Volunteering: unlocking the real wealth of people and communities

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Think Local Act Personal
Shared Lives Plus
How to participate today

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Alex Fox, Shared Lives Plus

Alex is CEO of Shared Lives Plus, the UK network for small community services. Shared Lives Plus represents Shared Lives carers and schemes and works with Community Catalysts (www.communitycatalysts.co.uk) to support social care micro-enterprises and Homeshare schemes. Alex sits on the National Programme Board for Think Local, Act Personal, the sector-led programme for transforming care and support. He co-led on prevention for the social care White Paper engagement process and is one of NESTA and The Observer’s Britain’s New Radicals. He Chairs the Care Provider Alliance from October 2012.

Alex was Director of Policy and Communications for The Carers’ Trust and sat on the Standing Commission on Carers. Alex is a visiting lecturer at Nottingham University, Research Associate at ResPublica and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA). Recent publications include Personalisation: Lessons from Social Care, published by RSA and launched by the Shadow Care Minister in May 2012: http://2020psh.org/?p=925. He blogs at http://alexfoxblog.wordpress.com/, @AlexSharedLives and www.socialcareworker.co.
Think Local, Act Personal is national, cross sector leadership partnership focused on driving forward personalisation and community-based social care. People who use services and family carers take a leading role alongside central and local government, major providers and other key groups.

The TLAP Building Community Capacity workstream encourages action in four key areas:

• Building social support networks.
• Encouraging membership of groups.
• Nurturing an inclusive community.
• Enabling everyone to make a contribution.
Shared Lives Plus is the UK network for family-based and small-scale ways of supporting adults. Our members are Shared Lives carers and workers, Homeshare programmes and micro-enterprises, with 4,500 members UK-wide.

Shared Lives is used by 15,000 people UK-wide.

There are thousands of micro-enterprises in the UK.

We support the UK’s small Homeshare sector.

Community Catalysts: our sister Community Interest Company.
Introduction

• Volunteering is often seen within a traditional “gift-model” of professionally-led social care delivery.
• Volunteering is not necessarily the same as “co-production”.
• This paper sets out how to move from
  o volunteers being recruited to help professionals deliver services to the needy to….
  o co-producing interventions with all kinds of contributions from citizens and communities
1. Thinking beyond services
e\textit{eg} Local Area Coordination

“We are learning to engage with people as active citizens and community members, where the majority of the care and support is offered up by families, friends and local networks.” Richard Jones.

2. Thinking beyond social care
\textit{eg} entrepreneurial volunteering

3. Co-design and co-production at every level…
Co-production

- Co-production happens when individuals and community organisations are equal partners (power + responsibility) in the design, commissioning, delivery, ownership and evaluation of an intervention, right from the start.
  - See TLAP’s pages: http://goo.gl/WhZYj
  - and NESTA’s network: http://goo.gl/3w6DF.
- In Control’s Community Fundholding model and the Leeds City Council/Stamford Forum community-led commissioning models.
- Spice (www.justaddspice.org) develops timebanking systems that invite community members not to be passive recipients of community services, but contributors.
- Health Empowerment Leverage Project (HELP) has shown an ABCD approach to achieving public health gains can have much wider impacts on many areas of local life: (www.healthempowermentgroup.org.uk)
A new strategic role for councils

- Strategic Planning for social capital, not just an afterthought
  - eg Leeds’ charter for organisations to be age-inclusive
- There is a role for councils, providers and front-line staff in stimulating, managing and shaping local opportunities for participation.
- Investing in community development, outreach and local partnerships
- Support mechanisms and incentives for volunteering eg TimeBanks
- Whole-workforce approach: training opened up to volunteers
- Commissioning practices which enable small providers and third sector groups to enter the market and which recognise Social Value (see Social Value Act)
  - eg Lambeth’s council ‘entrepreneurs’ help organisations get up and running
  - eg Community Catalysts works with 25 councils to stimulate and support micro-enterprises
Active participation in social and community life is strongly associated with happiness and possibly even reduces mortality rates. Volunteering can be a route into employment. But disabled people and people with a long-term illness are less likely to volunteer.

Local and central Government can do more to promote equality:

1. Essex Supported Volunteering
2. CSV and In Control have a new *Contribution through Volunteering* programme to bring supported volunteering to more people.
3. Voluntary action grant programmes with criteria around access and inclusion for older and disabled people.
Towards an asset-based system

Personalisation has brought us a long way:
• huge shift of care for working age adults into community-based locations
• Individual choice and service tailoring well-established

But system remains needs-based, not asset-based:
• Individual budget control hasn’t led to commissioning power
• Choice is illusory without user-led service design
• Even a well-tailored service doesn’t guarantee a good life
• “Independence” sometimes seems to mean living alone
• Same old gift-model services?
Asset-based approaches

- Look for people’s gifts, skills and resources before their needs.
- People’s connectedness to family and community is a crucial part of their ability to make and sustain changes in their lives.
- ‘Big Society’ and similar thinking: ‘the community’ is out there somewhere
- …whereas asset-based community development (ABCD) looks for the building blocks of community in people’s close relationships.
- ‘Asset-based’ approaches imply individuals taking on more responsibility.
- Asset-mapping approaches at area level and as part of commissioning.
  - Skills for Care’s community skills approach to strategic planning: *Only a Footstep Away* (http://goo.gl/EQ1yS)
Towards an asset-based system: The White Paper and the Bill

- social care from crisis-only to well-being system
- duty on councils to develop preventative services
- Information, advice and decision making support
- family carers are recognised in law for the first time
- move away from medical models of care & assessment
- promotion of time banking, Shared Lives, micro-enterprises, Tyze care networks, Local Area Coordination

*Care and support will be transformed to focus on people’s skills and talents, helping them to develop and maintain connections to friends and family. Communities will be encouraged and supported to reach out to those at risk of isolation.*
There is a strong tradition of social action in local communities irrespective of government policy, but there have been a number of recent government statements and plans:

• The vision for volunteering, ‘Social action for health and well-being: building co-operative communities,’ advocates strong leadership, partnership working, commissioning for social value and ensuring that volunteering experiences are open to all.

• The Social Care White paper, ‘Caring for our future: reforming care and support’ stresses the value of supportive communities and community connections to improve health and wellbeing.

• The Big Society

• The Localism Act and community rights
Are we there yet? A planning tool and checklist for building community connections
What the ‘gold standard’ in building community connections looks like with a checklist.

Does it work? A guide to evaluating community capacity initiatives
This guide shows how to involve people in evaluating initiatives for impact on social capital and community capacity.

The Building Community Capacity website
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Any questions?

• To ask a verbal question raise your ‘hand’

• Or submit a written question via the question pane
Thank you

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- Redesigning the front end of social care 30 August; Progress for Providers for Dementia 24 September
- Webinar feedback and ideas for future sessions communications@in-control.org.uk