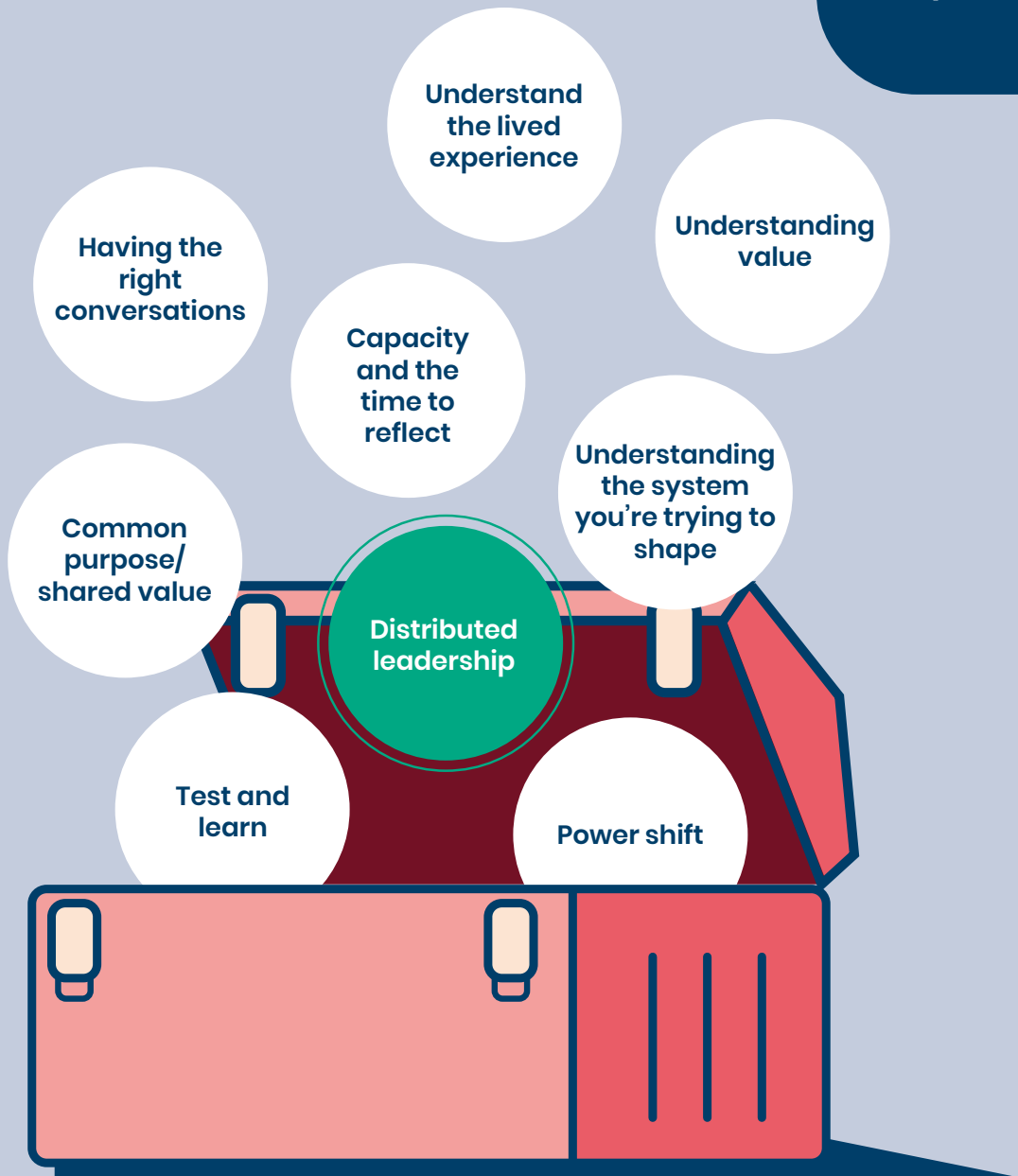




Putting it into practice
**Tools to support tackling inactivity
through system change**

Distributed leadership

Update published July 2022

Distributed leadership

This distributed leadership resource will help to guide you through the tools, models and approaches being used by places to tackle inactivity through implementing a place-based approach. This is one of nine sections of our collective resource 'Putting It Into Practice' which is organised by what we've found to be some of the practicalities of system change. The full resource can be found [on our website](#).

Every level of the system requires strong leadership, from the community all the way to government policy. Without nurturing and supporting leaders across the system, it's difficult to create local networks that link up different parts of it.



Questions you might be asking:

- What role could I play in helping to nurture and support leaders across the system?
- How can I help to grow sustainable community-driven development?
- How can I identify and articulate leadership behaviours that are important to the work?

Asset based
community
development



Pointers for
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Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot

In early 2019, Essex LDP decided to test the impact of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles and methods to tackling physical inactivity in disadvantaged communities. The decision was made to partner with Nurture Development, who recognised that it's only when agencies start organising themselves the way people organise their lives, instead of expecting people to organise their lives around services, that true partnerships between citizens and institutional systems will emerge.

Essex LDP wanted to test new approaches that support local communities to create the conditions to identify, connect and mobilise its assets to the benefit of the whole community. The approach needed to train and support public and voluntary sector organisations in ABCD and community building for the testing to be successful. The partnership between Essex LDP and Nurture Development created a bespoke package of training and development themed around Asset Based Community Development. The package operated at two levels – strategically at an Essex-wide level, with organisations like Essex Partners and Active Essex, and at a neighbourhood-level working with people and practitioners in the LDP test areas of Basildon, Colchester and Tendring.



Essex LDP Film on ABCD and Physical Activity

Name: Asset Based Community Development

Why would I use it?

- To support local communities to create the conditions to identify, connect and mobilise its assets to the benefit of the whole community. To get individuals and organisations to understand ABCD and apply the principles and methods to enrich community life.

Who would I use it with?

- Applicable to all organisations and people – with a line of sight to physical activity.

How can it be used?

- A partnership with Nurture Development offers a suite of ABCD training and mentoring options. This has included face-to-face workshops, online modules and the identification of influential people within communities and within systems to help embed ABCD principles

Advice to others

- ABCD training is likely to change the culture of organisations to put the needs of local citizens before organisational needs.

Putting it into practice - How has the tool been used?

Who was involved?

LDP team in collaboration with the Active Essex team and Nurture Development team.

Why was this tool used?

To test the impact of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles and methods in tackling physical inactivity in disadvantaged communities. The challenge faced by the Essex LDP was the perceived lack of citizen-led approaches in disadvantaged communities to tackle physical inactivity, and the perceived lack of skills and knowledge in public sector and voluntary organisations to supporting these approaches.

How was it done?

The test programme was co-produced with Nurture Development, who are the leading organisation for ABCD in Ireland and the UK. The programme started in 2019 and has grown in 2020/21. The strong and trusting relationship between a key member of the LDP team and a key member of the Nurture Development was crucial to the planning and implementation. We developed a series of face-to-face courses, online modules and identified influential people within communities and within systems to help embed ABCD principles. Topic areas included: moving from deficit to asset, the six building blocks of community, learning conversations, the role of connectors and animators and the eight touchstones of community building.

What was the impact?

During 2019/20, Nurture Development delivered ten ABCD training courses for the LDP to over 350 people, ranging from volunteer-citizens, through to senior managers and politicians. Nurture Development has had a direct influence on the culture of the LDP team, reflected in how the LDP team works internally and externally, how investments are co-produced, and how the LDP prioritises and plans for the future.

The pandemic has had two main impacts on ABCD in Essex. Firstly, it stopped planned face-to-face training and the on the ground work to develop citizen led approaches. Secondly, the profile of ABCD has been significantly raised in the Essex public sector and voluntary sector in recognition of the upsurge in citizen action to help neighbours with food, medicine, and emotional support. Essex County Council are now prioritising ABCD through the work of Essex Partners and the ECC Partnerships and Equalities service. Similarly, many local authorities are prioritising ABCD in their Covid-19 recovery planning.

What did we learn?

We're exploring ABCD as a strategic mechanism within the context of the LDP whole-system approach, particularly in relation to the aspirations to be citizen-led. We're doing this by proactively developing tangible community-based case studies that have arisen from such an ABCD approach.

Reflections from those involved:



Too often, organisations assume they know what local communities need. They focus on what's wrong, not what's strong. Adopting an ABCD approach is uplifting for everyone. It focuses on the passions of local people and the power of social networks; where public sector organisations are equal partners in any new developments, not in control. In many cases the solutions are already present within communities, often hidden from organisations who've been too focussed on finding problems to fix, rather than working alongside communities already creating change for themselves.



Chris Chinnock
from Nurture Development

Things to consider:

- Come to grips with what level of understanding there is about the principles and methods of ABCD in your area. This is an important baseline and starting point.
- The next step is to co-produce a bespoke ABCD plan for your organisation, partners, stakeholders, and local citizens that involves ABCD training and the application of ABCD principles and methods.

Where can I find further information?

[Active Essex ABCD](#)

[Nurture Development](#)

Email: administration@activeessex.org

Summary of opportunities:

There are four ABCD plans for 2021. One Essex-wide, and the other will be bespoke to Basildon, Colchester and Tendring. Nurture Development's offer is broad in its scope, and each of the three test LDP areas have different requests to meet their needs. As well as the Eight module online training course, Nurture Development have developed an approach called 'Learning Sites', which is made up of five constituent groups across three or more neighbourhoods to develop citizen-driven change, which is deep rooted, sustainable, and impactful.

Our long-term sustainability plan is to create a large cohort of ABCD champions across the Essex sport and physical activity eco-system, who are putting ABCD principles and methods into practice every day at all levels from local citizens to senior managers and politicians. Similarly, we plan to establish our own cadre of ABCD tutors and trainers to continue the upskilling of the wider sport and physical activity workforce, both paid and voluntary.

Pointers for Leadership Practice

Greater Manchester

Local Delivery Pilot

The Pointers for Leadership Practice were developed by the Revaluation team, who spent some time in GM identifying the value of the broader strategic landscape for sport and physical activity known as GM Moving. The set of principles were developed to describe how to create more of the value they identified in the future for those who are a part of GM Moving, or other parts of the GM system more broadly, and for those working in complex systems in other places. The local pilot work forms part of GM Moving.



Name:	Pointers for Leadership Practice
Why would I use it?	To help describe how you're working, and in particular the differences between this new way of working and traditional processes.
Who would I use it with?	Any partners or stakeholders who are interested/you want to influence, in the 'how' of the Local Pilot work and its importance in the development of that work to date.
How can it be used?	As a set of infographics, a discussion starter, and/or by pointing people to further reading about them and their use.
Advice to others	- The pointers can be used as descriptors, or thought-provokers, that can help others to think about how they might want to work alongside you and others. - They can be used to bring a personal approach to conversation about the work.



Putting it into practice - how the tool has been used

Who was involved?

Staff from various partner organisations new to the Local Pilot.

Why was this tool used?

To help us to explain 'how' we are trying to work, and what that means in practice in terms of behaviours and actions.

How was it done?

By talking through them with colleagues and giving practical examples.

What was the impact?

This is all about trying to create the right conditions for whole-system change, but with people joining the work at different times we've got to acknowledge that they haven't been on the journey to date, and that joining us could feel completely confusing and at odds to the work they've previously been involved in. We feel it's incredibly important to support new members of the GM team in its broadest sense, to become a true part of our collaborative way of working.

What did we learn?

That these Pointers also help us build relationships with new members of the team, and work in an authentic way bringing our whole selves to the Local Pilot.

Reflections from those involved:

The Pointers are a really useful way of framing how we're trying to work because the 'how' is often a really difficult thing to describe, primarily because it's based on personal perception, opinion and values.

Things to consider:

Not everyone is as receptive as others to having this sort of conversation, and it's worth remembering that everyone as individuals may interpret them slightly differently.

Where can I find further information?

[GM Moving - pointers for leadership practice](#)

[GM Moving website](#)

Email: info@gmmoving.co.uk

Summary of opportunities:

Committing to exploring the elements of 'how' we are working is making a huge difference to our working practices and fundamentally what we're developing. However, as we grow our network and reach, we need to make sure that we bring others with us on the journey to help us connect effectively with other parts of the system. As mentioned above, the Pointers help us to frame the how, to engage people in our journey who haven't been involved to date, and to build relationships with them.

Also in this series:



Understanding
value

Understand the
lived experience

Common purpose/
shared value

Capacity and
time to reflect

Test and learn

Power shift

Having the right
conversations

Understanding
the system you're
trying to shape

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