Asset-Based Working Workshops: Notes and Resources

Background

Darlington Borough Council (DBC) partnered with Community Catalysts CIC to develop a workshop on asset-based working for its Adult Social Care workforce. The workshop was shaped by input from colleagues through a steering group, interviews and a survey. The same workshop was delivered four times to maximise the number of people who could take part. Each workshop covered:

- What "asset-based" working means and how it links with the Care Act, strengths-based practice, and the principles of social work.
- How to identify, support, and utilise Darlington's community assets to help people to achieve positive outcomes.
- Techniques and tips to enhance and improve asset-based working.

The contents of these notes and resources can be used for reference to support further learning to help colleagues embed asset-based working within practice.

The workshop slides can be accessed below. This contains all the content we covered together in the workshop. View the slides.

A video was produced during the workshops. Watch the video.

Why does this matter?

To help put these notes and resources into context, please familiarise yourself with the DBC Adult Social Care strength-based practice framework. An extract can be found in the text below. Access the full document.

Our vision and culture is underpinned by strong values that are:

- Strength-based and committed to the people and communities in Darlington.
- Reflective of our legal duties and underpinned by the Care Act 2014.

Our commitment is that:

- We will always try to empower individuals and families to find their own solutions.

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- We will always try to promote independence.
- We will always try to work closely with partner organisations so that adults, families and communities get the most appropriate support available.

Our approach is:

- About listening to the individual, the family and the communities to ensure our approach is strength-based and person-centred.
- To be needs led. We will support appropriate identified needs and help to ensure a proportionate response.
- About supporting the development of shared local solutions through partnership and community asset-based working.

What we need to do:

- Create the conditions for good practice by supporting the development of a borough wide culture and ethos of strength-based working.
- Support the council to safely and appropriately empower people to make their own decisions.
- Protect and support those in greatest need. We will strive to keep people safe, without stopping them doing things that are important to them.
- Improve the effectiveness of Local Authority Adult Social Care.

Our intention is:

- To "know ourselves and know our adults and families".

(Darlington Borough Council, 2024)

Mapping Assets

All communities have strengths, or 'assets', that they can contribute to developing local health and wellbeing initiatives. Community assets include not only buildings and facilities but also people, with their skills, knowledge, social networks and relationships.[1]

"Asset mapping" is the process of using your own knowledge (and those of the people you are linked with) to understand and map local assets – what they are, where they are, what their purpose is etc. Every neighbourhood will have different assets. Many are informally organised and are hard to see at first. Here are some of the sort of categories you might want to think about:

- **People and relationships.**
- **Places and spaces** - like parks, housing, community centres, path, campsites, rivers.
- **Institutions** - like schools, hospitals, libraries, museums, council departments, police stations, faith organisations.

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[1] https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs148/chapter/quality-statement-3-identifying-community-assets

- **Businesses.**
- **Associations and groups -** like a chess club, book club, dementia support group or business organisation.

Online tools like Google My Maps[2] can be used to write down everything that you find and to share it with others – see this example below from South Tyneside. Using tools like this means that as new people contribute their knowledge, the map can grow and become more and more useful to everyone locally. They are also easy to share and match up with where people live!
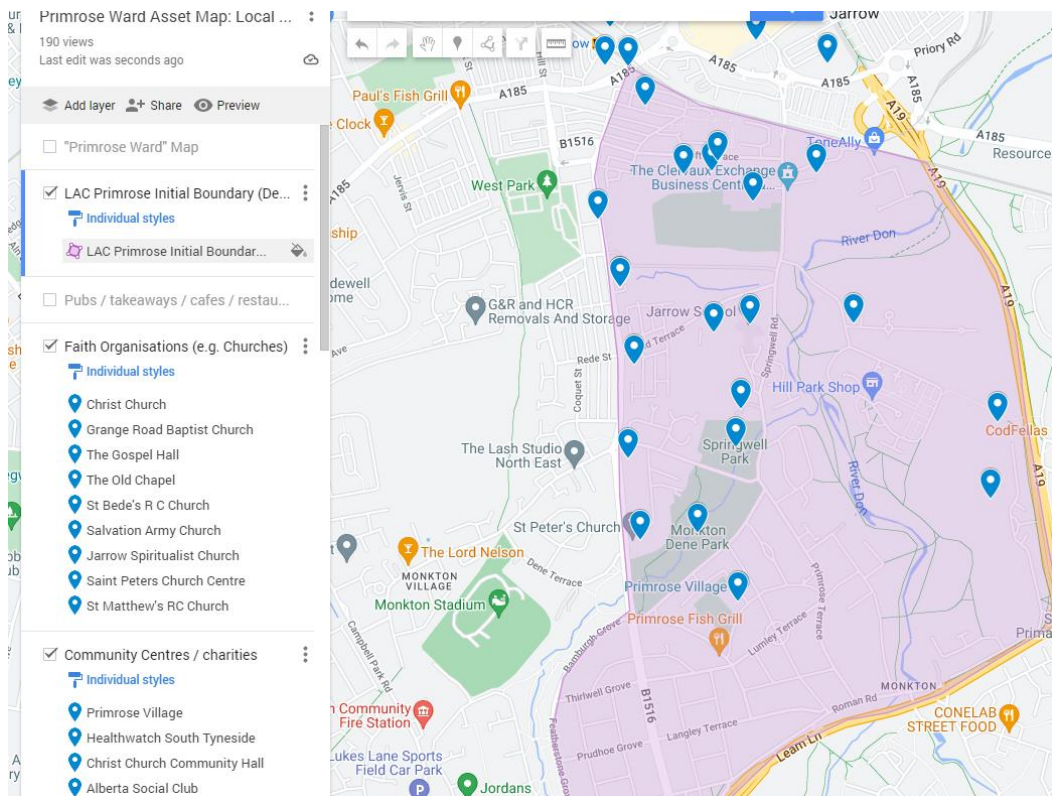
Below is a copy of the list of Darlington's assets created during the workshops. It includes links where available and is editable, allowing you to make changes or add assets as needed. View the list.

Finding out what matters most to people

Asset-based working is all about working with the strengths and assets of local people and communities. Finding out what and whom people care about is a really important aspect of asset-based working especially if (a) we want to help people and families find non-service solutions to problems they're experiencing and (b) share their gifts and talents with others around them too.

We've developed some key questions which can be used to guide your thinking and conversations. They should help underpin a strengths-based approach, building on what's strong and focusing on

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[2] https://www.google.co.uk/maps/about/mymaps/

positives.

What matters to you about this local area?

What are the strong parts of the local community?

What are you good at?

What do you care about?

How could things be even better here?

What or who makes you feel valued and included in your life?

Where do you meet and/or connect with people from the local area these days?

What might you be willing to do?

Evidence and Literature

Here is a list of the literature used within the workshops:

- Woodward et al (2021), **Asset Based Community Development: a review of current evidence**. Project Report. Leeds Beckett University, Leeds. (Unpublished).
- Blickem et al. (2018). **What is Asset-Based Community Development and How Might It Improve the Health of People With Long-Term Conditions?** .
- Community Care Article (2024) – **"Making a reality of asset-based practice in social care"**.
- An LGA webpage on **'Asset and strength-based working'** - includes loads of links.
- Cormac Russell and Nurture Development's work on ABCD, called **'Welcome to Nurture Development'**.
- Cassetti et al, 2020. **A systematic scoping review of asset-based approaches to promote**

health in communities - development of a framework.

Here are some links that may be of interest and are recommended for complementary reading or watching:

- Social Care Future.
- Rewriting social care – Words that make me go hmmm….
- Sustainable community development: from what's wrong to what's strong.