

Welcome



Ralph Broad
Director
The LAC Network

Welcome to Issue 4, Autumn 2012, of the Local Area Coordination Network Newsletter.

In the last edition we reflected on the new Government White paper "Caring for our future; Reforming care and support." Since then, many people have been contributing ideas, thoughts and recommendations for making the most of the opportunities presented by this discussion.

As finances tighten further and the risks of cuts to services continues, there is the increasing risk of unmet need, crises and safeguarding concerns for individuals and families.

The focus on intentional, evidence based and coordinated approaches to supporting people to stay strong and building mutually supportive communities becomes ever greater.

As new LAC sites start, this will provide the opportunity for shared learning at the individual, family, community and systems levels to make this happen and to continue learning and improvement.

This Issue

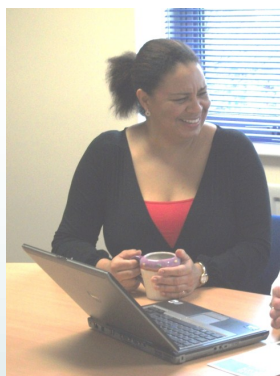
I am hugely grateful for some really challenging and important contributions to this Newsletter.

David Towell has written a thought provoking and challenging article on our collective responsibilities to strengthen communities for the future

Alex Fox has contributed an important paper on the importance, challenges and opportunities presented by the recent White Paper

Carol Taylor has reflected some of the key issues facing councils and communities and we have a great story from local people and professionals in Middlesbrough about LAC

I hope you enjoy this issue.



Carol Taylor
The LAC Network



Samantha Clark
Inclusion North

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BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR THE GREAT TRANSITION



David Towell is the Director of the London-based Centre for Inclusive Futures.

Probably like most readers of this excellent Newsletter, my interest in local area coordination and asset-based approaches to community building start from a perspective on disability equality.

We, the disabled people’s movement and its allies, recognise the need to build strong and **inclusive** communities if disabled people are to participate fully as equal citizens.

But **we**, all as citizens, have a much broader agenda for community building if **we** are to achieve a **sustainable** future.

We, the disabled people’s movement and its allies recognise the need to build strong and inclusive communities if disabled people are to participate fully as equal citizens.

In this short article I want to invite LAC network members to consider how our efforts to enhance social justice and promote the inclusion of disabled people can best be linked to the overarching 21st Century imperative of achieving sustainable development i.e. which protects the biosphere and fosters well-being for all.

Let’s start from the big picture.

We can’t go on as **we** are.

Our failure to rise to the challenge of climate change promises an intolerable future for later generations as **we** destroy our own habitat and the wonders of nature which depend on it.

Long before then, **we** will have passed the peak in oil production even as energy needs rise with global population growth.

We already know that the world’s financial system is an unaccountable casino which lacks the integrity to address these challenges. **We** are living with massive inequalities which make the ‘richer’ countries like the UK and even more so, the USA, dysfunctional for their own people. **We** can’t be happy with this.

New vision

We desperately need to create together a new vision of what it means for human society to flourish in the context of ecological limits, to have *Prosperity Without Growth*. **We** have to end our dependence on fossil fuels. **We** have to put aside materialism in favour of valuing the strength of our relationships and the support of our communities.



BUILDING COMMUNITY FOR THE GREAT TRANSITION

We have to ensure that social justice and inclusion are central to the transition agenda.

As *The Spirit Level* shows, **we** need greater equality to support the public ethos and cooperative working required to solve these problems together.

Indeed **we** need to achieve what the New Economics Foundation calls *The Great Transition* to a better future through revitalising democratic participation, developing more local and resilient economies, reawakening the power of families and neighbourhoods, and living in harmony with nature.

We must recognise *The Resilience Imperative* and learn from examples in *The Transition Companion*.

Being part of this

- ⇒ We need to be part of this because this is our future too. Indeed disabled people, especially in 'poorer' parts of the world are likely to be among the main victims of continuing failure.
- ⇒ We need to be part of this because our experiences and skills, for example, in developing mutual aid networks, opening up public spaces, helping protect local ecosystems, etc. are relevant and, providing things are organised accessibly, some of us also have time.
- ⇒ We need to be part of this because every local community faces trade-offs among multiple challenges: we will have good allies in this but we have to ensure that social justice and inclusion are central to the transition agenda.
- ⇒ We need to be part of this because there is work here for everyone and we understand a lot about welcoming diversity, establishing trust, communicating simply and meeting effectively.
- ⇒ We need to be active citizens continually searching for, and creating opportunities to play our part in building communities which are both sustainable and inclusive. To adapt the words of Alice Walker, 'We are the people we have been waiting for'.

David Towell is the Director of the London-based Centre for Inclusive Futures.

He co-hosts with John O'Brien a website which discusses the publications referenced here and develops these ideas at: http://inclusiveandsustainable.ning.com/?xg_source=msg_mes_network

A big thank you to David for this challenging, thought provoking, reflective piece—join the discussion and start to share ideas for a better future. *WE* can make a difference

Carol Taylor—The World According to Me (Well Sort of).....



A couple of weeks ago Ralph asked me to do an article for the newsletter entitled 'The world according to Carol Taylor'.

Grandiose in the least! The thing is things are changing at such a rapid pace that it would be outdated as soon

as the ink was dry so I've decided to stick a little closer to home.

Middlesbrough Council has just announced £11m worth of cuts with another £3m to be announced before Christmas.

It has been reported that these spending cuts will affect every one of the town's 140,000 residents. I can vouch for that. It's affecting me, it's affecting my team (and every other team in the organisation) and it's affecting the

Spending cuts will affect every one of the town's 140,000 residents.

The challenge is to make REAL reform happen

the vulnerable people we work with.

Whether we like it or not, we trust organisations to get it right, banks, retailers, local government, and we're not happy when they don't.

What's more it won't stop there. From April 2013 changes aligned to Welfare Reform will start to show impact. Universal Credit, bedroom tax, no housing benefit entitlement for under 25s, more job losses.

However, change doesn't always have to be a bad thing but it does have to be managed properly and that applies to everyone, individuals, families, communities and perhaps more importantly organisations.

One phrase that seems to have been adopted as part of the common language is 'benefit scroungers'. In my role as LAC Development Manager for Middlesbrough Council I have seen very few – if any – individuals that can be classed as such and surely if this term can be used against them, it can be used just as equally against organisations?

Times are tough but for how many years have organisations been dependent on grants and hand-outs and 'benefits' because they were poor or deprived?

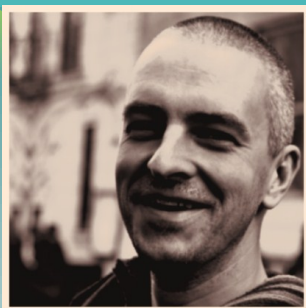
"Was the money used wisely, spent on priorities and crisis prevention? Did authorities use the money to look for things that worked and have those things been subsequently invested in? Creating efficiencies and investing to save. There are lots more questions to be asked but one thing we mustn't forget is that change isn't always a bad thing. Change can be, and more often than not, is a good thing. We just need to see the opportunities.

LAC has been tested time and time again over the past 25 years and the evidence that it works is there. We know that LAC supports vulnerable people to live a life that's good for them, empowering individuals and families and helping to strengthen communities. LAC is also a strategic tool to be used to transform services creating more focussed, more efficient, cost effective organisations, turning service delivery on its head and looking at services from a different angle.

I would hope that in the wake of such far reaching austerity measures and over two and a half years into the coalition's term of Government, that organisations in the midst of all this change would at least have a vision of what this change looks like for them, a strategy of how they are going to get there and a policy for efficiency in delivering necessary services.

The salami-slicing/cut 'n' shut approach may save money now but what will the consequences be? LAC may not be the answer that every organisation arrives at but it should at least be considered as a viable option proven to affect positive change whilst saving money. The evidence is there the impact is being felt.

You just need to listen.



Alex Fox— Act Personal, Think Local

There are a lot of places in the White Paper and the Bill where there are deliberate attempts to create ‘asset-based’ thinking about people’s skills, potential and responsibilities, where previously social care law was all about assessment of needs, vulnerability and (limited) entitlements. For instance, the White Paper has a strong story about the need we have “to understand that people with care needs very much have something to offer. Care and support should not just be about making people comfortable but about helping them to fulfil their potential” and to be “connected to society” as part of “more active communities”. But the Bill in particular could go farther in enabling and not getting in the way of an asset-based system.

One of ways in which the Bill could be improved will be to look at the distinction between duties to maintain individual entitlements and duties to maintain particular kinds of services. The former are duties towards individuals and the latter are population-level or whole-area duties. Whole-population duties are hard to enforce, particularly duties to have in place certain broad types of service. At the moment things that are ‘preventative’ fall into this whole-area space, and only service responses for those with higher needs have the clarity of being duties towards individuals.

We are working with partners such as Inclusive Neighbourhoods to frame a new duty: a duty to offer support to individuals who have low level needs to produce an action plan. This would not be a new offer of support services, it would be a way of framing the early provision of information, advice, navigation and planning support, with an emphasis on people being supported to think through all the ways in which they might be able to make better use of the whole range of sources of support around them in their family and community. This would reduce the risk of recreating the current system which often begins with tests of people’s needs, vulnerability and poverty, rather than with a creative discussion at an early stage about how the person and their family might be able to maintain control of their lives in the face of increasing support needs, rather than cede that control to a range of services.

In a time of scarce resources we can’t afford for social workers to be assessing people’s needs without producing something useful as a result for those who don’t meet eligibility thresholds. Instead, every discussion should result in a useful outcome, even if a service is not available or not appropriate. For those with high needs planning conversations will often necessarily have a strong focus on services. For those with lower needs, or no eligible needs, it may focus entirely on what else is around them in their community and the options open to them outside of state services. Either way information produced should be owned by the individual and portable. This early intervention will reduce the risk that the first support planning discussions take place during a crisis, when planning can be hardest.

Equally, there is a need to link more clearly the assessment and support to which individuals are entitled, with whole-area planning. At the moment the Bill has a duty to note unmet need, which narrowly interpreted, could be seen as merely requiring a headcount of people with social care needs who are not receiving state support. Recording unmet need should be part of each conversation carried out by or on behalf of the state, so that information about unmet need can be fed into councils’ strategic needs-assessment and planning processes.

One of the attractions of Local Area Coordination, is that it is a model which avoids the current separation between thinking about what individuals who use services need, and what is needed by the wider population. There is growing enthusiasm in the sector for this kind of universal approach; I only hope that we have understood its potential clearly enough to take this rare opportunity to embed it in the new care and support system.

Alex Fox FRSA is CEO of Shared Lives Plus (www.SharedLivesPlus.org.uk), 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 Chairs the Care Provider Alliance, sits on the board of Think Local, Act Personal and co-led on ‘prevention and early intervention’ for the social care White Paper engagement process. He blogs at <http://alexfoxblog.wordpress.com/> and [@AlexSharedLives](https://twitter.com/AlexSharedLives).



News

Welcome to Thurrock Council

A huge welcome to Thurrock Council who have now joined the LAC “family”. Work is starting on the design and development of LAC in 3

localities in Thurrock. There is real passion and commitment to local citizens and communities, aiming to build on the great assets of local people, communities, organisations and services.

A great opportunity for shared learning

LAC in Action—Stories from Local People and Partners

On 4th September (2012), local people in Middlesbrough who have been supported by LAC came together to meet David Boyle and Maria Nyberg (Cabinet Office) to talk about their experiences of Local Area Coordination and the impact on choice.

It was a very powerful and moving discussion where we were privileged to hear their stories – thank you to everyone who was there. See more on pages 6 and 7 in this issue

**The challenge
now is to make
REAL reform
happen—
people, places
and
possibilities**

Stephen’s Story

Check out Stephen’s story in the Evening Gazette.

Stephen suffered from bullying in the school system and has a passion to use his experiences to help others who may also experience bullying and spread an anti bullying message.

You can see Stephen's story and dvd via <http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/2012/08/25/middlesbrough-cerebral-palsy-sufferer-aims-to-beat-bullies-video-84229-31696351/>

For more news about Local Area Coordination, go to <http://localareacoordination.wordpress.com/2012/06/29/latest-news-local-area-coordination-network/>

Recent Publications, Blogs and Articles

It has been a very busy few months with increasing discussions and conversations about social care and health—below are some very interesting articles you may wish to look at

David Towell—Delivering the Promise of an Ordinary Life

Check out David’s paper “delivering the promise of an ordinary life” reflecting on the “then and now” 25 years on from “An Ordinary Life in Practice”

<http://www.paradigm-uk.org/Resources/lz/v/Delivering%20the%20Promise%20of%20An%20Ordinary%20Life%20draft%201.pdf>

It highlights some of the big challenges facing people with disabilities and their families in the current political and economic climate, plus also the opportunities and urgent need to come alongside our fellow citizens to support the goals of autonomy and genuine community inclusion

David Towell directs the Centre for Inclusive Futures. He is currently helping Inclusion International with its global report on implementation of Article 19 of the UN Convention, to be launched in Washington this October.



News

Welcome to Monmouthshire!

A big welcome to colleagues and friends in Monmouthshire who are starting conversations around the possibilities and opportunities of

Local Area Coordination locally. Have a look at the Monmouthshire “Your County Your Way” site at <http://www.yc-yw.co.uk/> for some of the positive work already underway. For more info, also look at Simon Burch’s Director’s Report—[http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/fileadmin/templates/mcctypo3/Carers_Support_and_Social_Services/Director s Reports/Directors_Report_v1.5_120611.pdf](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/fileadmin/templates/mcctypo3/Carers_Support_and_Social_Services/Director_s_Reports/Directors_Report_v1.5_120611.pdf)

A commitment to local people and closing the gap between citizens and local government. Great stuff.

Current Local Area Coordination Sites in England and Wales

Below is a rough map showing the current and developing LAC sites in England and Wales.

This is now providing opportunities for local leaders to build connections, share learning and experiences (mutual support) and thinking around opportunities and approaches to positive reform and re balancing of service system—from crisis/assessment/funding to strengthening citizens/communities and local solutions. In summary

- Middlesbrough— 2 LACs in place, plans to expand across area. Need to maintain design integrity
- Derby City—2 LACs in place. Strong programme developing. LAC and ABCD site
- Stroud—1 LAC in place. Recruitment and expansion underway. Design and development ongoing.
- Cumbria—part developed site—awaiting details of commitment to full design and implementation
- Thurrock—developing. 3 localities identified. LAC and ABCD site.
- Derbyshire—early development. 3 localities identified.
- Monmouthshire—conversations and design planning starting. Very exciting

There are now also further conversations starting in the NE/E, and across the Midlands





Stories from Local People and Community Partners

What makes Local Area Coordination work? What helps it to deliver the wide range of outcomes alongside individuals, families and local communities and also drive reform in the service system?

Over the past 24 years, there have been many, many reviews and evaluations showing the range of outcomes and possibilities presented by Local Area Coordination where designed, developed and implemented with integrity and supported by strong and principled leadership at the service and community levels.

Middlesbrough was the first site in England to start Local Area Coordination. The first (very early) evaluation showed a range of positive outcomes consistent with international studies and best practice. It has now been agreed that LAC will expand across Middlesbrough.

We have more choices – it's not just about services, but more about friends, family, neighbours, community options.

They help us to look at our whole life, not just try to fit us into a service "pigeon hole" –

They "deal with it all together"

However, perhaps the most significant and relevant feedback is that of local people who have been supported by Local Area Coordination.

On 4th September, 2012, local people in Middlesbrough who have been supported by LAC came together to meet David Boyle and Maria Nyberg (Cabinet Office) to talk about their experiences of Local Area Coordination and the impact on choice.

It was a very powerful and moving discussion where we were privileged to hear their stories – thank you to everyone who was there.

Below is a summary of the key themes that local people told us

Individuals and families

- LACs take time to get to know us, our family, our community and our circumstances
- They listen, they don't judge or assess
- We have more choices – it's not just about services, but more

about friends, family, neighbours, community options. They help us to look at our whole life, not just try to fit us into a service "pigeon hole" – they "deal with it all together"

- They support and challenge us to do things for ourselves – this has helped me build confidence, to solve more of my own problems and to need services less
- I now know who to go to if I have a problem – it used to be so difficult to find the right person or I'd have to wait until my problems were even worse before someone would listen
- They provide continuity and consistency – other services keep changing
- They help me to have a voice, speak up for myself
- They help me to understand and coordinate services – there used to be so many people involved, it sometimes made things feel worse

Stories from Local People and Community Partners

- “In the past, I felt excluded, now I feel more in control”
- They have saved my life
- I don’t know what would have happened if Carol, Janet and Stuart hadn’t been there
- They are always there for me – someone on my side
- They keep their promises – they do what they say, when they say

Statutory and Community Partners

- We have a great working partnership with LAC – mutually beneficial support
- Having the LACs has made our jobs better
- They are able to work across service types and ages – cradle to grave. This makes a big difference to families and builds continuity across transition and service types
- They are a single point of contact, not only for local people, but also for services. They help effectively coordinate services for local people
- They have and share a huge knowledge of local people, resources and connections – this is also really helpful for people we support
- They are amazingly creative – they find innovative ways of helping people overcome problems or achieve their aims
- LAC is becoming even more important as services are reduced – a focus on prevention, capacity building – reducing pressure and demand for statutory services
- LACs work differently to other professionals – it’s about taking time to listen, learn and find creative ways to solve problems. It’s long term
- If LAC wasn’t there anymore, there would be an increase in crises, family breakdown, service costs, unmet need, deprivation, drink/drugs related issues, homelessness, unreported crime
- The LACs have made a significant contribution to our communities
- The LAC programme must be protected and expanded
- It’s really important for LACs to be embedded in the community, working alongside local people and community partners
- We need to be thinking about building this for the next 10-15 years, not just 12 months



These stories reinforce the value and importance of paying close attention to the effective design of LAC programmes, full commitment to the values and principles of LAC and strength based approaches and the positive assumptions about local people and communities. It reinforces the possibilities for supporting people to stay strong, to need services less and strengthen our local communities.

We are currently putting together a new paper on Local Area Coordination stories – we’ll let you know as things develop



Local government innovators need to learn from the principles and practice of local area coordination



Mike Harris, from new economics foundation (nef) -reports on the opportunities and challenges facing local government, services and communities .

Local government innovators need to learn from the principles and practice of Local Area Coordination

The new economics foundation (nef) has long been an admirer of local area co-ordination – for the principles underlying the approach as well as the positive impact it has on people's lives. We've included local area coordination in our new report looking at local innovations in services and support for disabled people, produced for Scope – both because it is an important innovation in itself, but also because it points to the principles that should inform innovative services generally.

Over the past few months we've been looking for innovative services for disabled people developed by local authorities and other providers. You can read about what we've found in our new report, *Doing Services Differently*. The report shows how innovative local authorities are working with disabled people, and that this is the way to improve lives and reduce the need for traditional welfare – very much in line with the principles of local area coordination.

Of course, local authorities find themselves in a very challenging position, faced with unprecedented cuts to their budgets at a time of increasing demand for their services from an ageing population. With more cuts scheduled until at least 2015, this situation is likely to get worse before it gets better. The impact of these cuts is compounded by welfare reform and the tightening of eligibility for state-funded services. Vital support for disabled people is

being made less secure and increasingly contingent—which leaves local authorities in a very difficult position of trying to pick up the pieces.

Some local authorities have focused on 'back office' efficiency savings in an attempt to protect front line services, while others have had to cut services directly. But relying on cuts alone is a false economy. Cuts don't make services more efficient, rather they actually increase the demand for services elsewhere (for example in health and housing). Focusing on what to cut doesn't produce much innovation either.

Despite significant reductions in their budgets, some local authorities are rethinking services so that they recognise and build on disabled people's capabilities, enabling them to participate in work and in their communities. These services range from more personalised and integrated support, to services designed and delivered by disabled people, for disabled people.

What these examples point to is that reforming services in times of austerity should be less about cutting and more about 'reframing' support for disabled people and others. Rather than starting in 'what to cut', these services focus on what would improve the lives of disabled people, increase their independence, and even reshape the communities in which they live in. Fundamentally, they prioritise the human outcomes – the improvements in the well-being and life chances of disabled people, their families and carers.

In order to do this, these services work closely with disabled people to understand what their aspirations are and then design support around these aspirations. The key insight running through these services – what has helped local authorities and providers think beyond traditional services –

Needs Based and Asset Based Services

| Needs-based services | Asset-based services |
|---|---|
| Professionals doing things to and for service users | Services supporting and enabling service users to do things for themselves wherever possible |
| Decisions being made on behalf of services users/ service users being represented by others | Genuine choice and control by service users, advocating for themselves and others |
| Consultation on services | Co-design of services between professionals and service users |
| Traditional professional/service user split – professionals deliver services to service users | Co-delivery of services between professionals and service users |
| Mainly one-to-one relationship between professionals and service users | Service users are part of active supportive networks and communities (for example, peer support) |
| Relying on professionals to provide information | Supporting and enabling service users to find and use information themselves |
| Because they focus on the most urgent needs, services and interventions are largely reactive and (at best) ameliorative; as a result, these services are less likely to be sustainable (affordable) | Because they recognise and build on assets, services and interventions are more preventative and so help build resilience and independence; as a result, if properly designed and resourced, these services are more likely to be sustainable |

Of course, now more than ever, cost-saving is critical to local authorities, but cutting services can't act as a starting-point for improving them, let alone innovation. Many of the innovations described in our report are highly cost-effective and provide greater value for money, but they have been inspired first and foremost by a commitment to improve the lives of disabled people. Just like local area coordination, these approaches often lead to cost-savings in the medium and longer term, over and above those generated by an exclusive focus on narrow financial outcomes.

The most important lesson we draw from these examples is that better outcomes can only be achieved by placing disabled people and their families at the centre of transforming services.

These services can save money as a result of providing what disabled people and their families actually want, by working closely with them and by drawing on support based in their communities. Often, this means services being delivered with and by disabled people and disabled people's organisations (DPOs). As a result, not only do these services find new, more cost-effective ways of providing services – they also promote a fairer, more equal and inclusive society by putting the contribution of disabled people at their centre. For us, they demonstrate ways of doing services differently.

Doing Services Differently is available on the nef site at: <http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/doing-services-differently>



Late, late, late News!

LACs sighted in the Nottingham Half Marathon!

Huge congratulations to Neil Woodhead and Simran Sandhu for completing the recent Nottingham Half Marathon—in a rather good time as well.

Now that's what I call determination! All power to Local Area Coordinators in Derby City.

I did try to get photos....but that was going one step too far apparently.

Neighbourhood Network Members Leading Learning Session at Edinburgh University

A huge thank you to Neighbourhood Network members who led a great learning session with first year psychology students at University of Edinburgh recently.

We are very grateful to them for sharing their stories and thoughts about the terrible impact of service labels, deficit based assessments and low expectations—AND also about positive opportunities for making services and professional roles more personal, flexible and relevant. I was truly inspired

It has also helped to challenge and influence the thinking and behavior of the next generation of psychologists, with a bigger focus on the skills, contribution and leadership of people who may need social care or health support in the future.

A big thank you also to the students who were engaged, passionate and determined to make a difference in the future. They also spoke of their desire and passion to ensure the real contribution and leadership of people with disabilities and mental health needs in the future to shape and control services in the future.

You can find out more about Neighbourhood Networks at <http://www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org/>

Carol Taylor—Middlesbrough

Following a recent re structure of services in Middlesbrough, Carol Taylor will be leaving her post of Local Area Coordination Manager in Mid November—a huge loss for LAC, local people and service partners.

I would like to sincerely thank Carol (and Stuart and Janet) for her huge commitment and passion for making LAC so successful in Middlesbrough and making such a huge difference alongside local people (as you can see from the local stories in this issue). It has been a highly innovative (and cost effective) initiative and now provides Middlesbrough with the platform for supporting local people, strengthening communities, reducing dependence and reforming services. I look forward greatly to having Carol alongside to help make LAC a reality in other parts of England Wales. Thanks Carol.....Ralph

Next Issue—Winter 2012/13

Samantha Clark (Chief Executive, Inclusion North) will now be the Guest Editor for the Winter Newsletter. The focus will be on individual, family and community leadership, assets and local innovation.

A big thank you to Sam and the Inclusion North team.

***Also, we are now preparing the next paper on Local Area Coordination in England and Wales, with a focus on stories, local people. I look forward to hearing the stories and

Best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year - Ralph and family

