

2014—A Big Year for Change



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The LAC Network



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Welcome to the Spring issue of the Local Area Coordination Network Newsletter. We have finally emerged from the long Winter (well almost anyway), with the last 12 months seeing some great stories emerging of Local Area Coordination

- Supporting people/families stay strong and connected.
- Building new, valued and supportive personal relationships
- Finding local, non service solutions to aspirations, challenges and needs—reducing demand
- Nurturing contribution and supportive communities
- Helping people have a voice.
- Helping to shape reform and systems change.

Moving Forward

This is a hugely challenging time for people who may be isolated, excluded or vulnerable due to disability, age, frailty, mental health issues, their families and communities. For many, resources, services and supports have been lost, with no real support to build alternatives or opportunities to pursue their vision for a good life.

The new Care Bill is on the way and with it, an emerging commitment to supporting people and families to stay strong and to

nurture more supportive communities.

Local Area Coordination now provides a real opportunity to build a highly intentional approach to building resilience and creativity, leadership, systems change and service reform. Now—we need to do it with integrity in partnership with local people.

We are very excited about the development of the Local Area Coordination Network in partnership with emerging areas. My thanks to Community Catalysts and Inclusion North for their support and contribution as partners of the Network. **Read on!**

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2nd Local Area Coordination Network Gathering



On the 1st and 2nd April, Local Area Coordinators and Managers from Derby, Thurrock, Cumbria, came together for the 2nd Local Area Coordination Network Gathering in Derby.

This was a chance to

- Take time to get to know each other well
- Think about and share our gifts, strengths and experiences—and those of people we support and our local communities.
- Problem solve together.
- Build on the learning from the past few years.
- Think about how to keep to, and build on, Local Area Coordination Values and Principles.
- **Imagine New Possibilities**



Afternoon and Evening of 1st April

We all met on a sunny afternoon in Derby for snacks, drinks and conversations—a chance to build new friendships and working relationships. Oh, and have fun!



We shared stories, solved problems together, talked about what Local Area Coordination meant to us and started to think about how we can work together to be stronger, more innovative in the future.

Simran (Local Area Coordinator in Alvaston, Derby and events planning genius!!), who arranged the venue and accommodation, also arranged a fantastic Indian meal.

So much food! Wonderful—thanks Simran!





Making Local Area Coordination Work

2nd April—Making Local Area Coordination Work—Values, Principles, Actions

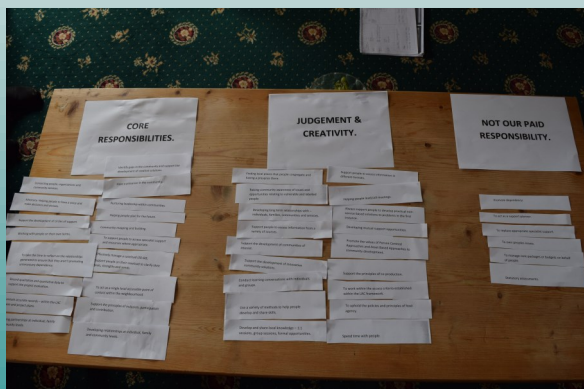
We know from the many studies and evaluations over the past 26 years that, where there is “Strong, Connected, Contributing Leadership and Effective Design” of Local Area Coordination, there are highly consistent, positive outcomes at the individual, family, community and systems levels.

So, one of the issues we were all keen to explore was “What does a Local Area Coordinator Do and What Does a Local Area Coordinator **Not** Do?” It helped us to start thinking about the actions and behaviour can either

- build relationships, contribution, resilience and support individual/family/community leadership and control **OR**
- become an obstacle, maintain service control and dependence.

Local Area Coordination combines a range of traditionally separate roles and delivers them very locally alongside local people, families and communities. Building a single point of contact in the community and simplifying the system for local people.

- No “pick n mix” approaches.
- No diluting of roles and principles.
- Avoid “stretch” - e.g. excessively large geographic areas, where it is difficult to build relationships, knowledge, contribution and local solutions
- Avoiding a “specialist” approaches that build new “silos” e.g. just for older people, or adults with a learning disability, or specific local needs. An inclusive approach, across age groups and service labels. **A human approach—not commodities, customers or “users”**
- Avoiding combining the Local Area Coordinator role with traditional service roles e.g. Care Management, assessment etc



We broke into groups and looked at a large number of activities and had to decide

1. What are core responsibilities of a Local Area Coordinator?
2. What are examples of using our judgment and creativity (HOW we do it)?
3. What We **DON'T DO!!**



Making Local Area Coordination Work

2nd April—Making Local Area Coordination Work—Values, Principles, Actions

Core responsibilities	Use of judgement and creativity (How)
<p>To act as a single, local accessible point of contact within the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Effectively support 50-65 people and their families in a local area.</p> <p>Support people to build valued, supportive relationships</p> <p>Support people to contribute, share gifts and experience.</p> <p>Support people to access information from a variety of sources.</p> <p>Support people to clarify their goals, strengths and needs.</p> <p>Advocacy. Helping people to have a voice and make decisions and choices.</p> <p>Helping people build and pursue a positive vision for the future.</p> <p>Always support people to develop practical none service based solutions to problems in the first instance..</p> <p>Support people to control resources, services and supports to extent they desire</p> <p>Nurturing leadership and inclusion within communities.</p> <p>To support people to access specialist support and resources where appropriate.</p> <p>To work within the access criteria established within the LAC framework</p> <p>Promote the values of Person Centred and Asset Based Approaches to community development.</p> <p>Support the principles of inclusion, participation and contribution—co production.</p> <p>Developing partnerships and relationships at individual, family, community and service levels.</p> <p>Identify strengths and gaps in the community and support the development of co-produced, asset based community solutions.</p> <p>To maintain accurate records – within the LAC database and project plans.</p> <p>To uphold the council/employer policies and principles.</p> <p>Record qualitative and quantitative data to support the project evaluation.</p>	<p>Helping people lead/call meetings.</p> <p>Developing long term relationships with – individuals, families, communities and services.</p> <p>Connecting people.</p> <p>Developing mutual support opportunities.</p> <p>Finding local places that people congregate and having a presence there.</p> <p>Working with people on their own terms.</p> <p>Conduct learning conversations with individuals and groups.</p> <p>Use a variety of methods to help people develop and share skills.</p> <p>Support the development of circles of support.</p> <p>Support people to access information in different formats.</p> <p>Support the development of innovative community solutions.</p> <p>Develop and share local knowledge – 1:1 sessions, group sessions, formal opportunities.</p> <p>Support the development of communities of interest.</p> <p>Have a presence in the community.</p> <p>Spend time with people.</p> <hr/> <p>What We DON'T DO!</p> <p>Statutory assessments.</p> <p>“Own” peoples issues.</p> <p>Take over.</p> <p>Do “TO” or “FOR”</p> <p>Replace appropriate specialist support</p> <p>Manage care packages or budgets on behalf of people.</p> <p>Act as a support planner</p> <p>Split roles e.g. Local Area Coordinator and care manager, or assessor</p>

There were lots of conversations, challenges and conversations about what was missing/could be added.

A rich conversation about what’s important, values, principles and keeping Local Area Coordination, strong and relevant.



2nd Local Area Coordination Network Gathering

How Can the Local Area Coordination Network Support Locally and Nationally in the Future?

In the afternoon, Local Area Coordinators were helping us to all co design the Local Area Coordination Network activities for the future. Here are some of the key things we thought would be really useful over the next 12 months, including.....

1. Standardised National Induction

PRO ACTIVE INDUCTION + SHARED

2. Timetable of National Meetings
- Mix of formal + informal !!

3. shared Directory
↳ Continuous contact and info sharing
- skill sets?

② TRAININGS LONG WORKING COOKING SKILLS.

What Can the Local Area Coordination Network Do in the Future?

LAC GATHERING
LAC DIRECTORY
SHARED SPACE

'OPEN' NETWORK. WHERE EVERYONE CAN GET INVOLVED IN. (SO LAC CAN GET KNOWN IN THE COMMUNITY)

① CREATION OF AN ONLINE SPACE (INTERACTIVE LAC CYBER SPACE MOODLE/VIRTUAL LEARNING)
② SHARED INDUCTION WITH TEN(10) PRINCIPLES
SHARED DOCUMENTATION
EG SHARED AGREEMENT

LAC LEARNING SETS

We will all continue to

- Help shape the Network.
- Contribute
- Build mutual support
- Share learning and solve problems together



Serviceland is Not a Place That Anyone Would Choose to Live



Angela Catley is Director of Operations at Community Catalysts CIC.

In this article, Angela talks about some of innovative work that Community Catalysts supports alongside local people, families and communities, plus the very exciting opportunities that the planned collaboration with Local Area Coordination could nurture in the future.

Community Catalysts is a small Community Interest Company (CIC), based in Yorkshire and working across the UK.

We work hard to harness the talents of people and communities to provide imaginative solutions to complex social issues and care needs.

Headings like 'social care', 'health care', 'community' and 'housing' broadly describe the areas in which we operate but we have learned over the years that labels like these bring their own limitations. With this in mind we try hard not to limit our thinking to the conventional and are always willing and able to look for radically imaginative solutions that cross sectors and join up dots in unexpected ways.

One of our main activities is to work with local partners (local authorities, PCTs and other voluntary and private sector organisations) to stimulate and support the development community based enterprises and initiatives.

Community Catalysts in Nottinghamshire

Rebecca Stanley has worked for Community Catalysts for over 3 years managing a project which is a partnership between Community Catalysts and the County Council. Her role is to support local people who want to help other local people by setting up very small (micro) enterprises or community initiatives. Over 60 of these enterprises or initiatives now operate across Nottinghamshire. Many do not offer a typical 'care' service, lots are co-designed or co-produced and some are run by people who are also service users or carers. As a group they offer services on a wide spectrum from very personal CQC registered home care to training for specialist assistance dogs <http://communitycare.rbiblogs.co.uk/mental-health/2013/07/my-mental-health-support-dog-has-given-me-back-my-independence/>. Between them they provide care and support in imaginative ways to over 800 people and this number is increasing.

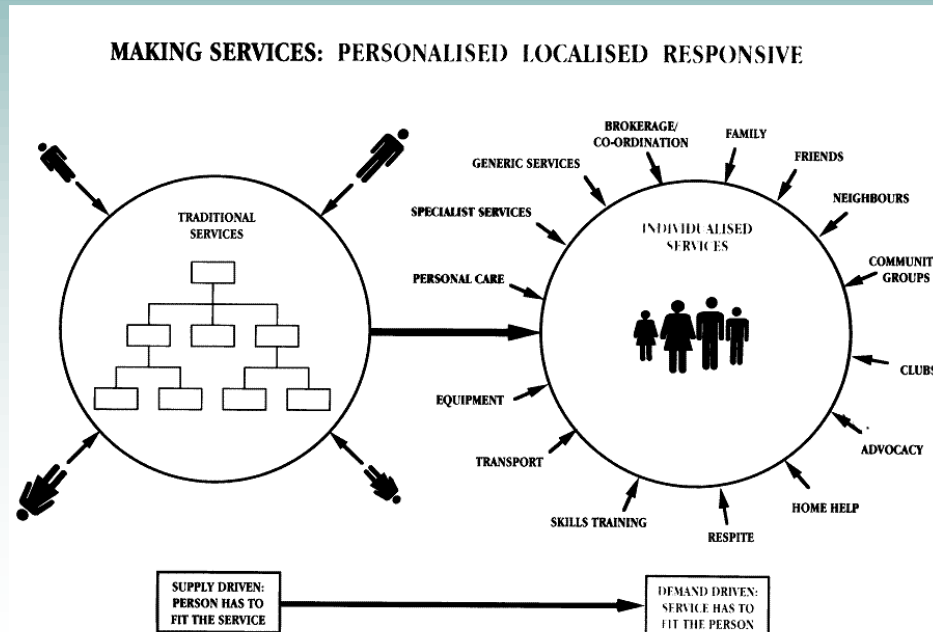
Community Catalysts and Inclusive Neighbourhoods have always believed that a partnership between community based enterprise development and Local Area Coordination could have the power to effect transformative local change. We both believe passionately in people using their talents to help themselves and their communities. We both have a healthy disrespect for 'serviceland' as a destination of choice for people who need help to live their lives.

Just before Christmas I was privileged to be invited to an Local Area Coordination event in Derby hosted by the city council with Eddie Bartnick as the guest speaker. At the event people shared stories of Local Area Coordination in practice and its potential to transform lives and communities.



ServiceLand is not a place that anyone would choose to live

Somewhere in the middle of Eddie's presentation he shared this diagram (explaining that it was very old, somewhat dated and more than ready for a revamp)



Despite its obvious limitations this has stuck with me, probably because it challenges the concept of serviceland and shows so clearly the diversity of a life lived well. Without ever intending it also seems to clearly illustrate the variety and creativity of the types of community initiatives and enterprises we support in areas like Nottinghamshire.

I came away from the event in Derby inspired and totally convinced that Local Area Coordination could add so much to our work and vice versa. Hopefully 2014 will bring partnership opportunities that will allow this conviction to be tested (and a nice new, modern diagram to be produced as a result!)

To find out more about Community Catalysts follow the link to www.communitycatalysts.co.uk

Angela Catley

Director of Operations
Community Catalysts
January 2014





Eat for the Hungry!!



Local Area Coordination in Cumbria is starting to build some interesting and exciting possibilities alongside local people in Cumbria. Read on.....

Duncan Larkin-Jones is Local Area Coordinator for Eden in Cumbria.

In this article Duncan talks about an innovative partnership between him, Paul, the owner of "The Soup Shop", and local people in Penrith.

Really exciting! Thanks Duncan and Paul.

Footfall in the Devonshire Arcade shopping arcade in Penrith increased by 30% following the opening of a shop selling homemade soup as a cheap, healthy and filling lunch.

Rather than going to traditional fast food outlets young people have begun to congregate there in their lunch-breaks from school and the soup shop has proved an excellent informal venue for young mum's toddler groups as well as a whole range of regular local work force visitors attending. The soup shop has become very popular and has evolved into a mini community hub with a freecycle bookshelf, community noticeboard and a 'herb trolley' for locally grown herbs.

Needless to say the soup shop has become a useful place for Eden Local Area Coordinator's to gravitate to - not least as a window to what is happening in Penrith.

The soup shop runs a loyalty card scheme, get your card stamped each time you buy some soup from them. After 9 goes you get your 10th bowl 'on the house'.

What Local Area Coordinator could resist the link?

I asked the soup shop man if my loyalty card was transferable and if so would he mind if I donated mine to the foodbank?

Not only did he agree, he was delighted and offered to match the donation, instead of one, every loyalty card donated is worth 2 bowls of soup to the Salvation Army foodbank.



Eat For The Hungry



The Herb Trolley!



Sounds great

He went further than that, even casual customers such as tourists can donate their stamp, 9 of those still counts as 2 soups.

There is no discrimination between loyalty or 'disloyalty cards' you just have to have a bowl of soup and let him know you want it counted.

I sent 450 emails to every County Council employee with an Eden email address and told them about the deal. At the end of the 1st week there were over a hundred counted bowls. We plan to have an 'eat for the hungry' event after a few weeks trial.

People presenting at the food bank get a big bowl of filling soup and a big chunk of artisan bread (wholemeal or cornbread). There is always a selection of between 5 and 6 soups with choices for the vegetarian, carnivore or just plain opportunivore. The environment is perfect, donations come from elderly customers, working people and school children and cultivates a real sense of social unity and community.

I am of course now stalking some of the larger food outlets and trying to badger them into accepting the benefits of flexible loyalty cards!

You can follow Cumbria LAC on twitter @CumbriaLAC



News

23rd April— Report From Institute for Public Policy Research.

A new report from Institute for Public Policy Research has been published “The Generation Strain: Collective Solutions to Care in an Ageing Society” recognising Local Area Coordination and as effective contribution to individual, family and community resilience and reform.

You can find it via http://www.ippr.org/assets/media/publications/pdf/generation-strain_Apr2014.pdf

7th April Turning The Welfare System Upside Down—University of Birmingham Conference.

It was very exciting to be involved in the conference at University of Birmingham, talking about Local Area Coordination as a key driver for building individual/family/community resilience and mutual support, service reform, integration, reducing demand.

Great to listen to colleagues from Community Catalysts (Sian Lockwood) and People2People CIC (Jenny Pitts) and others.

Opportunities for shared action and mutual support in the future.

3rd April 2014 Eddie Bartnik Update!

Press release from Mental health Council of Australia—Eddie has been appointed the new Strategic Advisor for Mental Health, as part of the new National Disability Insurance Scheme developments, following his role as the inaugural Mental Health Commissioner for Western Australia. A great chance to further influence and drive inclusion, contribution, mutually supportive communities and service reform.

<http://mhca.org.au/media-releases/peak-body-welcomes-bartnik-ndia>



1st and 2nd April 2014—2nd Local Area Coordination Network National Gathering

Local Area Coordinators gathered in Derby for the second national event, following on from our first event last year with Eddie Bartnik.

This was a great opportunity to apply our core principles of Local Area Coordination to ourselves. We spent time thinking about

- ⇒ What makes Local Area Coordination work— understanding and applying key principles and values.
- ⇒ Maintaining integrity of design and our behaviour/





News

actions as Local Area Coordinators.

⇒ Things we **don't** do as Local Area Coordinators!! It's about supporting people to do more for themselves, stay strong, connected and in control—**NOT** doing “to” or “for”. **Strengths** not deficits. **Resilience** not dependence.

- ⇒ Sharing stories, best practice and solving problems together—building relationships
- ⇒ Working in partnership with individuals, families, communities and services.
- ⇒ Building a consistent and shared approach to monitoring outcomes, efficiency and social return on investment.

Our huge thanks to Derby City Council for hosting the event and to Simran Sandhu (Local Area Coordinator Alvaston, Derby) for arranging venue and wonderful food—thanks Simran.

26th March 2014 Scotland Local Area Coordination Event

Local Area Coordinators from across Scotland came together in Edinburgh to share stories and think about the challenges and opportunities of Local Area Coordination in the future.

Simon Duffy facilitated a really challenging, thought provoking and interesting day.

I hope we may form partnerships in the future



24th March 2014 Local Area Coordination Network—National, Multi Site Evaluation

Following an initial meeting between Catherine Needham, Robin Miller (University of Birmingham), Brian Frisby (Director Prevention, Personalisation and Professional Standards, Derby City), Les Billingham (Head of Adult Services, Thurrock), Samantha Clark (Chief Exec, Inclusion North), Sian Lockwood (Chief Exec, Community Catalyst CIC) and Ralph Broad (Director, Inclusive Neighbourhoods), we are now looking at developing a longitudinal, multi site evaluation of Local Area Coordination in England and Wales.

This will be a great opportunity for not only building on the long term national and international evidence and learning around Local Area Coordination, but also how this may also support and drive wider service reform and positive outcomes for individuals, families and communities in the future.



Leaders from participating Local Area Coordination sites, University of Birmingham and the LAC Network will be meeting in late June to start co designing and developing the evaluation.



News

20th March 2014— Developing a Local Councillor Network

On 20th March, Cllr Mark Tittley (Derby, left), Councillor Jackie Dickinson (Leicestershire), Neil Woodhead (Social Capital Development Manager, Derby) and Ralph Broad (Inclusive Neighbourhoods and LAC Network) met to start conversations around the proposed Network for Councillors leading Local Area Coordination developments in the areas.



There was strong agreement about the value of coming together to build a supportive “Community of Like Minded Councillors” committed and contributing to Local Area Coordination, stronger and better resourced communities and positive service reform.

We are hoping for a full gathering in late September—watch this space!

Welcome to new Local Area Coordinators!

A big welcome to Martin Trevillion (Thurrock) and Karen Ratcliffe (Derby City), right. Great to see you at the LAC Network event—what a first day!

Welcome to the LAC Family.



Welcome to Swansea, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Leicestershire and Peterborough Councils

Another big welcome - this time to new members of the Local Area Coordination “family” who are also starting the development of Local Area Coordination in their areas.

This will be a time of “a big dose of vision building” (paraphrasing Eddie there!!), reflection, partnership working, challenge and change. It’s also about shifting the balance of power closer to individuals, families and communities.

Local Area Coordination will provide the context and environment for building resilience, contribution and control for local people and nurturing strength based systems change and more personal, local, flexible, integrated, accountable and efficient services

A great chance to share learning in the future.

Introducing Martin Trevillion (Local Area Coordinator Purfleet, Thurrock)

My name is Martin Trevillion and I have worked for Essex County Fire & Rescue Service for over 30yrs. I joined the Fire Service in 1982 and was operational until 2005. In 2005 I was given the opportunity to work in Community Fire Safety as a Community Safety Liaison Officer and

worked in Basildon until I retired from the Service in 2012.



After a brief time in retirement, I joined the Fire Service again, this time as a Civilian staff, working as a Community Safety Support officer.

From 2013, I have worked in the communities of Uttlesford and Braintree supporting vulnerable people. Then, on the 2nd of April 2014 I was seconded from the Fire Service to Thurrock Council as a Local Area Coordinator, following interviews with local people in Purfleet.

Over the past years I have been working in the Communities of Essex, as what I now know, as a Community Builder. I worked at the Traveller site in Basildon known as Dale Farm from 2005 until the eviction of the community in 2011 supporting at one time 1200 Irish Travellers. As part of my work, I was on the working group that was set up by Essex County Council to provide a County wide unit to provide support to Travellers and Gypsies. This Unit has now been working throughout Essex providing much needed support.

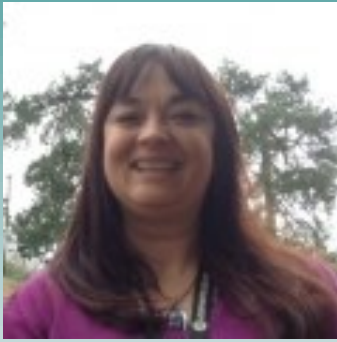
I have also worked in some very high areas of deprivation within Basildon. Where in 2009, I secured funding to renovate an old building in a new School Academy to support young people and families. For this work, and the work that I have done with Minority communities I was awarded the 2009 Fire Service National Equality and Diversity Award in Leadership from the Communities and Local Government, Chief Fire Officer Association and the Local Government Association.

On the 2nd April 2014 I attended a gathering of Local Area Coordinators in Derby to talk about the role and experiences that some have had, during the time that they have been doing Local Area Coordination work. What amazed me was the dedication and the excitement of those that shared the work that they were doing. I could not believe how much impact this could have. At this point I have not even had the opportunity to engage with someone who was receiving support.

On my return to Thurrock I have been shadowing the Local Area Coordinators on the visits that they make, to see first hand how it works and the difference it has made to those that receive support. No two days have been the same and the support given has been diverse. Every one has their own interpretation of what makes a good life. For some it can be simple and for others less so, however one thing for definite is that without support most will fall into crisis.

I am looking forward to learning more and developing skills that will enable me to support the community of Purfleet in Thurrock and also help the Fire Service to understand how important the role of a Local Area Coordinator is and how we can work together to support communities and those that are most vulnerable.

Michelle's Story



Sam Couldrey is Local Area Coordinator in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire.

Local Area Coordination, whilst still developing in Gloucestershire, is starting to see some positive stories showing the power of a single, accessible point of contact in the community listening, learning, sharing ideas and walking alongside people as they build and pursue their vision for a good life.

Michelle is a 32 year old woman who lives in a 2 storey house in Tewkesbury with her dogs.

My sincere thanks to Michelle for sharing her story

Taking time to listen

I first met Michelle in April 2013 after an invitation from her GP.

She was a passenger in a serious car crash 12 years ago in which she suffered injuries & fractures mostly to her lower body. She has had a number of operations over the years including a procedure in Nov 2012.

Following discharge, she was non weight bearing on her left leg, mobilising on crutches, sleeping on the sofa & not able to access her bathroom facilities upstairs. A community Physiotherapist worked with Michelle for some time to improve her mobility & level of function & independence. Her Mum moved in to support her as she was not able to independently manage with her personal care or domestic tasks, including caring for her dogs that she loves dearly.

Imagining a Better Future

I took time to get to know Michelle, what her life was like now and how she would like it to be

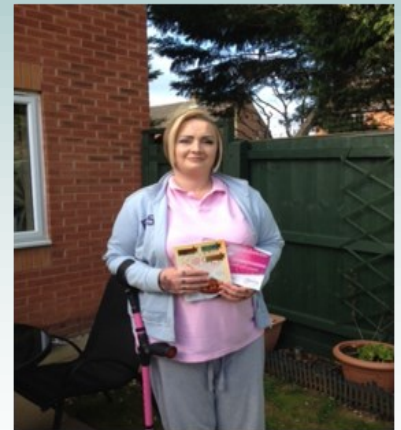
At the time we met, she was unhappy with her current situation & her loss of previous independence, which was very important to her.

She had lived without a parent or guardian since she was 16 & liked being independent and not having to rely on anyone.

She was very worried about her health issues. She rarely left the house except for medical appointments & was feeling very socially isolated.

I spent time listening & talking with Michelle, to understand what was important in her life & what mattered to her. She identified the following things:

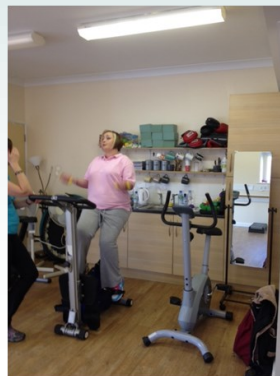
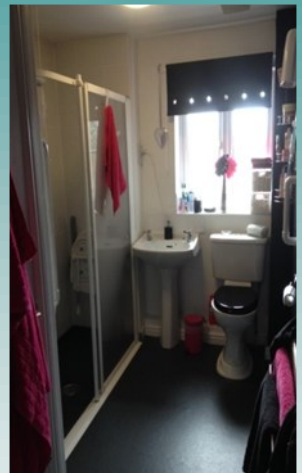
- Looking after her garden & being able to clear up after her dogs
- Feeling safer in her garden
- Having somewhere to visit, e.g. gym to improve mobility & muscle strength with appropriate support
- Being able to walk her dogs
- Being able to shower independently



- Being referred to Professor Richardson (who had performed previous successful surgery & in whom she had great confidence)

What Happened?

- Together, we applied for a Disabled Facilities Grant to install a walk in shower to support her to be independent with her personal care.
- The bathroom was planned with Michelle was supported to plan the bathroom to both meet her needs as well as her young & funky design preferences!
- A referral was made by her GP to the hospital that she preferred & trusted.
- Her Mum helped to tidy the garden & make it easier for her to maintain.
- The LAC arranged for a step to be fitted & a path to be repaired to improve access to/from her garden.



Together, we looked at a number of local possibilities to help her improve mobility & muscle strength, including joining a gym or partaking of the 'Healthy Lifestyles' scheme run at the local swimming pool, but Michelle felt these were not right for her.

She was keen to have someone qualified & able to advise her whilst she was exercising.

She also was keen to lose weight & give up smoking so I introduced her to the local Community Health Trainer & Lesley Gilmour, Health & Wellbeing Coordinator at Marina Court, a local extra care housing scheme.

After meeting them both she decided that she would join an exercise scheme with Lesley called 'Lose Weight, Live Well'. She was also interested the Community Health Trainer supporting her with smoking cessation and also started at Slimming World where she lost over half a stone in her first week!

What Happens Next?

Michelle feels she is doing really well and proud of the changes she has made to her life, with the support of her GP and Local Area Coordinator.

She is losing weight and feels less isolated/more connected, socially active as a contributing member of her local neighbourhood.. Her posture, mobility, fitness level & stamina have all improved – she is now able to walk short distances without any crutches & is enjoying walking her dogs every other day, even during the recent floods!

She feels she has achieved all of her personal goals & is now working positively towards some others—building a positive vision for her future.

Who Cares? Looking Out For Each Other



Samantha Clark is Chief Executive of Inclusion North, a Community Interest Company (CIC) promoting the inclusion of people with learning disabilities and their families and carers in the North East and Yorkshire and Humber.

Inclusion North supports their members in helping people get the lives they want.

Here Sam talks about learning from the recent "Advocacy Project" looking at the range of ways people with learning disabilities can be heard, in control of decisions, services and supports, stay safe and connected through a variety of approaches to advocacy.

Get involved!

The Advocacy Project

The Advocacy Project was part of the response by The North East Learning Disability Clinical Network (hosted by NHS North East) to the abuse at Winterbourne View, recognising that the incidents there would have been less likely to occur if the patients had been provided with good, appropriate, advocacy. We knew as well that people are usually safer the better connected they are. This work was focused on specialist in patient settings but we think it has a lot of useful learning for all services including LAC as it can help us all think about 'looking out for' & everyone's role in that.

We identified that use of the term 'advocacy' is usually taken by commissioners and other professionals to mean formal/ statutory advocacy. Our work with people with Learning Disabilities, their families & professionals highlighted there is a need to ensure people are 'looked out for' on a day-to-day basis by way of informal approaches such as self-advocacy, peer advocacy, family advocacy, generic advocacy and by service delivery staff in addition to formal advocacy.

What Did We Learn From the Project?

There is a wealth of learning from the project – for all kinds of services not just the specialist hospitals we focused on. Some of the headlines are

- Informal advocates such as family and carers play an important role in looking out for people's interests; it is unacceptable for their views to be ignored or dismissed. All services should have a clear policy to support their involvement.
- It is not sufficient to simply empower people to speak up. There remains a duty on professionals at all levels to listen to, promote and respond to the views and wishes of people using the service and the broader professional culture in health and social care must be adapted to this. There is also a duty on professionals to 'look out for' the people in their care.
- People's likelihood of receiving good care or support is increased when they know their rights and are able to speak up for what they want. Structured self-advocacy must be

resourced to support people's ability to do this or, where people are unable to self-advocate, their families or other supporters must be afforded appropriate resources.

- Services should identify when people are opting out of taking part in meetings about their own care. This is a key signifier that people do not feel listened to and should be seen as a warning signal about the nature of care decisions in a service.

The project aimed to explore why people and families sometimes experience professionals and organisations in their lives that behave as if only they 'know best'. The project team explored why this might be the case and have posed some questions for teams to ask themselves.

- Do you treat the people in your care as equals? If not, how are you able to empathise and treat people as they would want to be treated?
- Individuals and their families talk of their opinions being treated dismissively. Does the degree of credibility that you give to people and families echo this?
- Are you still operating on a mainly medical model; where you 'do to' people rather than work with people?
- Is the responsibility/accountability in the right place – are people really able to make their own decisions?
- Are you really investing time and attention into the difficult work of giving people choice and control, of really making this happen?
- Do you give every person the same service, or do people get better service if they or their allies have greater expectations, know their rights and are assertive?

All of these areas need careful and thorough consideration because, if these issues exist in practice (which we believe they do in some areas), then we are in danger of at best delivering sub-standard support to people and at worst creating unsafe and abusive environments.

Getting Involved

We hope some of our resources help you consider some of these questions with people and families. You can find them at <http://inclusionnorth.org/projects/what-we-are-doing-now/advocacy-project/>





Coming Soon!!!!

April and May

- Local Area Coordinator recruitment in Walsall, Derby and Thurrock in partnership with local citizens.
- Starting co design and development in Peterborough (in partnership with Community Catalysts), Swansea, Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Leicestershire

Late June—Local Area Coordination Leaders Meeting—including Evaluation workshop with University of Birmingham

August—Local Area Coordination Network national induction sessions for new Local Area Coordinators

September—Local Area Coordination Network Councillors and Portfolio Holder Gathering.

September— Local Area Coordination Network Gathering for Local Area Coordinators.

WATCH THIS SPACE!