

Community- led approaches - coordinated service response

This resource forms part of a series by Healthcare Improvement Scotland on community-led approaches.

Community-led approaches are an approach to the design and coordination of the way services operate. They emphasise relational care and support centred on outcomes – finding out what really matters to people and bringing in the care and support from across the system. Community-led approaches better meet people's needs in the community, and by doing so reduce the need for more downstream services. For more information on this series or community-led approaches please contact his.transformationalsystemchange@nhs.scot.

There are four key components to community-led approaches:

- ensuring community-based access
- support driven by good conversations between services and those they are supporting
- **co-ordinated service response that enables people to receive holistic support without facing siloed services (covered in this resource)**
- maintained connections between services and those they are supporting to ensure someone has a consistent relationship that enables better access to support.

1 What are coordinated service responses?

This resource explores what it means to provide a 'coordinated service response' After visiting community hubs, people talk about their care and support needs. Then, a coordinated service response happens. This marks a shift in the way services are delivered. It is important that community-led approaches are not just about how people access support but that they change how support is delivered.

The aims of a coordinated service response are to:

- **blend service delivery** – services work together to offer coordinated, person-centred support. This support considers all aspects of a person's life. Connecting clinical teams, social care workers, community groups, and other partners ensures people get full care, not just parts.
- **focus on outcomes** – support is organised around the outcomes that matter most to individuals. Start by understanding their goals and dreams. Then, create support that boosts wellbeing, independence, and quality of life. People measure success by the impact on their lives, not by activity levels or service use.
- **provide upstream and preventative care and support** – services work with communities to understand what keeps people well. They also strengthen factors that prevent illness or crises. Early intervention, self-management, and community support help people lead healthier, more connected lives.

Care co-ordination and multi-disciplinary working is becoming more common. However, in the context of community-led approaches, you need to take that one step further and shift how you use the skills within services. This requires moving even further beyond service silos.

In the context of community led approaches this means building flexible teams that work across services rather than creating new multi-disciplinary ones that sit off to the side. This enables them to better meet people's needs.

This shift is articulated in the table below.

From	To
Each service decides what it delivers, how it delivers it, and who it delivers it to	Services make decisions together to provide the combination of support needed to meet people's needs
Leaders within services lead their specific service.	Leaders within services see themselves as part of a cross-sector leadership group, working together to deliver the combination of services needed to meet people's needs
Responsive support is provided for a specific health condition covered by that individual service	Proactive care and support to maintain people's health that draw effectively from a wide range of services and flexible teams to address the wider drivers of the individual's health conditions and support need
Each service develops a care plan for what someone receives from that service	A single tailored care plan for someone is developed by a group of services working together with clear articulation of how the services work together to create a seamless response and pathway

2 Coordinated service responses bring services and organisations together for place-based collaboration

Community-led approaches are collaborative at their core. Commonly these are done in a particular place (geographical area). Where these approaches have been successful there has been a shift in how collaboration is done in a particular geography, drawing on, and building, the available assets in that place to provide a coordinated response.

2.1 Collaboration needs - agreed relationships, established pathways, and potentially commissioning relationships between organisations and services in a place.

2.2 Who to bring in - community-led approaches move towards a flexible collaboration model where there is effort to build local networks of services and supports that can be called upon to help individuals achieve their outcomes. When thinking about who to bring together in a place, consider

- commissioned third and independent sector
- peer-led community groups
- statutory services
- communities of interest (sports clubs, walking groups etc)
- non-health/care services such as Citizens Advice, Housing etc

2.3 Be creative based on people's needs - This means building on the [Good Conversations](#) and bringing together number of people from different services to discuss and understand how best to support that individual. This can lead to more creative, personalised solutions. A significant part of this is a move away from statutory services being the default option.

In North Lanarkshire, multi-disciplinary team meetings were used to discuss particular people and share intelligence about their wider circumstances which might be driving their health and wellbeing needs. In building this full picture of an individual, services are then able to look at the full range of community assets available and develop a tailored approach to care and support. This includes blending the skills available across services. Such as utilising social work assessment expertise and then being able to work with third sector services to provide specific input – rather than taking it all in-house which might not be proportionate to need.

2.4 Use collaboration to reduce the isolation of statutory service support - Where someone needs support from a statutory service, community-led approaches can enable a greater integration with community and third sector involvement. This enables people to effectively access and rely on a wider range of supports than just what the statutory service can offer.

2.5 Do not be too rigid in your collaboration - It might be that there are stronger links across services that continually work together, which might lead to more formal connections. However, it is important that this formalisation does not reduce their ability to flexibly work together to support people – for example by reverting to rigid referral processes and eligibility criteria.

3 Coordinated service response usually requires deliberate development of community-based support

3.1 Start with what you have - Community-led approaches take a strengths-based approach. A strengths-based approach builds on the good things happening in communities – enabling them to grow, connect with each other, and help people access them.

3.2 Spot your gaps - While there are excellent third sector and independent services across Scotland, it may be the case that some gaps remain, and there is a need to develop solutions to meeting these needs.

3.3 Widen what is available – see the '[widening the market](#)' paper in this series for more where there are not the right infrastructure or community organisations already in place to enable the development of the community's assets.

3.4 Use commissioning effectively - 'Ethical Commissioning' is good practice in commissioning. It prioritises outcomes over specific services to ensure that commissioning practices do not stifle community development, or new models, or and partnership working. Ethical commissioning allows organisations to act flexibly, offering support that suits individuals best.

3.5 Link with your local Third Sector Interface – Effective community driven initiatives can see services led by volunteers, local businesses or third sector organisations as essential parts of your local support networks. Third

sector interfaces or similar local organisations can support services and organisations across the third, independent and statutory sector to build relationships and integrate them into the existing ecosystem of support.

Vibrant Communities in East Ayrshire supports communities to take control of their services. Communities are given facilitation support to identify local assets, bring local groups together, and prioritise actions. They can create their own five-year action plans which cover things such as:

- events
- youth empowerment
- health and wellbeing
- befriending and volunteering
- sport and physical activity

Working flexibly with available resources has enabled new ways of working and helped increase impact. Examples of resource planning include community asset transfers and agreements for some Health and Social Care Partnership staff to be managed within the Vibrant Communities team.

Vibrant Communities has overseen:

- 10,000 additional hours of support provided each year by 207 volunteers
- 17 community-led action plans
- £5,145,000 of additional funding secured from external sources across 213 community projects (April 2015-March 2016)

4 Effective coordinated service responses are built on continued learning and adaptation

4.1 Learn from what works well and less well - Co-ordinated service responses do more than deliver services. There is an ongoing need to adapt and change what and how is available based on community led learning around community need. This way, you can organise support well, making sure resources get to the places where they are needed most.

4.2 Continual learning about what communities want and need - and have support be driven by this. Core to Community Led Approaches is using this learning to identify what assets each community has and how to develop and build on these as part of the support offered.

4.3 Invest in ways to put your learning into practice - Enabling communities and services to learn together needs leaders to help create the conditions where the learning can be put into action – for example by changing policies, clearing barriers, and supporting appropriate risk taking. This allows new ideas to be tested and not blocked unnecessarily. Your leaders (both within communities and statutory services) may find it helpful to have access to a [strategic gap analysis](#) that can spot gaps in community support and barriers in the way they run, manage, or commission services to addressing these gaps.

5 Proactive leadership is needed to enable coordinated service responses

5.1 Prioritise teamwork – Community-led approaches requires proactive leadership from both communities (and community organisations) and the statutory sector. Leaders must work to make sure that community-led approaches focus on teamwork – the more they communicate and embody a spirit of teamwork in the way they operate, the more likely this becomes the culture of the joint working.

5.2 Try new things - Leaders should also support people in trying new things and establishing new ways of doing things. Leaders that are visible and connect directly with people tend to be the most effective in doing this. It helps inspire creative thinking and confidence. People need to feel they have the permission and power to do these things – and the reassuring presence of supportive and collaborative leaders helps people to feel like they have permission and support to try new things.

5.3 Bridge gaps between fragmented services - Proactive leadership is key in linking services together across the whole system and become community-led. It is critical to bridging's gaps between fragmented services and the everyday lives of people. Proactive leaders bring partners together. This creates a chance for collaboration that would not happen in isolated groups. They unite local authorities, NHS teams, third sector organisations, and community groups. This helps build understanding and a shared purpose. This convening role goes beyond just holding meetings. It promotes openness, pushes slow institutions to act, and helps partners see the value of community insights. Leaders need to connect with their teams. This helps everyone understand new roles and responsibilities.

6 Coordinated service responses challenge the norm

There is enormous power in the inertia of letting prevailing cultures, roles and responsibilities function as barriers to change.

6.1 Challenge 'single condition service' norms - Communities mostly experience need in a way that does not match the 'single issue' silos we create in our services. It means that people must navigate multiple services to meet each of their needs in isolation. Evidence available clearly demonstrates that the range of needs that people have can impact on each other (e.g. your housing affects your health, your mental health affects and is affected by your employment status), and that holistic services that treat needs as interconnected can have a greater impact than siloed separate services.

6.2 Take multi-disciplinary working further to be more flexible - One of the fundamental shifts in community-led approaches is the move to closer cross-disciplinary working. Without this, services are not community led. Making this happen, often raises cultural challenges between different, previously siloed services, and require services to fundamentally question their roles and responsibilities.

One of the key pieces of learning from the work in North Lanarkshire (noted above) was that staff and services learned to work across their disciplines, roles and remits. Staff reflected that the care and support solutions were better for those receiving help. Also, these solutions were found and put into action much faster, which increased benefits for everyone involved.

7 Getting started on coordinated service responses

If you are looking to undertake a coordinated service response to health and care needs in your area, considering the following questions may be a helpful place to start. These questions can help you understand whether you already have the ingredients to establish a coordinated service response, or what you need to do to be ready to make it happen.

- Do you have distinct places where you can test the ability for different services and organisations to work collaboratively - A place where there is an agreed common outcome or set of outcomes that partners can coalesce around?
- Do you have a consistent way to garner learning from those in a community, in terms of what matters most to them about their care and support needs? Do you know where communities already come together to meet and talk about what matters in their lives? How can you spend time in such places to better understand the needs of your communities?
- Are there leaders who can provide reassurance and support that enables people to feel like they can try something new – in response to those needs being expressed by people in communities?

- Is there a culture of being able to challenge outdated or unhelpful norms? Do you have robust ways to bring learning about change that is required in 'business as usual' to those that can then respond and make change happen?