

LAC — People, Places, Possibilities



Ralph Broad
Director
The LAC Network

Well, 2013 is well underway, Christmas and New Year feel a distant memory already and the challenges to social care and health at the local and national level continue to increase.

Stories

Currently, the obsession is often on how to cut budgets or about labeling and judging people because of the needs they have, a recipe for disaster. We need a different conversation.

As Eddie Bartnik would say, “It’s About More than Money”.

So, in this issue, we thought we would start to share some of the stories emerging through the partnerships between Local Area Coordinators and local people.

One thing is clear. LAC *isn't* about an “intervention” where a professional is parachuted in to fix someone and then airlifted out when they are “fixed”. These stories represent part of a journey as local people build and pursue their personal vision and find ways of getting there together.

Janet Stanwick and Rajeev Nath talk about their early experiences as LACs walking alongside local people. It’s about taking time to listen, learning and then standing alongside and helping it to happen. **“Person by person”**

Leaders & Communities Building a Shared Vision

There are also some great stories of local leadership, vision building and partnership working.

In this issue, we also hear from Simon Burch about some of the aspirations for stronger communities in Monmouthshire and some of the innovative thinking making it happen.

Finally, Tania Sitch talks about starting LAC developments, as part of “Building Positive Futures” in Thurrock.

In This Issue

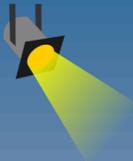
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Carol Taylor
The LAC Network



Neil Woodhead
Derby City Council
The LAC Network



Getting it Right—Tinker or Reform?



Local Area Coordination is an innovative and evidence based approach to supporting people who may be vulnerable due to age, disability, mental health needs or sensory impairments to pursue and achieve their vision for **a good life** and to create more **welcoming and inclusive communities**. When designed with integrity and with strong principled leadership, it also acts as a catalyst (and provides the context) for wide ranging **reform and systems change**.

It recognises and supports the value of individual **gifts, skills and assets**, the powerful and **positive role of families and relationships** and the contribution local communities can make as **alternatives to formal social care** and health services for many people. Through supporting people to build personal, family and community resilience and practical, local (non service) solutions, it aims to help people to stay strong and reduce dependence on formal services.

Local Area Coordination therefore aims to reflect this natural authority and assets by moving the “front end” from assessment, services and funding to “**prevention, capacity building and local solutions**”.

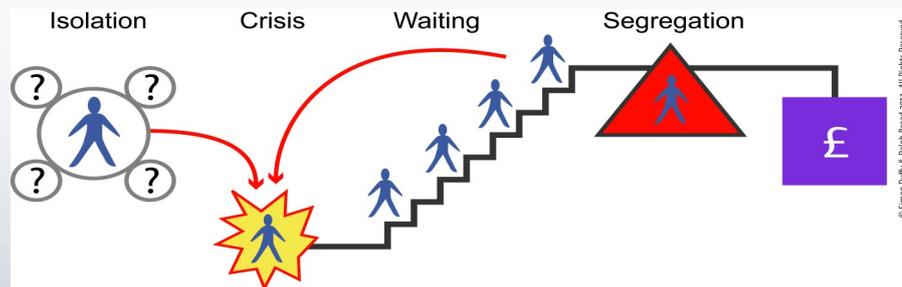
The Existing System Has Created Unintended Consequences

Over the years, there has been much needed development of rights, control, inclusion and valued support

LAC recognises and supports the value of individual gifts, skills and assets, the powerful and positive role of families and relationships and the contribution local communities can make as alternatives to formal social care and health services

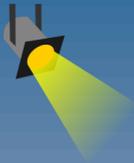
for people who may be vulnerable, isolated or excluded, although much more still needs to be done. However, the service system has sometimes developed a number of negative “unintended consequences.” These include;

- The increasing dependence on services.
- A culture of waiting for people to fall into crisis and then “fixing” with services or money (if eligible).



- A culture of assessment that focuses on deficits—“what can’t you do, what are your problems?”
- A complex service system, with multiple service “silos”.
- A focus on services and money as the only solution to problems.
- People competing for, or excluded from ever diminishing resources.
- A culture of “waiting in negativity” - waiting and fighting for services, but a lack of support to build resilience, personal connections and mutually supportive relationships and communities.

We need to “re - balance” the system to both help people stay strong AND have services as a “back up” where needed. Local Area Coordination is a long term, evidence based approach to supporting individuals, families and communities to stay strong and be more mutually supportive AND to make services more personal, local, flexible, accountable and efficient.



Tinker or Reform? Continued

Evidence and Stories—What Do They Tell Us?

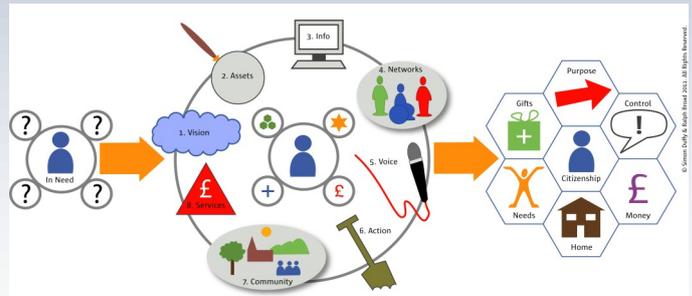
Over the past 25 years there have been 20+ evaluations and studies of Local Area Coordination, so a huge amount of long term learning to share.

Over this time, it has been clear that where designed with integrity (to core principles and approach) and strong leadership, the range of positive outcomes at the individual, family and community levels are relatively consistent and predictable. Where this is not the case, outcomes, are (of course!) less predictable.

Getting it Right—Design and Nurturing Robust and Locally Relevant LAC

Some key considerations in the effective design of Local Area Coordination include

- * Underpinned by 10 Core Values and Principles.
- * Clear LAC Framework underpinning best practice.
- * A long term relationship – not an “intervention”.
- * Building resilience—not dependence.
- * Single, accessible point of contact in community.
- * New Front end of service system – structural reform.
- * All ages & service types – 50-65 individuals/families in a local area/community.
- * LACs from a range of backgrounds—no single professional bias.
- * NO SHORT CUTS, no “pick n mix” or “hybrids”.



LACs really listen – they don't judge or assess

Local Area Coordinators are both embedded in the system AND embedded in the community.

The relationship is central

They take time to get to know us – me, my family, my community.

Finding the Right Person

We have more Choices. It's not just about services

They have a range of connected roles that are usually done by multiple professionals.

LAC combines the roles and delivers locally alongside local people and communities—simplifying the system for local people and professionals.

They come from a variety of backgrounds, are skilled, creative, driven by positive values and committed to their communities. Local people are supported to find their LAC—citizen leadership and contribution.

A single point of contact

It's really nice to be able to come and talk face to face with the same person

The LAC has listened to all the issues affecting me, usually the Council pass me on to someone LAC has helped me deal with it all

LACs work across age groups and service types—simplifying the service system.

They support and challenge me to do more for myself. I feel more confident now

So, the choice is “Do we Tinker or Reform?”

Focus on strengths, keep people strong and simplify the system....or not?

The LAC Network and Inclusive Neighbourhoods supports partners to develop an effective, locally relevant LAC approach, build mutually supportive partnerships with other LAC areas.

Monmouthshire—Helping People to Live Their Own Lives



Times are tough in the public sector. A time surely for retrenchment, clarity over who deserves what and a focus on processes and cost savings?

In Monmouthshire we are taking a different road, inspired among other things by the old Chinese saying “When the winds blow some people build shelters, others build windmills” Thus as a Council we are embracing innovation in our drive to become a 21st century council which is aligned with the needs and aspirations of its citizens.

“When the winds blow some people build shelters, others build windmills”

Chinese proverb



Within the Social Care and Health Directorate this means recalibrating our relationship with individuals and communities based on a strong set of values and by asking some very different questions of ourselves and our citizens. As we look inwards the questions are around purpose, principles, values and flow. As we look outwards the questions are even simpler and more powerful;

What matters to you?

What does a good life mean to you?

Tell us about your strengths and dreams

We are at the early stages of turning these ideas into a systematic approach, and for that we needed a methodology. A year ago a vertical slice of the Directorate, from social workers and OT’s down to the Director, worked together for a week with Simon Pickthall from Vanguard. It was a game of two halves, some real pain and desperation at the way in which apparently benign systems such as ours treat individuals and some

highs as we redefined what we were about and developed a new flow based around listening to understand what people wanted. One of the most powerful realisations was that we could move from a focus on people’s deficits and needs to a different discussion focussing on strengths, networks and opportunities.

And where has this journey taken us over the past year?

- We have placed our skilled staff at the front door, so when you ring up you speak straight to the OT, Social Worker or nurse who will listen to you, help you clarify what the issue is and engage you in finding the right solution. Sometimes this is a service funded by us, often its about coaching people to consider solutions based on their own resources and networks.

Monmouthshire—A Good Life con't

We have redesigned our adults and children's paperwork to give space to **ask the right questions** and leave behind checklists of deficits.

WE have designed a new IT system to support this and free up staff to have **more conversations with people**, and less with computer screens.

We are seeing **more issues resolved** straight away, **more creativity** and early evidence of **less demand** on our resources. For example;

i. A man rings up to ask for an increase in his home care support as he's not coping. An hour and several tears later it is clear that the real issue is the loss of his wife some years before. The call ends with him thanking the social worker for listening and stating that he doesn't need any more care support and will ring if that changes in the future.

"... as a Council we are embracing innovation in our drive to become a 21st century council which is aligned with the needs and aspirations of its citizens."

ii. We receive a message asking for OT advice and support. When the OT rings back one hour later and resolves the issue in discussion with the referrer she is flabbergasted, quoting "I wasn't expecting to hear from you for several weeks".

So not rocket science, but quietly transformational as we listen to people, engage them in identifying the real issues and solutions, and avoid sucking people into our systems and services.

And our next steps?

1. So far we've been about changing our social services front door. We are now working with Ralph Broad and others to take the next step, looking at how we can embrace LAC and ABCD to build the types of community connections and resilience that promote good lives.

2. We are realising we must keep supporting our staff to give them the tools and confidence to work in a very different way.
3. We are linking our work within the wider council, in the deep belief that whilst high quality, flexible services will always be a part of the solution, that the real gains lie in being alongside people and communities as they develop local connections and resources.
4. We are sharing our message widely across Wales; looking for allies and synergies.

*Simon Burch is Chief Officer of Social Care and Health
(Prif Swyddog - Gofal Cymdeithasol ac Iechyd) in Monmouthshire*



News

Care and Support Bill—Roundtable Event “Reforming the Front End of Social Care”

There was great interest and contribution in the recent roundtable event in London thinking about the issues and opportunities presented by the new Care and Support Bill.

A key aspect is the need to move the “front end” of social care (and other related services) from “deficit assessment, services and funding” TO “strengths, communities and practical solutions” wherever possible.

This is central to Local Area Coordination, which is a long term, evidence based and highly intentional and connected approach to changing the “front end” and supporting people to find a range of ways to build and pursue their vision for a good life and find practical, local solutions to problems.

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

Check out the paper on Local Area Coordination “Reforming the Front End of the Service System” <http://inclusiveneighbourhoods.co.uk/local-area-coordination-lac-reforming-the-front-end-of-the-service-system/>

Also, look at Local Area Coordination—From Service Users to Citizens” via <http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/by-date/local-area-coordination.html>

For more information about the draft Care and Support Bill, have a look at Alex Fox’s blog “Doing Services Differently” <http://2020psh.org/?p=1376>

Recent Publications, Blogs and Articles

Monmouthshire -Your County, Your Way

Conversations and planning have now started for designing and developing Local Area Coordination in Monmouthshire. A big welcome to Nicki Needle who will be leading developments locally.

Local Area Coordination will contribute to the really positive and innovative thinking behind the “Your County, Your Way”.

This is a really exciting initiative— Follow the link to find out more.

<http://yourcountyyourway.wikispaces.com/file/view/MCC%20NESTA%20Submission.pdf/325433474/MCC%20NESTA%20Submission.pdf>

I really like Simon’s quote (Chinese proverb) in the Monmouthshire article (Pages 4 and 5).

“When the winds blow some people build shelters, others build windmills”

It says it all.



News

Innovation in Day Opportunities

Check out the interview with Neil Woodbridge (Chief Executive Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions) in the Local Government Chronicle.

It's a fascinating story showing innovation and commitment to supporting people with disabilities to have greater choice, control and opportunities as valued, contributing members of their local communities.

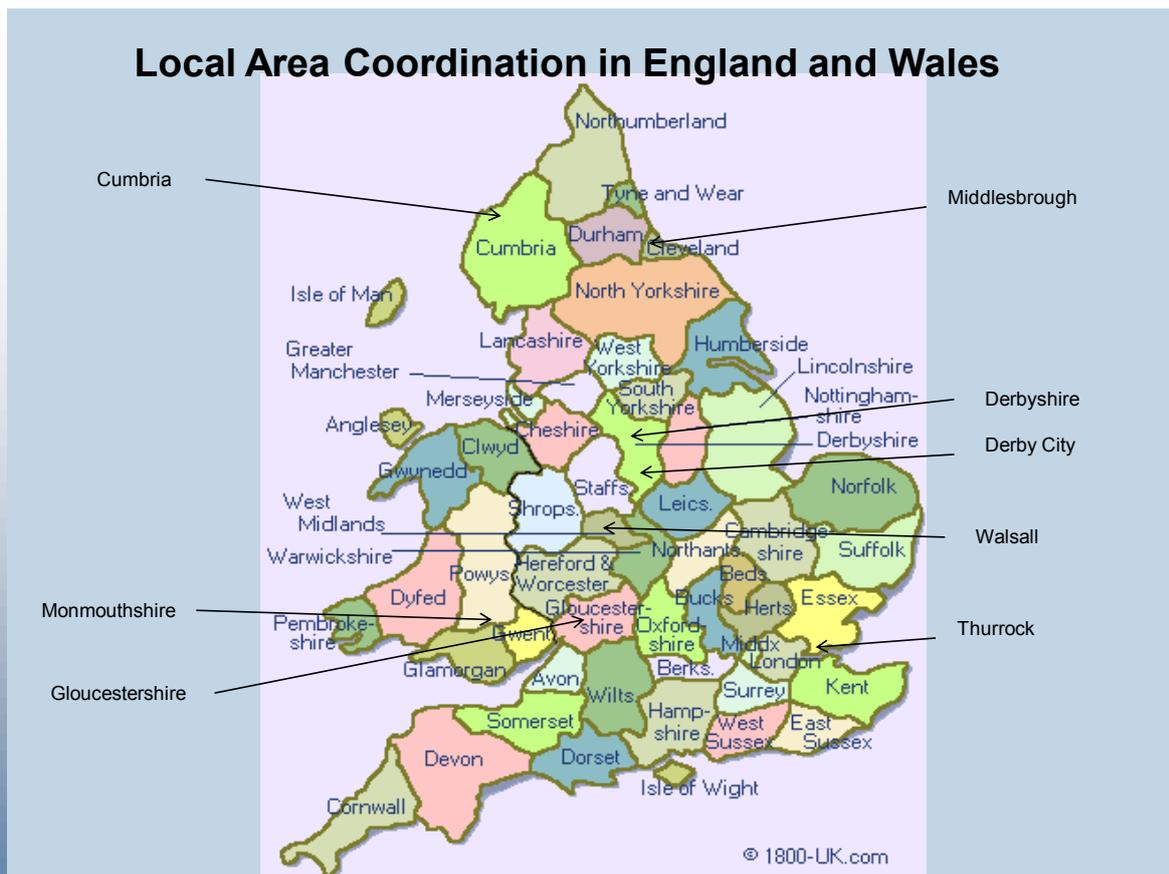
"The TLS approach is rooted in new community-based models of care that reject the notion that residential care for people with learning disabilities is inevitable."

You can find it via <http://www.lgcplus.com/5055408.article>

National Highlights and Developments

- Derby City—Very positive early outcomes at individual and community levels—well done!
- **"Thanks to the LAC my group has been able to apply for community funding that we would never have known about, brilliant."** (feedback from local resident/parent)
- Thurrock—3 localities identified. LAC and ABCD site. Now supporting local people to recruit their first 3 Local Area Coordinators.
- Monmouthshire—Leadership Group in place—really exciting conversations starting.

There are now also new conversations starting in the SE, NE and across the Midlands.



A Day in the Life of a Local Area Coordinator



My name is Janet Stanwick and I am currently employed by Middlesbrough Council as a Local Area Co-ordinator.

Janet is pictured alongside PC Ian Lambert and Stuart Green (fellow LAC in Middlesbrough).

To say our role is diverse would be an understatement. Unlike other professional roles in Social Care we offer ongoing support to all ages and any vulnerability including circumstance, allowing people to determine what would make a good life for them.

Consequently no two days are ever the same and I am using skills, knowledge and experience I wasn't even aware I had and have become confident in due to the vast range of complexities we deal with....

“Unlike other professional roles in Social Care we offer ongoing support to all ages and any vulnerability, including circumstance, allowing people to determine what would make a good life for them.

No 2 days are ever the same!”



Tuesday 12th June

I received a call from a colleague from First Contact Team for Children's Services who had been informed of a 16 year old girl who's father had fallen into crisis

following the death of his wife. He has recently had involvement with the Crisis Team following a suicide attempt and the support workers are obviously conscious he has a young daughter. Their concern is due to his daughter staying with friends and avoiding being in the family home.

As Children's Services will only investigate and support the Child's needs I was contacted to arrange a joint visit to ascertain this mans situation.

Joint visit arranged today.....



I visited an 84 year old lady who I first met in February. The initial contact came from a call from a neighbour who had my card following a previous visit.

It was later discovered that this lady had been kept at her alcohol dependent daughter's house against her will for 3 months. This lady had been assaulted a number of times by her daughter.

I made an Adult Protection Referral and have spent the following months gently building up a relationship with this lady. She has developed an historical mistrust of services whilst caring for her learning disabled younger daughter for almost 60 years. This daughter had passed away in 2011 and she was still clearly grieving her loss.

A Day in the Life of.....

As previously arranged I accompanied this lady to visit the Cemetery as it is her daughter's anniversary. It has been a long time since she has been able to go and this is obviously very important to her. We went to the coffee/flower shop and she chose a little bear with daughter on and some flowers and we sat and had a chat about her. I then assisted her tidying up the grave.

This lady was extremely overwhelmed and appreciative of this opportunity as it is another step in the process of regaining her confidence and ability to cope with things alone.



I met with my colleague at the property of the man referred to me from the Crisis Team. He man was literally 'on his knees', very tearful, 'ashamed', 'embarrassed' and finding it difficult to cope.

He disclosed he had money problems due to "avoidance of facing up to things". He doesn't answer the door, telephone or reply to bills/final notices etc. He admitted he drinks and although he tries to provide for his daughter, he would buy lager for himself instead of food.

His daughter tends to eat at friends and they don't communicate very well. He is intensely distressed and mortified about his current situation. His wife was a staff nurse and managed everything when she was alive.

We gave him time and space to talk about what was happening. He told us he had nobody in the world he can talk to. He avoids talking to his daughter, understandably as he is trying to protect her, nevertheless his daughter is receiving regular counselling. As he has anxiety/panic attacks, I offered to accompany him to a future Mental Health Assessment. He has agreed this would be helpful towards his path to developing ways of coping in the future.

Before we left, he asked if he would see us again. One of his concerns is that he has 'to go through everything again'. Although my Children's Services colleague said "no", I assured him I can continue support for as long as he requires.

As he had no food, we left some tinned products donated from the Homeless Team; however it became evident that his priority that night was to acquire a glue stick so his daughter could finish her homework!!I dropped one in later.....

Initial actions/outcomes

I will link him up with Welfare Rights and Money Advice departments and accompany him.



I rang a recently bereaved lady of 79 who I supported through her husband's End of Life Care to see how she is coping. She said she is going down to the Community Room where she lives when she can for bingo and going on a day trip in the near future. I said I would call and see her next week.

And in the end.....

It's about taking time to get to know people, their families and their communities well, finding out what really matters, building a positive vision for the future and then supporting them, in whatever way makes sense to them, to make the journey.

It's about helping people to stay strong.

Working Together—Carol Taylor In Conversation with PC Ian Lambert



CT: Thank you for giving up your free time to talk to me. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

IL: Well I joined the Police in 1986 so have spent the last 26 years as a P.C. (Police Constable). I've always worked in East Middlesbrough. Occasionally other parts of the town but for all intents and purposes East Middlesbrough. I'm from East Middlesbrough, my family still live in the area and I went to the local schools here. I still have friends here and like working in the area. My first job was in Hintons East Middlesbrough as a trainee store Manager. Dealing with people is what I have always done.

CT: I hear you've been quite successful in your role?

“And if you [LAC] weren't there you [Police] wouldn't know who else to go to on a variety of issues, for example benefits/ housing or even their own Doctors..... It's a point of contact that you know has links with all other agencies”

IL: Well you could say that I suppose. I've won a couple of awards if that's what you're talking about?

CT: Yes, tell me what you've won.

IL: I won the Neighbourhood Police Officer of the Year award in 2010. I won the same award for Middlesbrough and overall for Cleveland in 2011 which meant a trip to the national awards in London. The awards were important to me because you're voted for by the public and partner agencies too. It's nice that your commitment has been seen and recognised by the residents that you work with on a daily basis.

CT: Why do you think you've been so successful?

IL: I think it's because we're right on the patch in the middle of East Middlesbrough and that we're approachable.

CT: So you're not out of place?

IL: No not at all. Part of the scenery. It's about having different ways of approaching situations, mediation, knowledge of the area, family history etc. past events. It's often more complex than a straight forward right and wrong situation.

CT: LAC approaches things in a different way too. Would you agree?

IL: The way I see LAC is that [you're] not an organisation that will be judgemental about the individual or their situation. LAC works with other organisations who will guide you to the other organisations who can help – if that's what you need – and are totally independent of the Police.

CT: Any examples?

Working Together in Middlesbrough con't

IL: Sophia* and all of her problems over the years, probably going on before I became a PC. Long term problems. Seen on a number of estates that would usually be passed from one team to another. LAC coordinated that whole approach and got on with it, get on with it. On mischief night especially with the stolen fencing situation. I was concerned that the family was vulnerable and I knew that LAC had been instrumental in working with the family and other agencies to have the fence fitted as an added security measure. In any other situation I would probably have advised Sophia* to contact Janet (LAC) but as it was mischief night it was easier for me to go after work and fix it. I was able to work with LAC and the local housing team to reinstate the fencing quickly before any further damage or stress was caused. If it wasn't put back the rest would have gone too.

LAC staff know the area and know it's totally different to other parts of the town. We [professionals] all know where we are in the league of deprivation but the LACs are based in the neighbourhood office working next to the main housing provider who we also have a good relationship with, and ourselves [Police]. People are more likely to call the Police or Housing first. Knowing that you can contact the LAC team and either knowing that they will deal with it or at least get in touch with the right people to help deal with problems that a family has got.

CT: Golden question – would you miss LAC if it was no longer available?

IL: Yes I would miss it! I don't know how many officers in our neighbourhood team actually use LAC but that's just probably their ignorance. But I know it's a valuable resource. I know of 3 child protection issues in my Ward that LAC had an involvement in and were able to support the case. Their [LAC] involvement will no doubt continue as younger children come through and continue to work with other agencies, Social Services and the schools. And if you [LAC] weren't there you [Police] wouldn't know who else to go to on a variety of issues, for example benefits/housing or even their own Doctors. I was dealing with a woman struggling with her son's anti-social behaviour and drug taking. She was isolated and wanted help. It was causing problems on the estate and with family relationships. I passed the number on for LAC who were able to help.

CT: Would you say LAC was a viable model of support for vulnerable people?

IL: Yes. It's a point of contact that you know has links with all other agencies. It may not have all the solutions. It would take me a long time to get the same outcomes and unfortunately because of the workload you just haven't got the time. I think it would only work if you had that close relationship either [located] in the same building or regular contact. Surgeries at Neighbourhood Police stations/ drop-ins. It could become easily forgotten that's why you need to see someone's face rather than being at the end of a telephone.

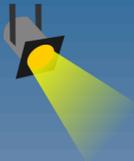
CT: Would you make any improvements?

IL: Reinforce what you do with the Police. Do regular force briefings about the role of LACs. Regular updates to reinforce what you do and what you have achieved working with the Police. Continue to make contacts to make sure you catch everyone and continue to develop the service you offer across the town.



Carol Taylor

CT: Thank you



It's About Taking Time to Listen



Rajeev Nath is Local Area Coordinator in Arboretum Ward of Derby City.

In this article, he reflects on the privilege of hearing one person's story and helping them to solve problems, stay strong & be part of their community

It's Important to be IN the Community

Being based in the local library is a great advantage especially when people you have known for many years come and talk to you. Generally most conversations start with 'how's things?' or 'what are you doing these days?'

Taking Time to Get to Know People Well

A local resident, whose father I had known for a considerable time, approached me and we had a similar conversation and went about our business. Days later, she contacted me and asked me if I could help her.

She has a similar background to me, having worked in the Derby area for many years in community development and working for the local authority. Her family are a well known and highly respected family throughout the city. She was staying at her parent's house with her two children.

She then came to see me in the library and explained how her life around her began to break down, her health, relationships and eventually one thing led to another and she lost her job.

Although she gets help from her children in the evenings, she now struggles with daily routines and requires help and assistance for meal preparation and getting dressed.

The support she receives is greatly appreciated; however managing this support isn't always easy for her. Sometimes her support workers turn up late or not at all and this has a great impact on her daily life. As a result of her experiences, she now

has severe mental health problems and receives additional support for this.

Initially, it was very difficult for her to talk about her life, but we just took things at her speed, in a way that helped her to feel in control. Over a few weeks, she became more comfortable to share with me the story of her life and started thinking about how together we could find ways of getting life back on track.

I became very aware that I was very privileged hear someone's story and that it also brought great responsibilities along with it.

We not only talked about some of the problems she faced, but also about her positive vision for the future, her interests and passions and her gifts.

Helping in a Crisis

One urgent issue for her was to find another place to live and feel more independent. So, we worked together and went to the housing office to find potential properties to view. This required form filling and negotiating with the housing department, which wasn't easy and took many weeks to sort out.



Peartree Library



Navigating the Social Care & Health Systems

Another big issue was to work together to navigate the Social Services systems to obtain personal care support.

A few months on and she now has a new place to live, which she has decorated and is very happy with.

She later reflected “I am an intelligent person and have been able to work on some significant projects within Derby City; however, despite this I found it extremely difficult to navigate and understand the social care system.”

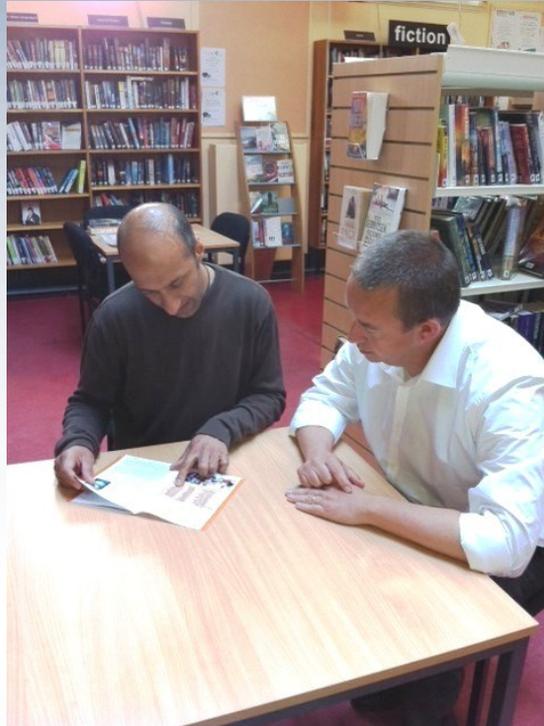
She now feels more able to contact or negotiate with agencies and knows that she can contact me again at any point.

Getting My Life Back—Being In Control-

She has now also chosen a new support provider for her care needs and says she feels more independent.

Whilst there are still some challenges to overcome, she feels more in control of her life and feels more confident in the future.

We will continue to stay in contact.



Rajeev and Neil in Pear Tree Library

The Relationship is Central

Upon reflection, some of the support I provided the woman was not at all complex or time consuming.

However, it was really important to take time to listen, learn and support her to find practical ways to move forward.

Whilst it is important to understand problems, it’s also really important to recognise, understand and support individual gifts, connections and aspirations for the future and to think about how these can also help people to stay strong and move forward.

The Final Word.

“I cannot overemphasise how Rajeev, my Local Area Coordinator, was able to step in at the right times with the right support – without which I believe I would still be struggling.

I felt that I had someone walking alongside me and that gave me sufficient encouragement to deal with all the issues without breaking down.

For me the LAC is the frontline customer service face for the local authority, supporting easier access and one point of contact for many issues a person could not possibly manage on their own.

I have had to move out of the Arboretum area due to my housing needs and I feel that LAC project should be expanded to all wards of the city.”

This is local area coordination



Building Positive Futures in Thurrock

Thurrock is on its way to deliver Local Area Coordination. I am privileged to be the Project Manager for this exciting journey. My day job is Service Manager for Fieldwork Services (i.e. managing operational social work, occupational therapy, and support planner and community solutions services)

This is already a very busy job so fitting in LAC development is a challenge, but I am very fortunate to have Ralph's support and an excellent steering group to ensure LAC is delivered here in Thurrock in the new future.

Like all authorities, Thurrock is facing huge financial cuts and efficiencies. Although this is daunting, it is also an opportunity and people are looking at things differently and listening to new ways of working like they haven't before.

In our steering group we have community reps, voluntary sector representatives health colleagues and Healthwatch. The whole group have signed up to making LAC work in Thurrock. We are already thinking how we need to transform our current services to make LAC sustainable and not just a fad or 'pilot'.

We know we will face challenges from our communities who need to be convinced LAC is the way forward as they've heard it before. By involving them early and genuinely working together we are confident we can develop LAC jointly. Riverside Walk Purfleet



We also know LAC will need us all to change our thinking. We are all used to saying no to things because they are risky, and this new venture will need a leap of faith and change in thinking for us all. We have identified 3 areas as learning sites, we have our advert for our first three LAC's ready – so may the journey begin.

We are now working with local citizens to find and select their first 3 Local Area Coordinators. It is the start of a real collaboration between citizens, community and the Council to work together to build on the inherent strengths and passion of people in Thurrock to Build a Positive Future, inclusive of all people in our community.

Watch this space

Next Issue—Spring 2012/13