

# Assets in Action: Illustrating asset based approaches for health improvement



**Jennifer McLean and Valerie McNeice**  
**Glasgow Centre for Population Health**  
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# Background

- **Shift: prevention and working differently**
- **Identifying protective factors**
- **Potential to enhance quality of life**
  - **self-esteem and coping abilities**
- **Skills and competences for living**

# We already knew...

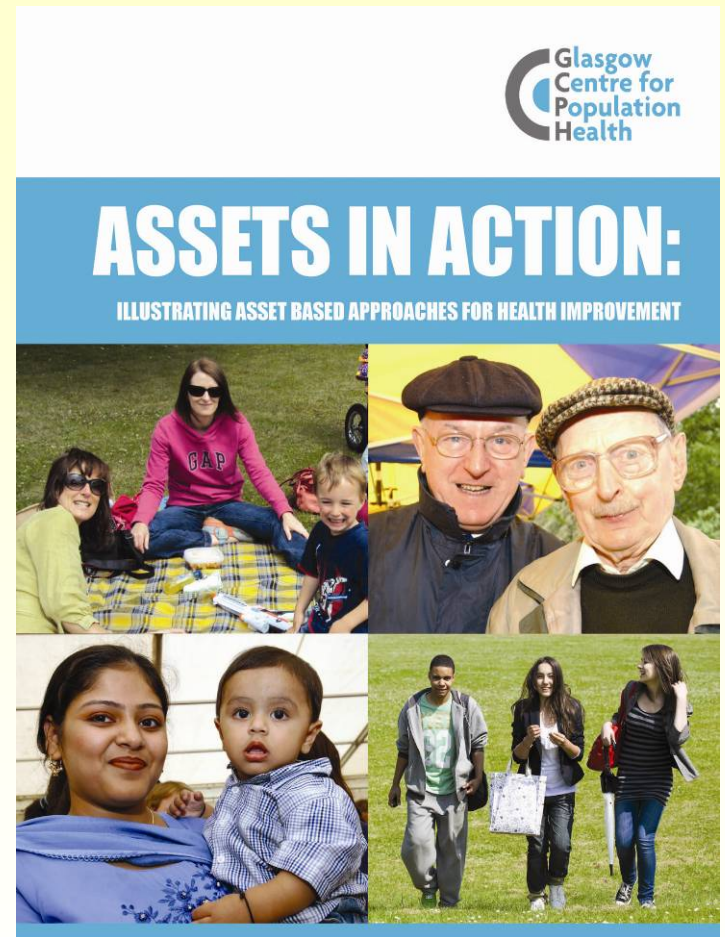
- **Collective resources – protect and support**
- **Assets – not just things can put a price on**
- **Control of life**
- **Values capacity, skills, knowledge and connections**
- **Redressing balance – needs and strengths**
- **Good theory base – limited evidence base**

# Benefits for people and communities

- Control over their lives and place
- Able to influence decisions
- Engaged as and how they want to
- Part of the solution not the problem
- Improved sense of cohesion
- Empowered, confident, independent

# We wanted to find out...

- What asset based approaches look like
- Capture the lived realities
- Scottish context



JENNIFER MCLEAN AND VALERIE MCNEICE

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A person with long brown hair is seen from behind, focused on painting a colorful abstract design on a piece of paper. The table is cluttered with various art supplies, including a roll of white paper, a glass of purple liquid, a bowl of blue paint, and a palette with green and blue paint. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the table and other items.

# Aim

**To illustrate asset based approaches for health improvement in action by producing a set of case studies based on projects or initiatives that have taken such an approach.**

# Objectives

- **Explore – asset based principles?**
- **Highlight strengths / positive outcomes and challenges.**
- **Assess – improving health and reducing health inequalities?**
- **Synthesise – draw out transferable lessons.**
- **Identify policy implications – recommendations.**
- **Produce range of accessible outputs.**

# Methodology

- Multiple case study design
- Case selection
- Data collection:
  - *Documentary analysis (19)*
  - *Semi structured interviews (57)*
- Data analysis: case-by-case, cross-case synthesis



**19 case studies**



# The cases

- Routes out of Prison
- Columba 1400
- Coach House Trust
- Templehall Dads Group
- Older People for Older People
- GalGael
- StobsWELLbeing
- Happy 'n' Healthy Community Trust
- Fab Pad
- Home Buddy Scheme
- Gorbals Recycles
- Urban Roots
- Rag Tag 'n' Textile
- Bute Produce
- Playbusters
- Fair Isle Primary
- The Big ShoutER
- Castlemilk Timebank
- 218

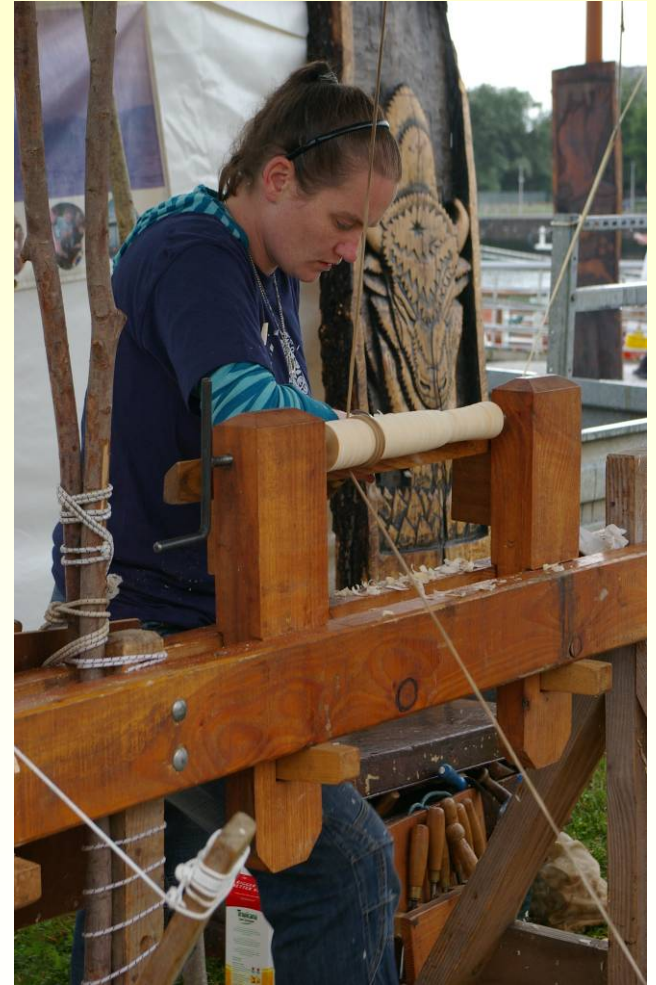
# Are the cases 'asset based'?

- Participant-led
- Flexible and adaptive
- Creating tangible skills
- Enhancing softer skills – relationships, mutual support, community spirit
- Confidence building
- Empowering and supportive
- Volunteering ethos



# Cross cutting themes

1. **Balancing**
2. **Connecting**
3. **Learning and earning**
4. **Empowering**
5. **Being human**



# 1. Balancing

- **A continuum** - Asset based approach to delivering needs based initiatives

- **Planned flexibility**

- **Engagement**

“The project doesn’t know how to let go” (staff)

- **Structure**

“[The project] structure is set and strong and balances out the person centred nature of the approach that is reactive and makes the project deliverable” (staff)

“Some struggle with the structure at first but then get used to it and even enjoy having a routine” (staff)

## 2. Connecting

- **Boundary spanning**

**“Its just become my life” (staff)**

**“We're not from the council or the NHS, consultation from these organisations is usually because something is looming. We're agenda free and neutral” (staff)**

- **Collaborative working**

**“There's a strong ethic of partnership working... By engaging in local networks we can ensure appropriate partnerships are formed to provide the full set of services and interventions participants require to progress” (staff)**

# 3. Learning and earning

- **The business of being ‘asset based’**

“Our works needs long term vision and consistency. Short term funding makes it very difficult to plan ahead”  
(staff)

“Funding has been, and probably always will be a struggle” (staff)

- **Experiential learning**

“The project staff haven’t invented something and rolled it out – it has come from reflexive practice – looking at what worked and why and doing more of it” (staff)

“Real difference is hard to measure – its about the quality of life experiences of participants” (staff)

# 4. Empowering

- **Whose assets?**

“We empower people by providing opportunities and choices to allow them to make positive changes in their lives” (staff)

“We help to open up possibilities” (staff)

- **Aspiration**

“If someone believes in you then you can believe in yourself” (participant)

- **Choice**

“Participation at the participants pace” (staff)

# 5. Being human

- **Honesty and humanity**

**“We treat people as people not as numbers” (staff)**

**“[Project] works with people in a more human way compared to big services” (participant)**

- **‘Giving back’**

**“I wanted to be able to help somebody else feel better. It’s nice to give something back” (participant)**

**“The positive energy and enthusiasm that transpires from the volunteers is inspiring” (staff)**



# In conclusion

- **Demonstrate how approach is being delivered – supports literature and principles**
- **Inclusion, honesty, participation, humanity, trust and respect**
- **Four recommendations**

# Recommendations

Issues which require further consideration  
and action:

**1. Understand, locate,  
nurture and support asset  
based working**

# Recommendations

Issues which require further consideration and action:

## 2. Refresh funding streams and processes

# Recommendations

Issues which require further consideration and action:

**3. Develop more appropriate measurement and evaluation approaches**

# Recommendations

Issues which require further consideration and action:

**4. Build research and knowledge about asset based approaches**

# Further work

## • Assets and resilience theme

- Published work
  - briefing papers and research report ([www.gcph.co.uk](http://www.gcph.co.uk))
- Work in progress
  - Resilience literature review
  - Action research with SCDC
  - Community narratives research
  - Social capital and children's health outcomes literature review
  - Review of the evidence, theory and characteristics of 'asset based services'

# Contact / follow us

**Jennifer McLean**  
**Public Health Programme Manager**  
**[jennifer.mclean@drs.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.mclean@drs.glasgow.gov.uk)**

**Valerie McNeice**  
**Public Health Research Specialist**  
**[valerie.mcneice@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:valerie.mcneice@glasgow.gov.uk)**

**Web: [www.gcph.co.uk](http://www.gcph.co.uk)**

**Facebook: [facebook.com/theGCPH](https://facebook.com/theGCPH)**

**Twitter: [@theGCPH](https://twitter.com/theGCPH)**

