

Theory of Change

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Conditions:

Social movements around the world are transforming how democracy works, with citizens and communities testing out social, environmental, economic and health solutions of their own. Central government has responded by bringing prevention into the mainstream, with community projects tackling the root causes of social problems positioned at the heart of localism, early intervention, the public health approach to violence reduction and the transformation of health and social care. Locally, the Council's 2019 Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Strategy acknowledges that VCS groups and organisations are "able to reach places and people that statutory agencies often cannot and have a greater ability to adapt to the evolving needs of the community". The One Croydon Alliance's long-term aim is to "encourage connections and community and personal resilience; increasing coherence of access to voluntary and community sector activities that improve health outcomes and reduce reliance on General Practice". In playing host to these bottom-up, community-led initiatives the VCS is working to its strengths - in building the relationships, trust and self-confidence that moves personal development into the collective action that drives social change.

Strategic objectives:

CVA uses asset based community development (ABCD) as a strategy for nurturing talent and empowering communities to lead from within. CVA equips its VCS partners with the skills to build strong relationships in the community by bringing like-minded people together, linking them up across neighbourhoods, creating spaces in which they can find common cause and promoting the collective actions that spring from peer-support groups. The VCS can make connections go further, join up conversations, persuade more people to listen, put wheels in motion and remove the roadblocks that prevent people from taking ownership and doing it for themselves. When it comes to tackling root causes the VCS can ensure that local people remain in the driving seat of social change and are given the right of way to design and deliver their own solutions.

Rationale:

Rather than ascribing a set of needs and problems to each person the ABCD worker identifies their potential and supports people to manage their own health, replacing dependency with interdependency and social isolation with a sense of belonging.

Inputs:

Hundreds of conversations with parents, carers, informal clubs and social networks to uncover people's strengths, stories, ideas, hopes, skills, passions and resources and better understand what local people care enough about to work together to change.

Activities:

Our ABCD teams are based in the neighbourhood and tasked with connecting local people up to social activities and peer-support networks; mapping the local assets and bridging the Local Voluntary Partnerships (LVP) and Integrated Care Networks (ICN).

Outputs:

Typically, a part-time ABCD worker will conduct 70 new conversations monthly; add 600 local contacts to the asset-map; set up 60 new social activities per year; signpost 400 people to local networks and activities; and convene monthly multi-agency meetings for local practitioners.

Intended outcomes:

- Stronger social networks of self-managing individuals with increased community connection – developing both personal and community resilience
- Improved health benefits with more people reporting an improvement in their emotional wellbeing and confidence/personal resilience
- More well-connected people better able to manage their own health and well-being – with reduced reliance on General Practice and fewer repeat attendees at GPs
- More cohesive communities providing local people with the space to design and deliver their own solutions
- Increased referrals to community activities and events
- Wider access to VCS services
- More people referred between community assets
- More VCS groups delivering preventative services tackling inequalities
- More VCS groups working together in partnership

#strongercommunitiescroydon

Intended impacts:

- Greater independence
- Proactive care
- Less social isolation
- More active communities
- More resilient communities
- Safer communities