

Community and person centred working using asset and strengths based approaches: a brief guide for adult social care employers

This brief guide is for adult social care employers and outlines some of the key principles of asset and strengths-based working. It includes practical tips and resources to help you to start thinking about how you can work in this way.

- Asset and strengths-based working is built on the understanding that everyone has something to contribute, moving away from a deficit model that focuses on needs and problems to a strengths-based solutions model that focuses on ‘what’s strong, rather than what’s wrong.’
- Supporting people to recognise and use their strengths and abilities to focus on what they **can** do can be really empowering, rather than the things that they **can’t** do. This can help people to believe in themselves and value their contribution, as well as promoting independence, choice and control.
- Having strengths-based conversations with people through the assessment, care planning and review process is a great way to do this. It can help you to find out all sorts of things that could be lost if you followed a standard form and the result should be something that focuses on the person, their support networks and community, rather than about the ‘tasks’ of the care plan. Our [‘Using conversations to assess and plan people’s care and support’](#) guide includes the principles of conversational assessment to help you to take this approach when planning care and support with people.
- Find out if people would like to connect and support others and use creative approaches to bring people together. People being empowered to use their individual skills to support and benefit others can have unplanned, positive benefits, for example, developing new friendships, confidence building and reducing social isolation.
- Asset and strengths-based approaches can help you when working with a wide range of people, not just the people that you support. For example, you could use this approach with your staff, carers and families to help them to recognise their valuable contribution and build on their own abilities and networks.

- Asset and strengths based working can be useful to promote and encourage culture change in the way that staff think about themselves and the people they support. New ways of working can take time to embed and you need to consider how to implement them in practice, for example through staff support and supervision, peer learning and team discussions.
- Think about different ways to record asset mapping – using visuals can be helpful and easier to use than things that are written down. Here's a [useful graphic](#) to show the skills available in one community. You can download a [blank copy](#) of the graphic to adapt when working with an individual or your local area.
- Ask that people that you support, their families and staff about their knowledge of the local community and how you will share this information. Provide people with accessible and timely information about what's available. It can take some time to build people's confidence to try something new, particularly if they have been isolated for some time and may need additional encouragement and support. Consider linking people into other services available e.g. social prescribing, community link workers, befriending schemes and local interest groups to encourage participation.
- Our '[Working with families, friends and carers framework](#)' outlines some best practice guidelines about working well with people's families. You could use it when thinking about implementing asset and strengths-based approaches with the people that you support.
- Asset and strengths-based working can require practical changes within your organisation, for example, you might need to review the paperwork used in assessments and care planning. 'One page profiles' can be a useful way to explore what's important in a person's life for their wellbeing and to give purpose and meaning. Creating staff one page profiles can help with matching staff to support people with similar interests, skills and hobbies. More information about one page profiles can be found [here](#).