



social care
institute for excellence



The Asset-based area 2.0

Social Care Innovation Network - Phase II



Introduction

The Social Care Innovation Network has completed two phases of work - exploration and discovery. The second phase consisted of three learning groups, each focused on identifying conditions in which innovations can flourish or proliferate.

This report details the work of the group dedicated to asset-based areas.

Asset-based approaches were a core theme for each of the learning groups. As described in the 2017 TLAP paper [Asset Based Area](#), the approach has two core aims:

- to make visible and value the skills, knowledge, connections and potential in the community
- to redress the balance between meeting needs and nurturing the strengths and resources of people.

The original Asset-Based Area (ABA) model had ten actions. We have updated these into ten broad commitments which we invite local areas to discuss and adapt into a local action plan. We learned that successful areas start with a clear story about change with input and ownership from a broad range of agencies and communities. That narrative is then put into practice, through co-designing local plans, particularly with the people who rely on services most, and with those who are most likely to be excluded from services and communities. To do that requires a culture in which people can be fully present and human, with systems designed to keep people in control, rather than to put organisations in control. This approach allows local areas to draw on a wider range of assets and local organisations, and to get behind innovators and change makers. It requires leaders and organisations to share power, resources and knowledge, and to measure success against a broader set of wellbeing measures.

The ten commitments are:

1. We have a clear, shared story about how we work and what we want to change.
2. We are always looking for, connecting up and investing in community assets.
3. We co-design with people who use services and groups who miss out.
4. At work we can be ourselves, connect, be creative and act.
5. We make systems and services simple and human, so that people stay in control and can make choices.
6. Wherever we can we plan and act early, assess later.

7. We co-commission a wide range of local enterprises and back entrepreneurs and innovators.
8. We plan and organise with the neighbourhoods, communities and groups that people feel they belong to.
9. We share power, resources and risks fairly and openly, learning when we get things wrong.
10. We use shared measures of wellbeing, resilience and equality.

Behaviour changes

The asset-based area learning group considered what behaviours we would expect to see in areas which were adopting the ten commitments above. We recognised that there are some behaviours such as showing empathy and humanity, that we would expect to see from everyone, and others which would vary according to the roles in which people found themselves. The table below looks at behaviour changes for three groups:

- People with power
- Workers and volunteers
- Citizens

The behaviour changes in each row are linked. For instance, some citizens can only take a more active role in their communities, if workers and volunteers are more willing and able to share resources and support that activity, which in turn only happens if people with power create more autonomous roles and are willing to share state resources. Equally, for leaders to share their power requires people who deliver and use support services to have the skills and confidence to be able to take on more responsibility. So these behaviour changes will happen together or not at all and they require people in different roles to take risks and to be prepared to make mistakes (see Point 9 in the commitments above).

We recognised that people move between those groups and can occupy more than one of those roles at any one time. We also recognised that there are many different kinds of power and influence: asset-based areas look for and build leadership outside of traditional leadership roles.

The behaviour changes

People with power	Workers and volunteers	Citizens
We show empathy and humanity, and feel valued	We show empathy and humanity, and feel valued	We show empathy and humanity, and feel valued
We are open to change and being led by others, and are present in our community, and build alliances	We work alongside (not for) citizens, connecting ourselves and others.	We are active – doing and starting stuff in the community, and we are well-connected with others
We are happy in our roles, creating healthy, learning workplaces, and roles in which people are able to thrive and build deep relationships	We are happy in our roles and help people to live good lives, working with their capacity not just their needs	We pursue good lives and are happier, and expect support to help us live our idea of a good life
We aim for wellbeing and measure the good <i>and</i> bad impacts of our work	We are confident we do what matters to people rather than the system, showing humility and courage at the right times	We define the lives we want to live and the roles we want any organisations to play; feeling confident to feed back and take the lead
We build systems and services that fit with people's individual and family lives	We are free to be led by people, not a system; we can work whole-family and with carers	We're in control of our lives and support plans and who sees our information; we can make choices and take responsibility
We share our resources, responsibility and power	We support people to make choices and take risks	We share ownership of our neighbourhood and its organisations and resources.

Summary points

While we have developed the detail of the Asset-Based Area model, three broad themes have remained constant. Sustainable change requires:

1. **Co-production**, partnership and power sharing: an ongoing approach to understanding, building and valuing the capacity, resources and current/potential contribution of local people and groups to creating inclusive and safe neighbourhoods, and better services and systems.
2. **A strategic approach** to being asset-based: wellbeing, resilience, independence and connection are embedded as outcomes across the whole system, expressed in a clear narrative underpinned by shared measures and use of the Social Value Act principles in provision, grant-making and commissioning, and building a diverse range of support providers
3. Diversifying **workforces** and building **local enterprise**: developing individual employers, mutually and community owned support organisations; growing the employment and self-employment of local people from diverse communities, including people with experience of using services.

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