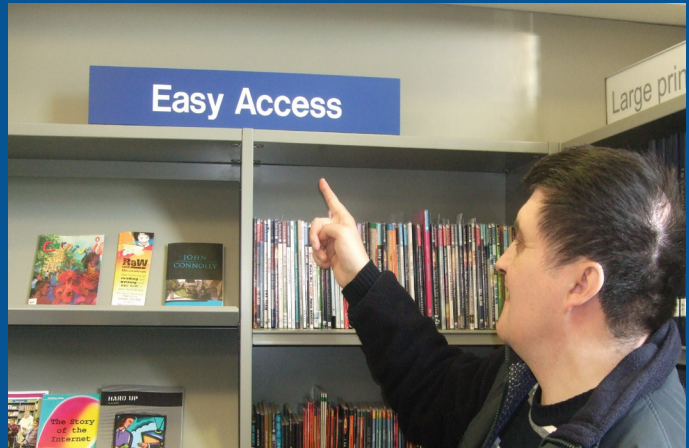


The Accomplished Community

Building Inclusive Communities



Old roots and new routes to welcoming everyone

Simon Goldsmith and Christine Burke



foundation for
people with
learning disabilities



Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the three district based project teams from Swale, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling on whose experience much of this report is based.

Special thanks to:

- Sophia Chung and Linda Bailey from the Tonbridge and Malling District Partnership Group;
- Sheila West and Clare Trumper from Kent Libraries and Archives;
- Gary Watt from Larkfield Methodist Church;
- Graham Seymour, Managing Director of Shoppers Anonymous Sussex;
- Angela Borsos at The Beat Project;
- Stephen Gregg and Duncan White from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council;
- Lynne Weatherly, Chris Perry and Ian Kemp at Tunbridge Wells District Partnership Group;
- Jenny Wilders from Voluntary Action Within Kent;
- Stewart Wild from Fusion Lifestyle;
- Chris Bryant from Swale Borough Council;
- Tina Miles from Amicus Horizon;
- Chris Lovelock, Swale Carers; Paul Williams, Diana Lovecchio, Richard Smith at Swale District Partnership Group;
- Sue Peach East Kent Mencap;
- Workers-of-art and;
- Jo Kidd, Louise Allen, Ann-Marie Eighteen, Peter Bland, Chris Jennings at The Skillnet Group

We would also like to thank colleagues from Kent who are working on the Good Health agenda and a variety of community groups from whom we have learned a great deal. We have used some examples of their work in the following pages to illustrate what can be accomplished, even though they were not part of the Building Inclusive Kent Communities test sites.

Our thanks also to Alison Giraud-Saunders for her advice and editing of the report. To Kate Ball for her advice and keeping us on track, Hilly Reynolds for the illustrations used in the report and Hanifa Islam for her assistance in creating the easy read summary.

Finally, we wish to thank Kent County Council for funding the Building Inclusive Kent Communities Programme and supporting the range of community centred initiatives that followed.

Contents

1	Key messages
3	Foreword
5	Introduction
7	The project
9	Project lessons
9	The district teams
10	Finding ways to describe this work
10	Developing a shared mission
14	Team facilitation
15	Who leads this work?
15	Where can we be partners?
17	The role of support services
19	The Eight Community Accomplishments
20	Accomplishment 1: We have an expanding and diverse leadership base
21	Accomplishment 2: We have a strong social mission that is widely understood and shared
21	Accomplishment 3: We are increasing inclusive and active participation by local people
22	Accomplishment 4: We are investing in developing individual skills, and support people to bring their gifts to the lives of others
22	Accomplishment 5: We provide information in different formats like easy read, including person to person contact
23	Accomplishment 6: We provide high quality community-based area co-ordination to assist people to plan, navigate and connect to community resources
23	Accomplishment 7: We invest in co-production and joint delivery of multi agency work across traditional boundaries
24	Accomplishment 8: We work alongside individuals and groups who may have found access difficult, to define good standards of service and check that progress is happening
25	Conclusion
27	References
28	Useful links



Key messages

- Building active lives for all is a citizenship and human rights issue as well as a goal for social care reform.
- Community groups and public services want to deliver shared work and many see this as an essential part of their future plans, not least as a way of attracting funds to develop new work.
- Strong local leadership is needed as well as a dedicated person(s) through whom cross sector work is generated and co-ordinated.
- Leadership development is much needed to expand the diversity of the current leadership base.
- Outreach to disadvantaged groups is delivered by many community groups and public services. Strong working partnerships are necessary to maximise impact and reach more people.
- Local festivals and places of gathering for whole communities play an important role in breaking down barriers and working on the wider inclusion agenda.
- The introduction of direct payments and personal budgets provides an economic driver for business, community groups and public services to improve access to new customers.
- There is a need to publicise accessible community facilities widely to the general public. This project found that some public services had achieved high levels of access but had not shared information widely about their facilities.
- One-to-one connecting of people in local communities needs to go hand in hand with a range of community centred work to support the development of multi-partnership work on the broad access agenda.
- A broad definition of access is needed that recognises the importance of physical access to places but also encompasses welcoming attitudes, easy information, and good support by mainstream staff.
- The widespread use of props such as visual choice cards, menus, Braille guides and tactile maps is much needed to assist mainstream staff in direct communication with a diverse range of local people. Such props have been found to be helpful to other sections of the community.
- Specialist services should support mainstream services to build their inclusive practice and check whether these make tangible improvements to the lives of the people they serve.
- The role of small community and voluntary organisations is vital; both national and local government need to look at how small local groups can be sustained within the current extremely difficult financial environment.
- The Eight Community Accomplishments (Goldsmith and Burke, 2012) can be used to enhance this work and create local benchmarks for inclusive practice everywhere.



Foreword

Opening up access to community resources is a major priority. This is not only an equalities issue, but a major practical consideration in planning and design of community spaces to be inclusive of the whole population.

There are many references to community in this publication. When we discuss community we are not adopting a strict geographical interpretation, but referring to the numerous groups, associations and networks to which people have access or feel a sense of belonging.

A truly inclusive society calls for an environment in which a diverse population can exist harmoniously and in which everyone, regardless of disability, age, gender, ethnicity or other circumstances, can participate equally.

This agenda contributes to stronger communities, increased social cohesion and better quality of life as people meet and understand better the issues faced by each other. This work grows from the roots of fairness, social responsibility and searches for new routes to delivering equality.

Almost everywhere people working in the public and community sectors are struggling with ways to save money and 'do more for less'. Top-down approaches are not uncommon in a time of uncertainty and yet there is ample evidence to show that creative and entrepreneurial solutions most often come from those on the front line: this includes public service staff, local people, and voluntary and community groups. They are able to truly understand where change can come and where new opportunities lie to provide better customer service and reduce avoidable waste.

This booklet does not deal with building regulations, planning or highway matters. However, we are ever mindful that the issues raised in the following pages have explicit links to the wider access agenda concerning the built environment. For example, creating a town park that is accessible to all relates to the needs of disabled people, older people and those with young children alike. A broad definition of access includes easy information, support and access to welcoming and helpful staff who are equipped to meet the particular needs of people with learning disabilities and other previously excluded groups.

This booklet draws on work undertaken between 2009 and 2011 as part of the Building Inclusive Kent Communities (BIKC) Programme. This set out to extend interest in opening up community and public services so that people with learning disabilities in particular could have better access and ultimately improved life chances alongside other people.

The findings from this project are intended to be shared nationally as part of the ongoing debate about access.

The programme brought together multi-sector teams from Swale, Tonbridge and Malling and Royal Tunbridge Wells to look at what difference community groups and public services could make together. This included finding ways to be partners and exploring work that could lead to shared outcomes, by:

1. Working alongside disabled people to identify and remove the barriers that prevent some people from being present within local communities;
2. Working with community based partners and disabled people on shared projects to develop more inclusive practice.

The purpose of this booklet is to:

- bring together what we have learned from the BIKC project about improving access
- share some practical examples of work undertaken
- make the case for broad definitions of community access
- present Eight Community Accomplishments as key drivers of the broad access agenda, which others can use in their work



Thinking About Inclusion

Lessons from this work has led us to the production of a booklet 'Thinking About Inclusion' aimed at public, private and voluntary services to support them to think about how to make their practice inclusive and welcoming to everyone.

See our website to download this guide:

www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/publications
www.valuesinc.co.uk



Introduction

According to the Office for National Statistics (1), nearly one in five people of working age in Great Britain is a disabled person. The population of the UK is ageing and it is expected that this proportion will rise as the number of people aged 75 and over doubles in the next 25 years.

The Government's Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens (2) and the partnership agreement, Think Local, Act Personal (3), call for a new approach to caring for ourselves and others. They promote a renewed drive towards using the assets of whole areas to improve health and create safe, clean and welcoming communities. They advocate opening up community resources to all and involving local people as advisers and co-producers of support services rather than simply passive recipients.

Creating a 'Big Society' (4) emphasises the need for local action and argues for a broad view of the resources available to tackle community and social issues. This involves using the gifts and talents of all citizens, tapping new sources of funding (including private giving) and better use of the non-state-owned assets of a community such as church halls, community centres, pubs and other places of gathering. This also encompasses a bigger role for the community and voluntary sector in reaching local people, encouraging and supporting social responsibility and responding quickly to local community needs.

Changing the way social care works for people through the introduction of personal budgets is not an end in itself. The bigger agenda is to look again at how communities help one another, welcome and understand difference and take responsibility for the places where people live, work or play. In short, this is a citizenship agenda that also challenges the passive and paternalistic roles of 'service user' and 'client' and reinforces a new direction for social care.

The Government consultation document Caring for our Future (5) highlighted a number of themes aimed at improving quality, personalising care and support, integrating services and investing in prevention and intervention at a local level. Integral to these aspirations is the need to build community capacity and orchestrate available resources to the benefit of all.

Access to community and public services is a cross cutting theme that transcends work with particular sections of any given community. For example, an accessible sports centre is welcoming to all. Building this type of capacity is not 'owned' by any particular agency or service. It depends on building a clear social strategic mission that is widely shared and understood.

The whole issue of community access is pressing. The Life Opportunities Survey (6) findings published by the Office of Disability Issues in 2010 revealed that more than a third (36%) of adults with impairments experienced difficulty accessing public services compared to a fifth (22%) of adults without impairments. The survey covered health services, justice services, benefits and pensions, culture, sports and leisure as well as social services.

One important lesson from the Building Inclusive Kent Communities

programme has been that multi-sector shared work, even if small in scale, can bring benefits to people beyond the initial target population. Mainstreaming good practice is therefore an essential part of this important work.

Example 1: Hospital Communication Folders

The Hospital Communication Folder used in Kent has pictures and symbols to help explain medical procedures and health problems that need to be talked about when receiving care in hospital settings.

The Hospital Communication Folder was agreed by the Kent Good Health Group, which is an implementation group of the Kent Partnership Board.

The communication folders were introduced to help hospital staff improve communication when working with people with learning disabilities.

The Good Health Group works closely with the acute hospitals in Kent to make sure that all hospital staff are aware of the folder and use it at the right time (plans are in place to do a similar piece of work with community hospitals). Each hospital is asked to have a lead person to oversee awareness and use of the folder within their services.

A group of people with learning disabilities and their carers had some experiences in hospitals when the folder was not used consistently. They asked for posters about the communication folder to be displayed in key areas.

Early indications suggest that the communication folders have a much broader application than the initial intention. They have been used with older people, people with dementia and people who may not speak English as a first language.

This work is to be developed further with the emerging Clinical Commissioning Groups that will be responsible for commissioning acute services for their local populations.



The project

The Building Inclusive Kent Communities project set out to extend interest in opening up community and public services in Kent. The project aimed to demonstrate the contributions that can be made to inclusion through combining:

- community centred activities
- individualised support
- one to one connecting of people at risk of exclusion

There is evidence from community connecting work to show that this combination can achieve real changes in the life experiences of individuals (7).

All three test sites were able to develop shared projects. These projects had a focus on involvement and leadership by people with learning disabilities and working across service boundaries. The project hoped that bringing people together would provide fertile ground to learn about building new partnerships, opening up opportunities for co-production at a local level and be a catalyst for cross sector collaboration that would help us all work together in better ways. The teams met six times over the life of the project in an 'action learning' format.

The aims of the project were to:

- identify community partners and possible partnerships across sectors
- engage the wider community in taking action on a broad definition of access including physical access, access to information and access to mainstream services and groups
- explore how existing community services, programmes, and events could be revitalised with a renewed emphasis on reaching out to people with learning disabilities and other under-represented groups
- share findings widely and contribute to wider learning concerning community inclusion.

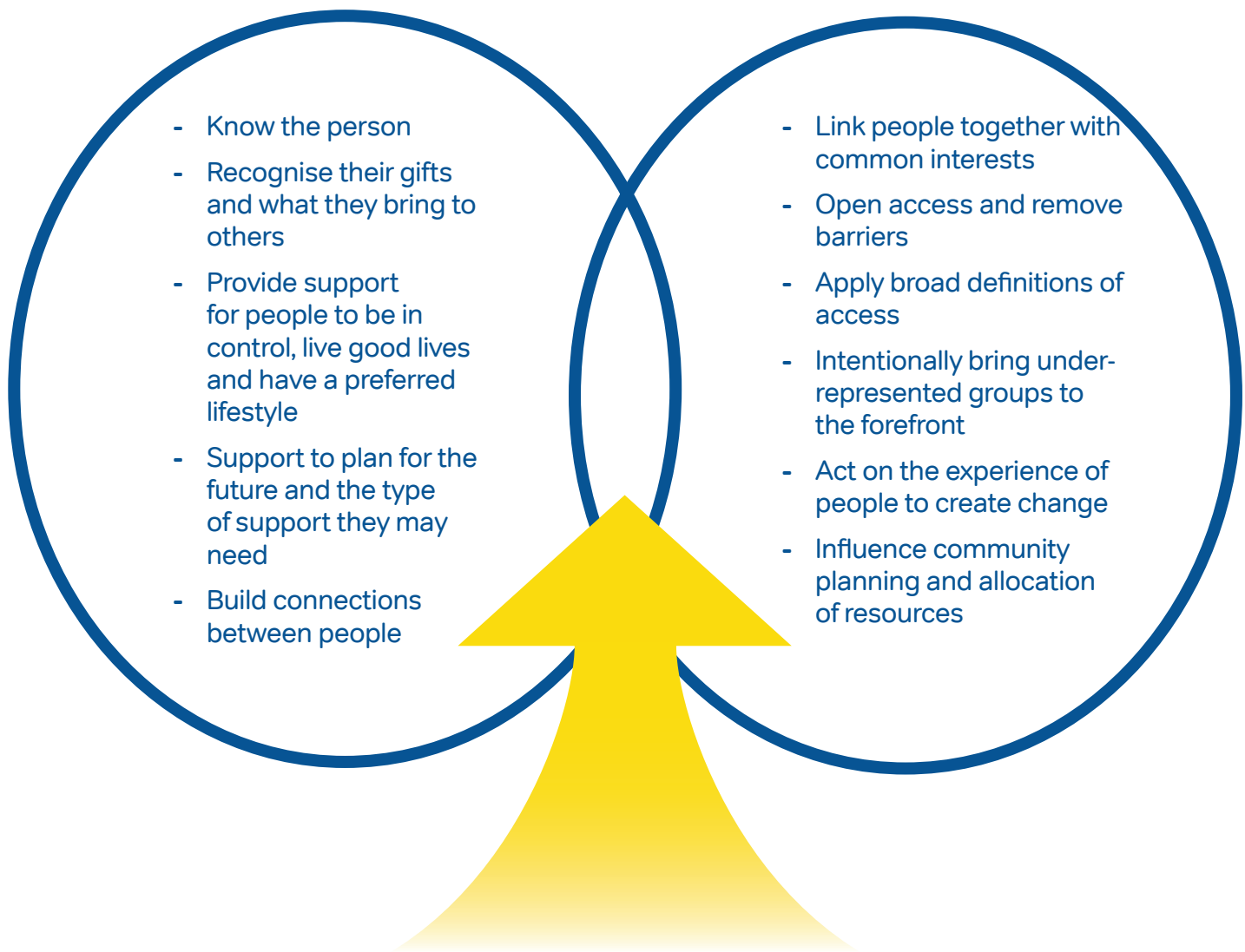
Person-centred and community-centred work

Over the past few years there has been much innovative work on building communities, with a focus on connecting people into their local communities (7). This has had a positive impact on awareness of the need for greater access.

This project brought together two distinct but sometimes overlapping approaches: person-centred and community-centred work.

Person-centred work supports people to discover, recognise and contribute their own gifts to others. Community-centred work builds networks, cross sector partnerships and local leadership to improve access.

Person-centred and Community-centred work



Community connecting is the interlink between good person-centred work and matching peoples skills, interests, aspirations and dreams with opportunities in their local communities.

Project lessons

The District Teams

District teams were made up of people with learning disabilities and people working in public services as well as community organisations, including some faith communities. They had been invited to participate, being known for their active involvement in community issues. An initial task was to identify what the project termed 'open' or 'part open' doors. These included potential partners who may never have met but who shared common values and had the drive to test some new ways of doing things and be a catalyst for wider change.

Project development within teams supported the leadership roles of people with learning disabilities. Keeping individuals at the centre of planning meetings, making information easy to understand and slowing down the pace of discussions all posed a challenge to teams. However, the very presence of people with learning disabilities was a constant reminder of the task and teams did achieve a sense of equality in working together and deciding on actions and shared delivery.

Community partners asked us not to fall into the trap of only referring to 'services' when describing the project. They reminded us that informal community supports often had first and ongoing contact with people and were keen to be part of the 'opening communities' agenda. There was also a clear request from people with learning disabilities not to address them as 'service users', which some people found stigmatising and a throwback to the paternalism of some specialist services they had used in the past.

Example 2: Opening up volunteering

A project led by Voluntary Action Within Kent and people with learning disabilities using daytime services in Paddock Wood worked to design and develop an easy read leaflet and registration pack to enable people with learning disabilities to use the Volunteer Centre more easily.

As part of the work the group visited organisations like the library, arts centre and shops to take photographs to be included in the leaflet and volunteering presentation. The pack is now being used by Volunteer Centres in Tonbridge and Sevenoaks and used in the recruitment of volunteers for the Olympics.

www.vawk.org.uk



Finding ways to describe this work

Describing the project as community capacity building, community empowerment or just improving community access led to many discussions about what these things meant. This seemed to distract teams from what had started as a simple mission: to see how public and community services could work together on some projects that would have shared outcomes of improved access and participation.

The project found that work of this kind can be ill-defined and blurred around the edges. Some participants expressed uncertainty about the focus of the project. Some felt more confident about connecting people into existing services whilst others were interested in developing planned projects or events but with new partners and a more inclusive membership.

As the project unfolded we became more confident in what we were trying to achieve. However, feedback from all district teams emphasised the need for greater definition and clarity over such work. With this they felt they could have started work earlier and perhaps delivered more.

Finding common ground and establishing shared objectives took time. The project also took place amidst growing pressures on individual partners brought about by planned spending reductions and the restructuring of services.

The project found that community groups and public services wanted to deliver shared work and many saw this as an essential part of their future plans, not least as a way of attracting funds to develop new work. The practicalities of creating new opportunities and finding common ground and tangible things that could be done were less clear.

Developing a shared mission

Most participating organisations were able to describe a social mission that went beyond the delivery of their day-to-day work. For example, libraries, leisure centres and faith groups were keen to promote themselves as safe and welcoming places for people to gather as well as places to gain information and/or develop new skills. Some provided cafés or communal areas where people could meet informally. These areas were well used by local people, especially amongst people who would not frequent the expensive coffee houses at one end of the spectrum or the fast food chains at the other.

Partners felt that being able to provide places of gathering for local people had an important role in supporting self-help, breaking down barriers, facilitating involvement and contributing towards the building of stronger communities generally.

This project found that local services wanted to do more around their social missions and that the development of a whole community vision linking input from across sectors was much needed.

Example 3: Royal Tunbridge Wells Mela Festival

An annual multi cultural and inclusive event held in the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The planning group had high levels of local involvement and promoted understanding of diversity and difference. The planning group worked to involve people with learning disabilities and enrolled people as full members of their stewards' team for the first time.

www2.tunbridgewells.gov.uk



Example 4: Tonbridge Arts Festival

This whole community event, entitled 'The History of the White Wedding', was delivered by The History Wardrobe of York, The Beat Project, Kent Libraries and the Tonbridge and Malling District Partnership Group.

It was performed as part of the annual Tonbridge Arts Festival and was organised by people with learning disabilities and the wider community to break down barriers and meet new people.

www.tonbridgeartsfestival.co.uk



Example 5: Swale Community Festival

This was a whole community event and the planning group benefitted from the inclusion of people with learning disabilities on the group. Swale Borough Council trained and included people with learning disabilities in the recruitment of the Festival organisers. They included people as stewards and worked with them in reaching all decisions in order to ensure inclusion.

www.skillnetgroup.co.uk



Whole community involvement was part of the work of most partners. This was found in the form of mobile libraries, support for small mainstream community groups and associations, and links to community and voluntary sector organisations working with under-represented groups. There was a clear sense that partners saw themselves as part of the local community and felt a sense of local pride in the achievements of the geographical communities they served. Some partners had experience of cross sector work, but much of this had been limited to the delivery of specific time-limited projects. The Beat Project and Kent Libraries were an exception to this, since they had been developing multi strand community work programmes for some time.

Kent Libraries were delivering a county wide programme of work called 'Making the Difference'. This aimed to welcome adults with learning disabilities into libraries. The work undertaken won them the prestigious 2011 Libraries Change Lives Award from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

This award winning work included increased provision of easy read books, promotion of assistive technology, delivery of inclusive events (including arts exhibitions and events), delivery of the 'Passport to Libraries' programme, and the training and use of new volunteers. This work, although focused on people with learning disabilities, was also part of a much wider programme to engage and serve community groups who might not ordinarily use their services. Kent Libraries supported the development of mystery shopping to check access and report on findings as one important way of gaining customer feedback.

Sample Mystery Shopping checklist

Area/question	Yes	No	Not needed
Outside the library			
1. Was it easy to get to the library by public transport?			
2. Is there a clear sign to the library from the nearest town?			
3. Is there a clear sign to the library when you are nearby?			
4. When you asked local people about the library, did most know where it was?			
5. Did the library look nice from outside?			
Was it clean?			
Could you see inside the library?			
Was the area outside the library clean and tidy?			
Were the windows clean?			
6. Overall, did the library look welcoming?			
7. Could you see the opening/closing times?			
8. Were the opening time signs easy to read?			
9. Was the area outside the library safe?			
10. Was it easy to open the door?			

Example 6: Mystery shopping to improve access to public libraries

This project was undertaken as a partnership between people with learning disabilities, Kent Libraries and Shopper Anonymous Kent (a commercial mystery shopping company).

Participants were supported to share their experiences of both good and bad customer service. They created their own checklists to assess a broad range of access issues within West Kent Libraries. This included the outside areas (including signage), the interior of buildings (including availability of lifts and toilet facilities) and staff service and helpfulness. Findings were reported back to Kent Libraries and Archives to inform their strategic planning.

www.shopperanonymous.co.uk/contact/sussex

A similar programme was undertaken in Swale with the development of a Disability Forum that undertook 'Citizen Checking'. This involved the assessment of local public services and offering them advice and support to make their services accessible to all, including people with learning disabilities.

Swale Disability Forum at Skillnet Group

www.skillnetgroup.co.uk and
www.learningdisabilities.co.uk



Team facilitation

A few teams found the task of building opportunities for greater social inclusion very hard, as they could not find logical starting points.

Teams made up of a good spread of mainstream organisations, supported by a selection of specialist support providers, did best at defining possible new ground to be explored. The one team led by a specialist professional worker did less well and we found that teams' sense of possibility was sometimes obscured by the 'walls and ceilings' of professional job descriptions.

The project found that multi agency teams benefited from a dedicated facilitator to help make connections and exchange ideas and expertise. Facilitators were able to focus the energies of teams into the discovery and recognition of community assets rather than needs or deficits. They helped partners to work with what was present, what could be re-shaped, and what could be harnessed to deliver some small scale shared work.

Example 7: The gift of quilts

The "Gift of a Quilt" was open to anyone, any age, any skills. It could be an individual, a group of friends, a village project, a school project, a community project involving care homes, day centres. All that was needed was to be able to hold a needle. The object was to give a quilt to each country participating in the London Olympics and Paralympics in 2012 (The Games) as a unique sign of friendship and peace.

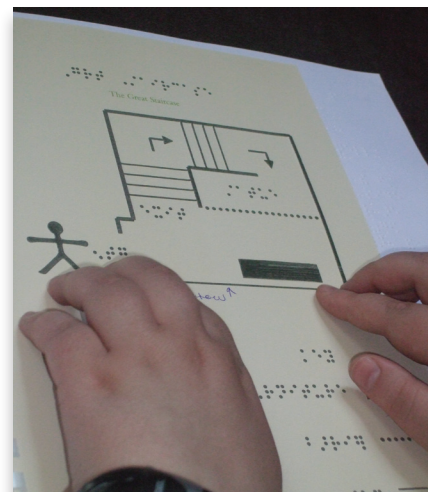
www.thebeatproject.org.uk



Example 8: Tactile maps

The National Trust at Knole worked with visually impaired people and people with learning disabilities to produce a Braille guide to their historic house and tactile maps. These maps allow blind and visually impaired people to locate important objects within the public rooms and to locate stairs and any built structures.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk



Who leads this work?

The question of who leads work of this kind is an important one. In 2006 the Community Development Foundation (8) was asked by Government to look at the current state of community development and assess what steps might be taken to raise its profile and effectiveness. Their report explored the role and value of community development as an occupation and reflected back on earlier work by the Department of Health (9) on the four specific roles of change agent, service developer, access facilitator and capacity builder.

The Building Inclusive Kent Communities project was able to identify closely with many of the issues raised by the Community Development Foundation report. Our work found a clear need to invest in well trained workers with a community development background who are able to move between sectors, generate shared work plans and improve the current evidence base. The project also identified the need for strategic community development approaches to achieve greater participation at all levels, including a strong and more diverse leadership base to turn the vision into tangible and measurable objectives within community planning.

Where can we be partners?

Members of individual teams came to the programme with different expectations of what might be delivered. These were in part shaped by the interests of their organisations and by priorities within their strategic and annual plans. These included meeting health and active lifestyles objectives, extending community reach, finding out what under-represented groups were looking for, and work on national change programmes such as Change4life.

Example 9: Band without boundaries

This was a shared project delivered jointly by Community Futures Kent and Kent Music. The club provides an opportunity to bring people together to learn about jazz music and musical improvisation. The club brings together musicians and individuals who may never have had an opportunity to experience different types of music. Band without boundaries performed as part of last year's Sevenoaks Summer Festival. For the first time the festival stage was made accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties.

www.communityfutureskent.org.uk

Example 10: The Schools Project

By working proactively and in partnership with people with learning disabilities and schools, the project helped young people to change their preconceptions of disability.

SC Support and Care Services Ltd



Through the project there was recognition that strong multi sector partnerships were essential to maximise impact and reach more people within different networks.

Shared work of this kind could usefully be described in three domains:

1. Local involvement and co-production

Engaging all members of the community, not just those who are active, and finding ways to generate new opportunities together based on pooling of knowledge and resources in a new way.

2. Building social capital

There are many definitions of what this means, but many have as a central tenet the value of social networks. Social capital has been described as ‘the ability of people to work together for a common purpose in groups and organisations’ (10).

3. Designing, reshaping, generating and checking

Looking at what already exists and how this can be remodelled or re-shaped in the light of new demands, needs and customer expectations.

The changing scene of social care provides a useful backdrop to many discussions in this booklet. The introduction of direct payments and personal budgets as part of the wider personalisation of services was an important element.


Public services such as leisure centres should see the potential economic benefits of becoming more accessible to new customers. The project’s experience of visits to premises showed that already accessible environments were not being widely promoted and that this was an area that could be improved with little expense. However, this does demand action by partner agencies: to prioritise time to do this and to explain to senior managers why the work is important. There is a need to make the case not just on moral or social grounds but on the economic benefits of attracting new paying customers.

Cross sector partners can learn from one another, most especially around the development of inclusive practice such as the availability of props as tactile maps for people with visual impairment, visual menus, choice cards and direct feedback from customers who may not have used these services before.

The project found that such resources need to be checked regularly to ensure they are used consistently and appropriately and that they are well displayed so that customers themselves can choose to use them. It is important that these tools become a regular part of the daily service that staff provide to their customers.

What could we do together?

Shared work could take place in many ways including:

I wonder what could we do TOGETHER	
Multi faith and community events and celebrations	
Community exhibitions and use of gallery space	
Work on local and national change programmes such as Change4life	
Lifestyle programmes	
Outreach work and community based delivery of service	
Better use of shared public spaces	
Information and awareness days	
Volunteering and supported volunteering	
Making easier information	
Opening up apprenticeship and training days	
Work on joint funding applications	
Opening up mainstream delivery to become inclusive to all	
Opening up opportunities for local leadership and involvement in service planning	
Checking on progress through mystery shopping	
Involvement in community planning and design	

See the [Self-assessment Template](#) available from our websites for a full version of this checklist.

The role of support services

The project found that specialist services were well placed to support mainstream services to build their inclusive practice and test whether these made tangible improvements to the lives of the people they supported.

Far from making a case for less well trained support staff, this project found a need for further investment in the development of new skills for support staff. They need to be able to work within community based services and have a broad range of interpersonal skills to make new introductions and support people to participate in the activities on offer to everyone.

In order to maximise opportunities, support services need to plan how to make the most of mainstream resources and think through what may be needed to make this work for more than just a few people (7).

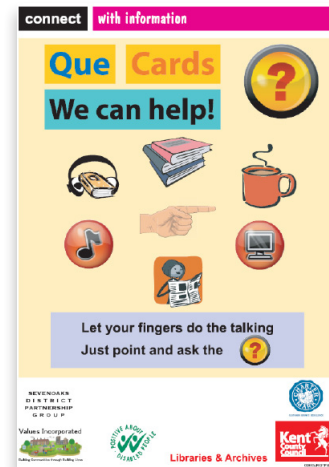
We are keen to emphasise that this does not just mean relocating specialist services into mainstream buildings, but a far greater shift in thinking about how individuals are connected to others around mutual interests and their ability to contribute, whether this be through work, learning or community initiatives.

There is a human resource challenge concerning local recruitment and training that supports re-orientation from reliance on specialist provision. An increasingly important role will be modelling good practice for mainstream staff.

Example 11: Visual choice cards and menus

These have been developed by libraries to assist librarians in serving customers who may not use spoken language, and who may need visual images to help them make choices. Although designed primarily for people with learning disabilities, they have much wider application within the community, including service to people who may not speak English as a first language.

www.cilip.org.uk



Example 12: Access to Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre

Work to open up access to all and promote the accessible facilities of the sports centre, including wheelchair tennis and other adapted sports. The project involved inviting people who had not used the leisure services to visit and try activities out with centre staff.

www.fusion-lifestyle.com



The Eight Community Accomplishments

This work led us to consider the importance of the ideas developed by John O'Brien around five service accomplishments (11) and we developed eight complementary community accomplishments. We feel that these add value to the understanding of how to develop greater capacity in our communities to participate together.

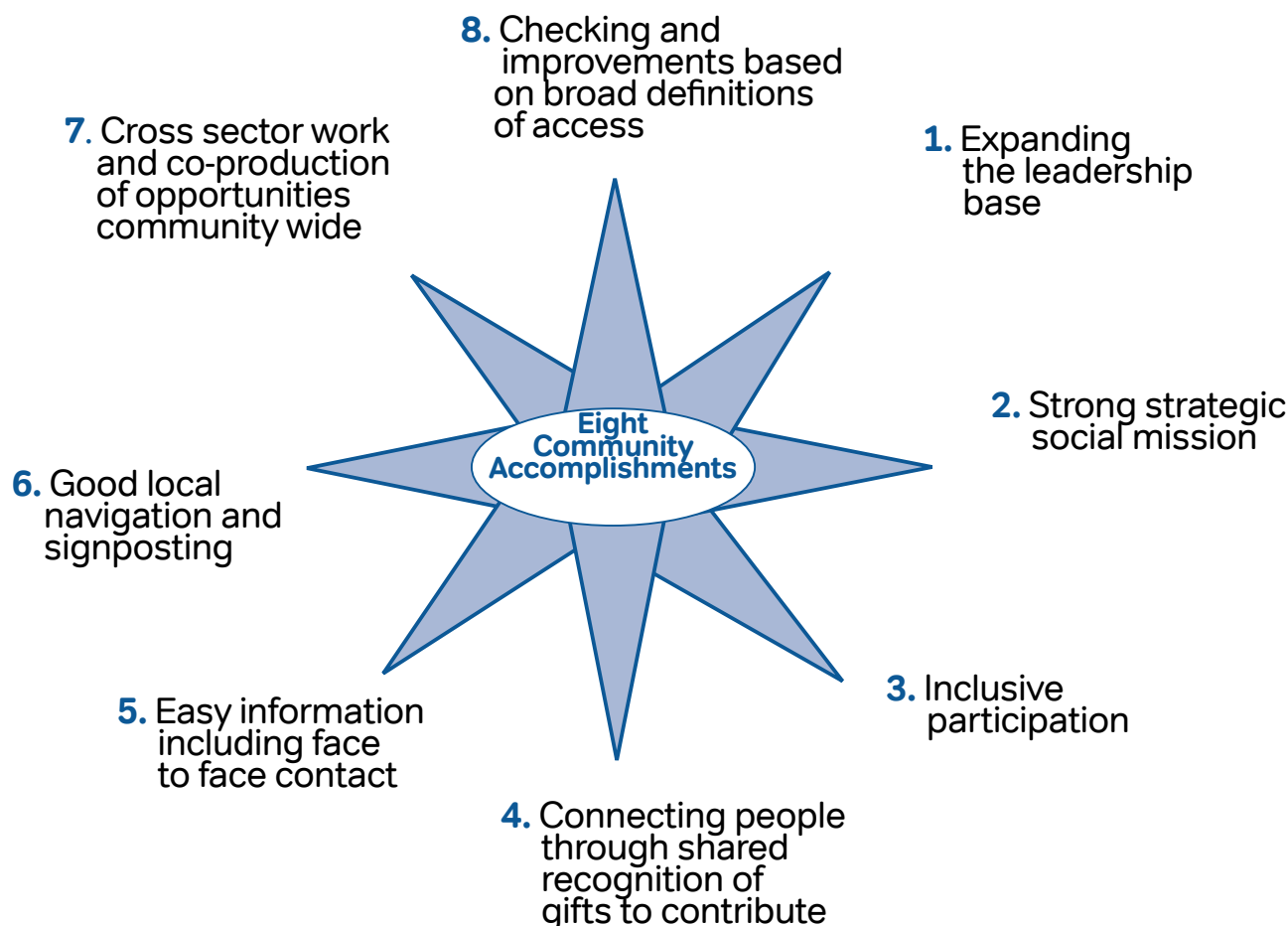
In 1987, John O'Brien and Connie Lyle O'Brien undertook research in Seattle, USA, to explore what makes a good life. They published their Framework for Accomplishment, which set out five key areas that were widely agreed to be important to everyone. They proposed that services should support people in these five domains and should be judged by the extent to which people were:

- sharing ordinary places with others
- making choices in life
- having valued social roles, chances to contribute and being treated with respect
- developing in skills
- growing in relationships with others

John and Connie asked that we think about how communities can welcome and include people who might otherwise be missing. From this early work John produced guides to help service workers support people to move from a life defined by special places, special staff and special activities to a full life with others.

The Building Inclusive Kent Communities project worked with these ideas to look at how communities themselves could change: to open their doors to people, welcome people in and do this with more people. We started to think about community accomplishments that would enhance the five service accomplishments and set them in a new context. The world of social care is changing and the people who make up our communities are changing also. There are challenges all around, but we do believe that this work is achievable - and even more important today as a result of the impact of public spending cuts. Cross sector working offers the potential to generate new routes to social inclusion, without forgetting the old roots of where we have come from and how we came to be where we are today.

We developed the following eight interlinked community accomplishments, as we found that they can be used to enhance this work and create local benchmarking for inclusive practice everywhere.



Accomplishment 1: We have an expanding and diverse leadership base

Public services, agencies and community groups/associations nurture, develop and use the skills of people from different parts of the community who represent its diversity and differences.

- ✓ Support and training is available to people who have been subject to low expectations, to develop their leadership capabilities.
- ✓ Person-to-person mentoring programmes are available to develop specific skills such as speaking in public, understanding meetings, working as part of a team and putting your ideas across to others.
- ✓ Support is available for people to learn about the democratic process and how to work with elected officials to create change.
- ✓ Support is available locally to enable people with common experiences, such as disabled or older people, to meet and work together on the inclusion agenda.
- ✓ Local decision making groups responsible for resource allocation have representatives from diverse groups of local people.

Accomplishment 2: We have a strong social mission that is widely understood and shared

Local leaders invest time in working with others to develop a clear, compelling social mission for the communities they serve. This encourages ongoing discussion and debate on ways that the community as a whole can contribute.

- ✓ Local consultation and planning with public services, agencies, community groups and associations is underpinned by a strong social mission to enable all people to participate fully and equally.
- ✓ The mission is developed by a broad range of people who represent the community in its totality.
- ✓ The social mission is clearly communicated in a variety of ways including positive visual images that communicate respect, tolerance and contribution.
- ✓ The social mission is communicated in a way that is relevant and understood by different audiences. For example, exploring different ways that people can contribute to others in schools and academies.
- ✓ The social mission is 'alive' and translated into objectives that can be used by community groups, associations and public services and assessed for impact.

Accomplishment 3: We are increasing inclusive and active participation by local people

Local people are encouraged and supported to make their own contributions to others in the places where they live, work or play. This includes enabling people to make their contributions through personal or corporate giving, employment or work in the community. Mainstream community groups, associations and public services welcome people from diverse backgrounds and are able to evidence practical ways that they have adapted to the needs of their customers.

- ✓ There are community projects that embrace supported volunteering or connecting schemes for people who may face obstacles in making their contributions in more traditional ways (including elected roles).
- ✓ Public and community programmes create welcoming, safe, clean and caring communities and reach out to people by building strong partnerships with groups that regularly come into contact with people at risk of disadvantage.
- ✓ Places of gathering within local communities are publicised widely. They are physically accessible and staff have access to, and are able to use, for example, props such as visual choice cards/menus, objects of reference, or Braille guides and tactile maps.

Accomplishment 4: We are investing in developing individual skills, and support people to bring their gifts to the lives of others

An environment exists that has a focus on preserving and/or developing individual skills and gifts and seeking opportunities for learning alongside other people. People are engaged and connected on the basis of their interests rather than any label they may have inherited.

- ✓ Support is provided for people to discover, value and contribute their gifts and talents to others.
- ✓ Community learning opportunities encourage lifelong learning and social outcomes as well as vocational and educational outcomes.
- ✓ Adult learning opportunities support real mixing by members of the community and actively break down stereotypes and low expectations.
- ✓ Practical help is available. This may include mentors, citizen befrienders, volunteers, time banks, co-operatives and shared help.

Accomplishment 5: We provide information in different formats like easy read, including person-to-person contact

Community groups, associations and public services are skilled in the production of easy information, have clear standards for how public information is produced and get feedback on how well they are doing.

- ✓ Those producing written information for the public have clear easy-access standards to guide their work.
- ✓ Those responsible for producing information for the public are skilled in producing material for different audiences and know what the issues are for different sections of the community.
- ✓ Information is available in a variety of formats, not forgetting the availability of person-to-person contact where information can be shared as part of an exchange.
- ✓ Visual images are selected to represent people from the whole community and challenge negative stereotypes.

Accomplishment 6: We provide high quality community-based area co-ordination to assist people to plan, navigate and connect to community resources

Local Area Co-ordination is an approach that builds the capacity of individuals and communities. It explores how new opportunities can be generated and co-owned by a range of partners.

- ✓ Local people have access to independent facilitation, in-depth knowledge of local community resources and the offer of support to make new connections if needed.
- ✓ Local people who have a personal budget or who are self-funders are supported to take genuine and maximum control over their own lives.
- ✓ Self-funders receive good advice and support to maximise the use of their income and get the most for the funds they have available.
- ✓ Local people have good access to, or can purchase, high quality information, advice and guidance.
- ✓ Local Area Co-ordination relieves demand on care managers by supporting people to lead their own planning and have access to practical help, including use of mainstream services and supports.
- ✓ Local Area Co-ordination or local partners are able to arrange technical support for people (financial advice, employment support). This makes it easier for more people to enjoy the full benefits of managing their own support.

Accomplishment 7: We invest in co-production and joint delivery of multi agency work across traditional boundaries

Multi sector approaches to delivery, micro enterprise, social enterprise and co-production offer new routes to innovating markets, revitalising communities and maximising available funds.

- ✓ Work on shared projects across service boundaries is both welcomed and supported by named workers with a community development background.
- ✓ Joint working between sectors on shared outcomes is facilitated and reflected in strategic planning.
- ✓ Easy access to support is available for anyone interested in micro or social enterprise, including mentoring and business planning.
- ✓ Proposals recognise the importance of building social capital and engaging people who have been excluded from the labour market.
- ✓ Opportunities exist locally for peer support by people who have started up their own enterprises.

Accomplishment 8: We work alongside individuals and groups who may have found access difficult, to define good standards of service and check that progress is happening

Findings from the checking process are used to inform strategic planning, including the development of local equalities planning.

- ✓ Local people are supported to define their expectations of access and customer service in order that practice can be assessed and benchmarked.
- ✓ Checking takes account of the external environment for access, the interior layout of services and the quality of customer care and support.
- ✓ Findings are used to inform future planning and are used to make mid course corrections to the delivery of services.
- ✓ Findings are made available to the public in a variety of formats.

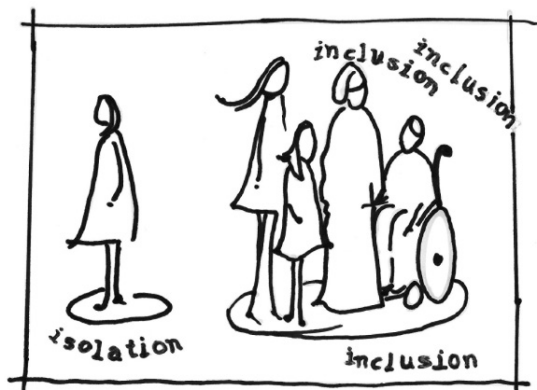


Conclusion

The Building Inclusive Kent Communities programme of work found great coherence in the social missions of many public and community services and yet little strategic co-ordination of work across sectors.

Potential exists through:

- sharing knowledge and equipment (including specialist equipment)
- increased capacity from individuals and the community and voluntary sector
- increased sharing of information and pooling of local knowledge
- knowledge of different specialist areas of work and increased combined reach into local communities
- greater strength in both identifying and drawing attention to poor practice
- opportunities for joint funding applications to both local and national grant making organisations
- greater overall capacity to address equality issues and develop a widely owned culture of improvement on these and related issues



The project found that there is a need to identify key people who have the skills and capacity to play an important behind the scenes role. A key person with the right skills and understanding of how to make change happen in terms of building inclusion can be a change agent, they can walk with providers and help them to consider inclusion, the barriers that get in the way and how to change things.

The Right to Challenge that forms part of the Localism Act (12) opens the way for community groups to apply to run local services if they think they can deliver them better.

Indeed, local people and community organisations may have a different vision for how services could be improved and this may include collaboration between two or more partners across sectors. It is unclear within a procurement process how this would happen and how a restricted focus on single services alone can help different parts of local communities work together in a better way at a time when this is really needed. There are some important questions about how we make the best of everyone's contributions and how we can join up different partners to build better solutions that cut across current silos and sectors.

The role of small community and voluntary organisations is vital, as public services alone cannot deliver the big changes that Government is expecting. It is therefore essential that both national and local government look at how small local groups (which often have most contact with communities) can be sustained within the current extremely difficult financial environment. With the removal of many grants to small groups and the introduction of highly formal procurement processes, many may be left without enough money to

continue, let alone to drive this new agenda. Further, lack of stable funding and short-term approaches make it difficult to evidence and sustain a cumulative, whole-community approach. Increasing demands for evidence of short-term outcomes before making long-term investments undermine longer-term development.

The Building Inclusive Kent Communities project has shown that relatively small-scale multi-sector work can bring benefits to many people, including those who were not the primary focus. Accessible environments such as libraries, sports centres, places of worship, community centres and the like are open to all and work to extend access should not be the preserve of one organisation alone. When this happens the work is expensive, as it fails to build cumulatively on other associated endeavours; piecemeal and uncoordinated endeavour is inefficient.

Together we are stronger.



References

1. Office for National Statistics, www.statistics.gov.uk
2. A Vision for Adult Social Care - Capable Communities and Active Citizens, Department of Health (2010),
www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_121508
3. Think Local, Act Personal, Social Care Institute for Excellence (2010),
www.scie.org.uk/news/mediareleases/2011/270111.asp
4. The Big Society, The Prime Minister's Office (2010),
www.number10.gov.uk/news/big-society
5. Caring for our future - Shared ambitions for care and support, Department of Health (2012), www.caringforourfuture.dh.gov.uk
6. Life Opportunities Survey, Office for Disability Issues, HM Government,
<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php>
7. Wightman, C. (2009), Connecting People: the steps to making it happen. London: Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities,
www.learningdisabilities.org.uk
8. The Community Development Foundation, www.cdf.org.uk
9. Firm Foundations, Cabinet Office (2004),
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/firmfoundation
10. Fukuyama, F. (1995), Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity. London: Penguin. (1997)
11. O'Brien, J. and Lyle O'Brien, C. (1987), The Five Accomplishments,
www.inclusiononline.co.uk
12. Localism Act, (2011)
<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism/documents.html>

Useful links

The Big Society Network

Exists to support and develop talent, innovation and enterprise to deliver social impact and help build a better and healthier society.

www.thebigsociety.co.uk

The Community Development Foundation

The Foundation is a charity and social enterprise that works to achieve a vision of an inclusive and just society through empowering people to influence the decisions that affect their lives.

www.cdf.org.uk

Civil Exchange –Strengthening Society’s connection to Government

An independent ‘think tank’ that aims to help the Government and the voluntary sector to work together. They will undertake the first comprehensive assessment of how far community empowerment, social action and opening up public service is being achieved.

www.civilexchange.org.uk

Civil Society Media

Independent news, publicity and events company focused on charities and other civil society organisations.

www.civilsociety.co.uk

Centre for Welfare Reform

The stated mission of this organisation is work for the redesign of the welfare state in order to increase social justice, promote citizenship, strengthen families and enrich our communities.

www.centreforwelfarereform.org

Community Rights

A new website that gives people information about the new powers and opportunities available to them.

www.communityrights.communities.gov.uk

Creating Stronger and More Inclusive Communities Which Value Everyone's Right to Contribute

A short paper that is addressed to all those who are committed to advancing equal citizenship; it draws out some succinct lessons for inclusive community building. This report can be downloaded from the CSV website.

www.csv.org.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government

A central government website containing a variety of information concerning communities, local government, decentralisation and increased community accountability (this website contains a plain English guide to the Localism Act).

www.communities.gov.uk

Inclusive Placemaking

Developed by Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, this document provides specific detail and technical guidance on how to address accessibility for all in the future, built environment.

www.kent.gov.uk/inclusivedesignandplacemaking

Kent Partnership Board

The board is responsible for making sure that Valuing People is implemented in Kent. In time, the board will oversee the planning and commissioning of services that provide real choices to people in their local community. For more information on all the changes proposed in Kent.

www.kent.gov.uk

New Economics Foundation (nef)

nef is an independent 'think-and-do' tank that aims to inspire and demonstrate real economic wellbeing and challenges mainstream thinking on economic, environmental and social issues.

www.neweconomics.org

National Occupational Standards for Community Development

This document contains the revised occupational standards for workers who undertake a community development function in their work.

www.fcdl.org.uk

Opening Public Services

This site contains information about making public services better for everyone and decentralising power. The site contains some useful reading, case studies and relevant resources.

www.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Office of Disability Issues

The ODI works across Government to take forward the disability equality agenda. This site contains many useful links on all associated topics.

www.odi.dwp.gov.uk

Sensory Trust

Works with a range of disciplines including architects and planners so that social inclusion is part of every stage of building development.

www.sensorytrust.org.uk

Social Enterprise UK

A national organisation promoting social enterprise in the UK.

www.socialenterpriseuk.org.uk

Shopper Anonymous

A mystery shopping agency committed to raising standards of customer care and with some experience of work with people who have learning disabilities in defining good service and checking access. Contact Graham Seymour for details: graham.seymour@shopperanonymous.co.uk

www.shopperanonymous.co.uk/contact/kent

Think Local, Act Personal

A place for members of the Think Local, Act Personal Partnership to share what they are doing and what they are learning with others as they tackle challenges in making a difference to people's lives through personalisation and community based support.

www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens

The Government's view of how they see services being developed in the future with an emphasis on 'personalisation' and active citizenship. Published in November 2010. Department of Health.

www.dh.gov.uk

Response to consultation on improving support for frontline civil society organisations

www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/content/assets/pdf/policy/big-society-consultation.pdf

Values Inc.

An independent community based organisation that works on project management and delivery of work that pushes new boundaries in the area of social service transformation and whole community responses to overcoming the barriers faced by disabled people. Values Incorporated has developed, in partnership with The Avenues Group, 'Community Futures Kent', a community organisation run by, and with a learning disability to open up mainstream services to all.

www.valuesinc.co.uk

Community Futures Kent a community organisation run by, and with people with a learning disability to open up mainstream services to all. It is part of the Avenues Trust Group.

www.avenuesgroup.org.uk

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

We work to break down the economic and social barriers and prejudice that people with learning disabilities face throughout their lives.

We promote the rights, quality of life and opportunities of people with learning disabilities and their families. We do this by working with people with learning disabilities, their families and those who support them to:

- Do research and develop projects that promote social inclusion and citizenship
- Support local communities and services to include people with learning disabilities
- Make practical improvements in services for people with learning disabilities
- Spread knowledge and information



Building Inclusive Kent Communities

Our Community Partners

Tonbridge and Malling



Libraries & Archives



Tunbridge Wells



Libraries & Archives



Swale



Values Incorporated

75 Claremount Road
Hextable
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7QS

Email:
simon@valuesinc.co.uk
Website:
www.valuesinc.co.uk

Foundation for People
with Learning Disabilities

Colechurch House
1 London Bridge Walk
London
SE1 2SX

Telephone:
020 7803 1100
Email:
info@fpld.org.uk
Website:
www.learningdisability.org.uk

Registered charity number
England 801130
Scotland SC039714
© Values Incorporated 2012

changing
lives