

Asset-based community development (ABCD) - starting with "what's strong?" not "what's wrong?"

What is ABCD?

- Every community already has valuable skills, relationships, groups, spaces, traditions and resources - and bringing these assets together can support local priorities and solutions
- Focusing on what works well in a community to inspire action, rather than dwelling on what doesn't
- Encouraging communities to lead the change they want to see, with services and organisations acting as partners, rather than directors - leading to sustainable community development coming from within the community itself

Key principles

1. **Citizen-led** - asking residents what they can do puts them in the driving seat of change. They take the lead by using what they already have and can then secure what they need from outside agencies, such as the council or NHS.
2. **Relationship orientated** - the power of relationships is often undervalued but it can bring groups together to amplify and multiply the capacities of individuals, ensuring the societal whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts.
3. **Asset-based** - starting with 'what's strong' rather than 'what's wrong', being present to the capacities and resources that exist in every community rather than viewing the people and place by the sum of their problems, and setting aside the utopian impulses to fix, save and deliver, and instead be curious, collaborative and humble.
4. **Place-based** - neighbourhoods, small towns, villages and estates are the scale at which local people come to believe they can make an impact, and it's at this hyper-local level where individuals can connect assets together and come up with innovative solutions that are not within reach of top-down institutions.
5. **Inclusion focused** - building on the principle that everyone has a gift, skill or passion that can contribute to the societal whole.

What does it look like in practice?

- Identifying existing assets by creating an asset map - including:
 - Individuals - people's skills, knowledge and lived experience
 - Associations - local groups, faith organisations, clubs and informal groups
 - Institutions - schools, libraries, NHS and council services
 - Physical assets - parks, buildings, community spaces
 - Economic assets - local businesses, community enterprises
- Identifying and connecting key influencers and community leaders
- Engaging with communities to identify and unlock strengths, wants and aspirations
- Encouraging collaborations with services based on wants of the community
- Supporting new and existing grassroot groups to thrive
- Facilitating resident-led decision making such as participatory grant making