real joint working, co production....doing it together.

In Thurrock, they did just that. Local people, statutory services and community organisations came together to find their first Local Area Coordinators.

Here, Kristina Jackson (CEO Thurrock CVS), Neil Woodbridge (Chief Exec Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions) CIC and Tania Sitch (Thurrock Council Fieldwork Services Manager) tell the story of the community led open interview approach.

About Thurrock

Thurrock is a small unitary Authority just to the East of London and nestling between the A13, M25 and the Thames. Way back in 1996 its voluntary and community sector really pushed for the area to become Independent of the Essex Local Authority control, arguing Thurrock had a unique profile that deserved a highly tailored Local Authority. In 1998 this was granted and everyone stepped up to the plate for positive change.



The Beehive

Rolling forward, through many years of development and change this little Authority of 150,000 citizens still packs a major community punch (there are over 500 groups locally). Whoa betide anyone who thinks they can turn up on the doorstep and tell people what to do. The Local Authority concept of securing 4 Local Area Coordinators was thus set upon with some anxiety to get it right and a distinct desire to maximise involvement of everyone.

Real Engagement—Real Contribution—Real Leadership



The Team!

The Local Authority Managers were keen to get this process right – when they looked at the original applications response to a standard advert they simply couldn't shortlist enough candidates. The steering group were asked to think again and together with CVS and a local Social Enterprise developed a citizen led model of recruitment:

The LA agreed that everyone who expressed an interest in the LAC posts from an advert would be allowed to go through the recruitment process. This resulted in 105 people being invited to an all day experience! The administration of which was quite an accomplishment; but key were the Community Connectors / Citizens of

Thurrock and local groups who were invited and supported to lead the decisions. These people were chosen via the local CVS and a

local Social Enterprise as people who had most engaged with the sector. As a result we had approximately 25 community advocates who were clearly involved in their communities as connectors and who spanned a wide variety of experience; from faith groups, disability, mental health, older people, and young people – all of whom came with a desire to bring positive change to Thurrock.

Local People in Control—Working Together

The Community groups were divided up and placed on 4 tables around the large hall in the local CVS building – the candidates were then briefed on mass and divided into small groups of 8. They all had

numbers for name badges and the Citizens had cards that they could simply write the numbers on and then piece of paper with a scale of 1-5 written on which to score each Candidate instantly. Each group had a guide who stayed with them and scored also throughout the whole process. A triangle was rung to start and then every 25 minutes afterwards – just like speed dating!

There were a total of 6 tables that the applicants in their groups had to go around – one was to have a three-minute interview at and one was simply called ‘Rest’ where they could read articles about LAC. The 4 tables of Citizens had specific tasks to ask the candidates supported by a facilitator. One was to lead a discussion about a proposed local large shopping development, two was to ask them to place post-sticks on a huge map of Thurrock showing what community connections they knew in the local area, Three was to translate a paragraph from a Local Authority document and Four was to discuss “What I love about Thurrock is ...”. For each task the candidates took it in turns and only had three minutes to take the lead – all the time being observed by the Citizens and managers from Thurrock.

It’s all about relationships

It was extremely interesting to observe how people did or did not engage with the Community. There were some clear winners and losers. At the end of this process the steering group looked at the collated score and at only this point did a formal panel agree to interview a shortlist of 16 people. From these, 6 candidates in total across the four proposed LAC areas were chosen. These people



Mayor Gupta and the team asking hard questions

were then taken forward and given another final interview with a small group of community leaders from the specific area we wanted them to work in – so the final job offers were made to the Candidates from the Community Connectors in the area within which they would work. True Citizen empowerment.

Where the Community Connectors from the LAC area said no this was respected and the person not appointed.

What people told us

Feedback from both the Candidates and the Citizens who took part has been extremely positive. The situation somehow felt very real to everyone; it wasn’t what was written on any application paper it was the ability to engage, to show local

knowledge, to deliver passion and to show a genuine interest in local people that allowed the candidates to succeed. People who can’t get alongside Citizens, network and make community solution style links needed not to apply!!

It’s helping us to do things differently

Footnote: - The Local Authority so engaged with the process that they asked the Community to help them again recently with a similar process in order to recruit their next batch of OT’s and Social Workers

Power to the people!!



Kristina Jackson



Neil Woodbridge



Tania Sitch



Spinning Out with a LAC Twist!



Neil Woodbridge is CEO of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC, an innovative social enterprise led by people who have a learning disability. Check it out!

In 2001 the government produced a white paper entitled 'Valuing People' and part of it described how the antiquated day services for people with Learning Disabilities could be modernised. At the time, having come from the Voluntary sector and as a Service manager for the LA, I read it and thought this is obvious isn't it?

Sadly, there are still many parts of the Country that still have big day centres filled to the hilt with lost souls and all the concurrent interdependencies that go with this. One City I visited in the North recently still had 800 people in 4 large buildings – their transport budget alone was £1.8M! In terms of 'community inclusion' - Just how much would the shares in Hollywood Bowl go down if they weren't full of people with Learning Disabilities every week-day? Go see.

In Thurrock we finally moved to the next stage of our day services modernisation (having closed the big buildings years ago) on February 1st 2013 as 144 people's lives were agreed to be supported by a group of people with learning disabilities who span out their modernised services from the Local Authority into the Community Interest Company that they are elected Directors of – whose profits go back to the community they serve. Finally, at last we are heading away from 'passive recipient of care' to 'Active Citizen in control' via Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC.

So where does LAC fit with this? Well, in 2002 I bounded into the then Director of Adult Social Care and said; "read this" – it was an article by Eddie Bartnik extolling the virtues of LAC in Australia. She sighed deeply and said; 'your just too maverick for us Neil – no Local Authority could ever go for this'.

I didn't give up – we started training the LA staff and with an enlightened Commissioner I changed

their job titles from 'Day Centre Officer' to 'Community Facilitator'. I wanted people to see that Thurrock, like most Counties, is full of Communities on all levels. So we have the geographical Communities of small towns and villages – each with a unique identity and culture of its own, the vast array of small voluntary sector groups and clubs, the individuals that connect the Community – preacher, PCSO, doctor, local citizens etc. We taught the staff that 'Community is an experience and not a location'. We undertook massive person centred individual planning sessions and designed an Individual Support Plan that looked at peoples desired outcomes in a solution focussed way and talked about Community Solutions.



I see Thurrock as a huge span of interconnected firing wires of gorgeous community solutions that people can be navigated along by nodes of our community connectors. All people with Learning Disabilities have gifts they contribute to the community - no one is in deficit or need – all are fantastically active citizens ...little did I realise our Community facilitators had some of the key LAC skills around listening, learning and valuing individual gifts and contributions.

Ok – I hear you say "So What" - Well, the important money stuff is that Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC is recorded as saving a cashable

£279K of the precious LA resource as it spun out. Vital these days – but of more importance.. we have many many people examples. Here is just one –

Steven is a young man who has a Learning Disability and who had been in care most of his childhood as well as on probation for violence.

Thurrock LA wanted him to move back from his out of Borough expensive placement. The Directors of TLS had taught us as 'experts by experience' of their poor similar transition experiences. The new model of support was based on their discussions.

Steven rented a room for us while he moved back– he was stubborn, difficult and a deeply damaged young man who'd been fighting the system for some time. We started the Individual Support Planning and started the Community connections. Steven took part in a community-based project looking at how to keep safe in the Community, during which he met some local Police Officers and lots of community people. He had several angry moments in the community and was still on probation with a threat of imprisonment – one day the Police were called.. they remembered him from the course and one of their 'Specials' talked him down with an understanding of his like for the Eddie Stobart trucks TV

programme. She also recalled a PCSO who worked for the company locally. They arranged for Steven to be taken to a lorry on his birthday and he went on a road trip! Having been made so happy he then made connection with a local charity who repaired pushbikes and he was invited to volunteer. He loved this work and it motivated him to get up in the morning. From this he was connected to a local volunteer handyman project – where he supports minor repair and removal jobs around Thurrock. From this he was asked to help decorate a local flat used by Community Service Volunteers and then was offered a permanent home with a local Housing Association.

Steven was also able to attend a local nightclub for the first time in his life as the owner had made connections through a Community facilitator – he drank responsibly and started to make appropriate contact with people of the opposite sex! Evidence like this finally enabled him to be discharged from the support he had from the local mental health team.

At Stevens last LA review he stayed in the room the whole time, did not rant and get aggressive – the professionals could see his active contribution and the shift away from LA dependency.

From passive recipient of care to Active Citizen via the LAC twist – reciprocity rules - geddit?

Neil Woodbridge (Chief Executive TLS CIC)

To find out more about TLS CIC, contact Neil and the team via info@choiceandcontrol.co.uk or

<http://www.choiceandcontrol.co.uk/>



Listen and Keep On Listening



Neil Woodhead is Social Capital Development Manager in Derby City and leading the development of Local Area Coordination and Person Person Centred Practice

Recently, I had intended to attend the UK gathering of The Learning Community for Person Centred Practice in Birmingham, however in Derby we had an important meeting with colleagues from The University of Derby to take stock midway through year one of our LAC project.

This missed opportunity prompted me to reflect on a meeting I had been fortunate enough to be invited to towards the end of last year between two people who have had a significant impact on my life over the last 10 years. The meeting took place between Ralph Broad and Helen Sanderson, it was the beginning of the conversation about the links between LAC and person centred practices. It was a great meeting to be part of and obviously, as you would expect there were lots of opportunities and potential discussed.

The reason why I reflected on that particular meeting this morning, is that I was tasked with writing up examples of where we had used person centred tools in our work on the Derby LAC project. Whilst the tools are embedded in everything in do...I haven't taken the time to write up the examples, and so I was a little relieved that I wouldn't have to "fess up" to Helen.

However, it did leave me thinking about the two approaches and what made them such a perfect match.

"Listening is not a one off event that happens at assessment or review"

After the university meeting, I got involved a conversation with a colleague who was incredibly frustrated with the way services can respond to people by disempowering them and leaving them labeled as difficult. Then, the light bulb went on.

Three Promises

When we go into any relationship with the people we are working with or walking alongside we should embark on that journey by offering **three promises** to the person:

1. **To listen** to what is being said and to what is meant by what is being said and to keep on listening. Listening is not a one off event that happens at assessment or review.
2. **To act** on what we hear and always find something that we can do today or tomorrow, and to keep acting on what we hear.
3. **To be honest and open** in every communication. Particularly when we do not know how to help the person get what they want, because it's at this point that we create the space for the person to take ownership of their own issues, and creativity can flow. Especially if the final promise is that, **we will walk alongside them.**

For me these principles are the foundation of LAC and person centred approaches and in order to be effective in our roles we must keep them at the centre of everything we do.



Listen and Keep on Listening

Tomorrow's Leaders Course



Samantha Clark

Inclusion North is about to start a new Tomorrows Leaders course – much to the team's excitement and the envy of nearly everyone we know.

Tomorrow's Leaders is a training course that helps people with Learning Disabilities become leaders and understand that role. It is framed by asset based thinking & approaches. It is based on these values & tries to model them in practice

* The values of Inclusion

* Honesty to each other and ourselves

- * Everyone has something to learn and contribute
- * We all have prejudices we need to challenge
- * Everyone has a responsibility for how they act, what they get out of the course and for making the course run well

We know being a leader can be tough as Stewart Chappell says

"It's been a journey, a long journey. I'm not sure if I was bullied or hard pressed to do the Tomorrows Leaders course but before I know it I had an application filled in and sent off to Inclusion North, Now I look back **it's the best thing I ever did.**"

Through the course we help people make connections with other northern leaders but also people across the country who are well connected themselves – like the Partners in Policymaking network. Tomorrow's leaders is part of the partners 'family' & was 1st developed by Partners graduates to support emerging leaders through the newly formed National Forum for people with learning Disabilities & local learning disability partnership boards.

Angela & Susan are leading the course but one of the really great parts of the course is that it includes contributions from a huge range of people – the leaders or innovators in their field. The course is a residential course that runs over 4 months and is based on planning for the future as leaders. People come with co learners who help them develop & their project & work in between sessions.

The content of the course includes:

- ◆ The history of exclusion of disabled people and the inclusion movement
- ◆ The growth of the disability rights and Self Advocacy movements
- ◆ The English political structure (National and Local)
- ◆ How to lobby and campaign for change
- ◆ Current government policy including the move to strengths based approaches & personalisation
- ◆ Working with others in Partnership to achieve change

Tomorrow's Leaders graduates have **gone on to do amazing things** in their own lives and making changes in their communities for the better. This includes **getting jobs**, leading campaigns, delivering training or becoming formidable **influential leaders** around local & national policy.

I feel confident these graduates will do the same & remind us workers that **people are gifted, talented & engaged citizens.**

To find out more contact Samantha on 0113 2626409 or via <mailto:info@inclusionnorth.org>

