

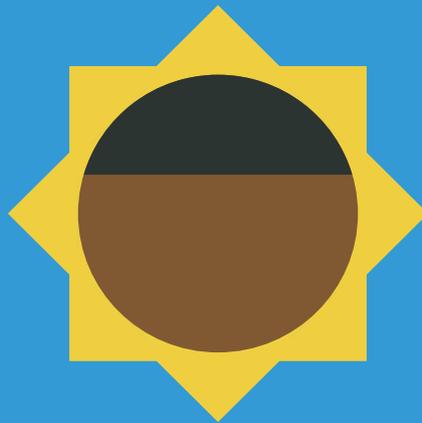


**Stronger Together**

**A co-production toolkit  
from Ageing Better**

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# **Asset-based community development**





# Welcome to our learning guide about asset-based community development (ABCD).

**This guide is for you if you're looking to support others in your community to set up activities using their existing skills, strengths and networks.\***

This guide will be particularly useful if you are:

- Working for an organisation in a service delivery or development role
- Part of your local community, a person with lived experience

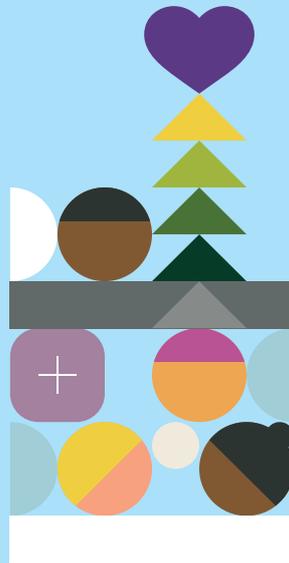
\*While the Ageing Better programme focuses on reducing isolation and loneliness among people aged 50 and over, all of the co-production learning and resources featured in the learning guides and toolkit are transferable across all community groups and areas of working.



Our comprehensive co-production toolkit, **Stronger Together**, contains the information mentioned in this guide, plus many more resources.



In our **webinar recordings**, topics and themes surrounding co-production are discussed in more detail.



## Recap: what is co-production?

Co-production is people working together to design and deliver services with meaningful and sustainable impact. It is a meeting of minds and hearts to reach a shared solution.

For an overview of co-production and the benefits of this approach, take a look at our [\*\*What is co-production? learning guide\*\*](#)

## What is ABCD? – Ageing Well Torbay

Ageing Well Torbay describes **asset-based community development approach** as a positive way to bring people together. It is always about looking for what is strong in a community and building on what’s already there.

1) When Community Builders begin to work with a neighbourhood or community they talk to everyone, in the street, at bus stops, benches, on the buses, in cafes, pubs, shops, at groups, classes, at church and in the park. They go door knocking.

2) They make an ‘asset map’ with residents, on big paper, of all the things already going on in their community. They draw the streets and the buildings and spaces where things already happen.

3) They find the connectors in the community – the people that make things happen and love to bring others together.

4) Then they listen. They really listen to what people want to do in their community - not what the Community Builders think would be a good idea for them to do. It’s about going where the energy is and making things happen with them and with other people, who want to do the same things together. Ideas come from them and the idea belongs to them.

5) They remove barriers that could be in the way of what people want to happen.

6) They connect people who want to do the same things together and support them to set up groups and activities for themselves.

The **ABCD resource** goes hand in hand with these three videos about ABCD:



1. [Asset Based Community Development with Community Builders in Torbay](#)



2. [An Introduction to Asset Based Community Development with Martin Simon](#)



3. [What is ABCD? Is the strengths-based approach really any different? Lessons from 6 years of the Ageing Well Torbay Community Building Team](#)

These resources can be found in the Theme 11 Resources and Stories folders of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

### **A resource for service deliverers and community grassroots audiences**

You may find this resource helpful as a service lead looking to set up or develop a community-focused service, a community development worker, or a member of a service delivery team.



## Applying an ABCD approach to set up and run a bereavement peer-support group – Bristol STAR

The STAR groups in Bristol have been set up using an ABCD approach. They are run by the community, for the community, and are self-sustainable. This workshop recording shares learning on applying the ABCD approach, including a practical tool for mapping community assets.

### The ABCD approach is built on four foundations:

- It focuses on community assets and strengths rather than problems and needs.
- It identifies and mobilises individual and community assets, skills and passions.
- It is community-driven – ‘building communities from the inside out’.
- It is relationship-driven.

### The foundational truths of the ABCD approach:

- Everyone has gifts.
- Everyone has something to contribute.
- Everyone cares about something and that passion is their motivation to act.



**Applying an ABCD approach** can be found in the Theme 11 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

### A resource for service deliverers and community grassroots audiences

You may find this resource helpful as a community development worker, a member of a delivery team, a leader of, or an individual within a community group, and someone with lived experience.



## Top tips when setting up groups – Ageing Well Torbay

Ageing Well Torbay's top tips for setting up groups using an ABCD approach.

### Key top tips:

- Always listen to what the community wants – you need someone in the community to want this group to happen.
- Weekly meetings work best. Regular monthly meetings can work well too as long as the date is very clear.
- Don't worry about having small numbers, as this can still be a committed core group.
- Keep the group open and welcoming – new people arriving are vital to the health of any group.



**Top tips when setting up groups** can be found in the Theme 11 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

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## Community Building: Connecting people and place to build community and reduce social isolation – Ageing Well Torbay

Ageing Well Torbay believes that isolation among people is not an individual's challenge – it is a community challenge, and it is only the people who live in a neighbourhood who can actually build a community there.

This document summarises the learning of their Neighbourhoods theme – the bedrock on which the rest of the Ageing Well Torbay Programme is built. This theme adopts a 'strengths-based' or 'asset-based community development' approach delivered by a team of 20 Community Builders.



**Connecting people and place** can be found in the Theme 11 Resources folder of the Stronger Together toolkit resource library.

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## Community Building: Co-designing an ambitious vision for change – Rother Valley Riders and Well Rotherham

**The Well Rotherham public health programme** set out to get behind local people with great ideas to make the places they live better.

They wanted to increase access to physical activity in the Rother Valley area.

Well Rotherham met the Rother Valley Riders, an entrepreneurial club that has literally hand-dug mountain bike tracks around the area with no external investment.

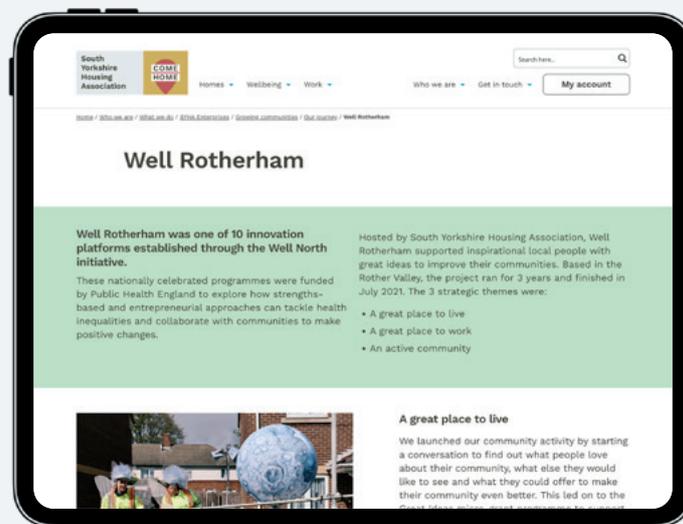
The area is rich in green spaces and has existing leisure facilities to link new developments to.

They worked together to set out a vision for the area to become the number-one destination for mountain biking in the UK.

A long-term plan was developed before they set out to deliver a phased programme of action to achieve their goal. They used the programme's strategic visibility and funding to leverage interest and match funding and over two years:

- produced a masterplan
- created a new off-road leisure path to connect assets together
- delivered two new all-weather entry-level downhill tracks
- made a learn-to-ride and pump track in the valley

The area was recently voted the eighth-best destination in the UK for mountain biking. So still a few rungs to climb before they achieve the vision, but off to a great start!



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## Contact information

If you have further questions about co-production or the Stronger Together toolkit, feel free to get in touch with [customercollaboration@syha.co.uk](mailto:customercollaboration@syha.co.uk)

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## Take a look at our other learning guides in this Stronger Together co-production series:



[1 Toolkit user guide](#)



[2 What is co-production?](#)



[3 Principles and values of co-production](#)



[4 Creating a co-production culture](#)



[6 How to grow sustainable groups](#)



[7 Increasing diversity of inclusion](#)



[8 Co-production in research](#)



[9 Developing a co-commissioning model](#)