



**Report on the development of Local Area
Coordination Best Practice Guide
Corporate Delivery Committee (CDC)**

24th October 2022

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present our current position with the implementation of Local Area Coordination and the opportunity for us to develop, publish and promote a set of best practice guidelines for the benefit of the stakeholders including Members, professionals (such as General Practitioners, Social Workers and Social Prescribers) and members of our communities in Swansea.

The **Local Area Coordination Best Practice Guide** primary audience will be Members, residents, partners and stakeholders. It will also provide direction for the Local Area Coordination team who are currently co-producing an operational Team Handbook.

2. Context

Local Area Coordination recognises the power of taking time to get to know people, families and the wonderful connections, resources and opportunities within local communities and is a key component in the successful delivery of the Social Services and Well-Being Act, and the Ageing Well Plan.

The Local Area Coordination Vision is that **‘all people live in welcoming communities that provide friendship, mutual support, equity and opportunities for everyone¹’**. This powerful vision is the ambition for an international movement to develop a long term, evidence-based, capacity-building approach for working alongside people of all ages and backgrounds in our communities. We work towards this vision through the LAC Charter:

The Local Area Coordination Charter

Develop partnerships with individuals and families as they build and pursue their goals and dreams for a good life and with local communities to strengthen their capacity to include all people including those at risk of exclusion, as valued citizens.

Local Area Coordinators are there for the whole community. They walk alongside individuals and the community to help people to:

- Make new connections and friends;
- Get involved in groups and activities;
- Overcome personal challenges;
- Get their voices heard by people in power and get involved in improving public services;
- Make contributions to their communities;
- Think about what their good life looks like.

¹ ‘Power and Connection: The International Development of Local Area Coordination’ [2021]

3. Local Area Coordination in Swansea

Description of approach

In Swansea, Local Area Co-ordination has been implemented since 2015. Swansea is one of 12 areas across England and Wales that has been developing and implementing this approach as part of the Local Area Co-ordination Network (www.lacnetwork.org).

Each Coordinator works with a defined neighbourhood of around 10,000-12,000. They approach, or are introduced to people, who may be isolated, causing concern or are at risk of needing formal services. Coordinators support people to build their own their vision for a good life, finding pragmatic and creative solutions to any problems, and drawing on individual's strengths, and family and community resources, before considering commissioned or statutory services.

This means that instead of assessing or signposting people into services, they can:

- Invest enough time in understanding what a good life looks like to the individual or family, and how they could get there;
- Help people to build their own capacity and connections, so that they can stay strong and independent;
- Build new community connections or capacity where they don't exist.

Walking alongside individuals in this way enables them to stay stronger, confident and interdependent for longer, delaying – or even removing – their need for formal service support. It is a connected, integrated, preventative and strength-based role – whole person, whole family, whole community, whole system - which is embedded in and connected with community, whilst also being connected with formal services providing a valuable bridge between community and Local Authority.

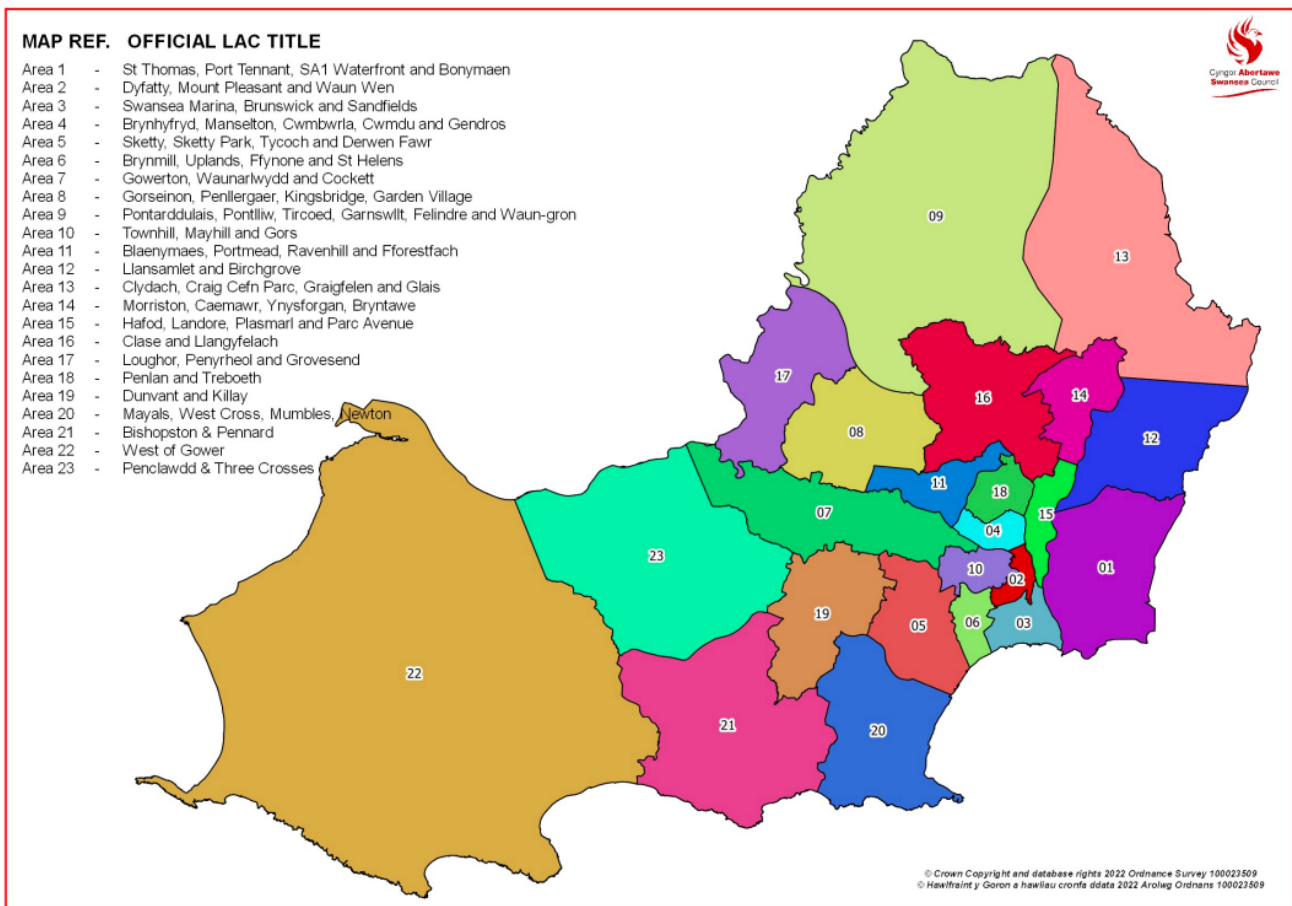
Coverage

Over time, the approach in Swansea has grown to the point where we now have full coverage of all areas across the county. There is a dedicated Coordinator covering the following twenty-three areas based on population size (as opposed to ward areas).

A list of all the Local Area Coordinators in Swansea is included in Annex A for information.

The map below shows the coverage of Coordinators across Swansea:





Partnership working is critical to the success of Local Area Coordination, as each Coordinator develops relationships with service providers and stakeholders that work in their communities. This includes relationships with organisations and groups such as:

- Swansea Council – including Social Services, Education, Housing and Regeneration;
- Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS);
- Registered Social Landlords (RSL) – including Coastal, Pobl and Caredig;
- Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) – including local GP Cluster Groups and Community Mental Health Teams;
- Social Prescribers;
- South Wales Police – including local Police Community Support Officers (PCSO);
- Mid and West Wales Fire Service;
- Citizens Advice;
- Many third sector organisations and service providers – including charities, food banks and voluntary groups;
- Community Councils;
- Community-based enterprises;
- Education and learning partners.

Evidence of impact

Since the implementation of Local Area Coordination in Swansea, we have seen evidence of the positive impacts that have been achieved. We record data about the work of our Coordinators, some of which is illustrated below:

Team Introductions: This figure is NEW introductions to people, and in addition each Coordinator also has a number of people (usually between 50-60) they are already walking alongside.

Q1 Jan - Mar: 274
Q2 Apr - Jun: 266

Source of the Introduction: Coordinators are able to receive introductions to people from anywhere, either from other Professionals or direct from individuals. Among the most common sources are:

Q1 Jan - Mar: Community (Friends, Relatives, Neighbours): 45
Social Services inc CAP: 44
Other Agency: 41
Direct from person: 17
Q2 Apr - Jun: Community (Friends, Relatives, Neighbours): 40
Social Services inc CAP: 53
Other Agency: 37
Direct from person: 20

Other sources include: GP, Hospital, Housing, 3rd Sector, Police, DWP, Elected members

Reasons for Introducing People

There are many reasons for introducing someone and often, once the Coordinator has built a relationship with them, the most pressing reason isn't the primary one. These are the most common primary reasons:

- Isolation;
- Mental Health;
- Needs Advice;
- Social Connection.

Informal Community Contact

In addition to formal introductions to individuals the team also record their informal connections. This may be a conversation with someone at a group or Community Centre, or with an individual they meet while they are working in the community. Often these conversations are opportunities to give information about what is happening in the community or to make initial contact with someone who may want further contact.

Q1 Jan - Mar: 705
Q2 Apr - Jun: 479

While the data provides a part of the picture, it is in the feedback from people who have been helped by our approach that its value and importance are clearly defined and understood.

Coordinators regularly produce stories of their interactions with people to whom they have been introduced. This shows the value of the connection and the impact that has been made in the person's life as well as the lives of those around them. Successful outcomes for individuals and for communities have been seen in all areas of coverage but below are a few quotes from some of our 'stories':

The following story summary shows a typical journey where the Coordinator is able to spend time to discover the strengths of an individual and encourage them to use those strengths to improve their life.

- Hugh and wife Janet were introduced to Richard by a CMO in Social Services.
- Hugh sadly has dementia and Janet is his Carer.
- Janet was getting increasingly concerned with Hugh's agitation and restlessness. Hugh had been 'fiddling' with door keys and locks, mixing them up and on times 'working' on home electricals taking wiring apart in plug sockets and light fittings.
- Janet felt unsupported with limited choices. SS could offer some respite care, but the couple have been together over fifty years and the thought of being separated was unbearable, however Janet recognised she was struggling to cope.
- Richard visited - Between some telephone calls and in person conversation Richard discovered that Hugh was a retired carpenter.
- He had worked with his hands all his life and was a competent tradesman. He had even taught others his skill. When Hugh talked about his work his eyes lit up and he fully engaged in the conversation, it was clearly a passion of his.
- Hugh proudly showed off his workshop at the bottom of the garden that he had built himself. It was well equipped and ideally suited to Do It Yourself projects. Richard discussed with Hugh the possibility of making things in his workshop. There was initial trepidation, notwithstanding the issue of dementia and the associated worries of ability.
- Further discussion with Hugh followed and making bird nesting boxes was decided upon. Hugh was very motivated. He spent the next few weeks researching design plans for the bird boxes and came up with a list of materials. With the support of the local timber merchant, Richard supplied the materials free of charge. Hugh then set about his work.
- To date Hugh has produced a number of bird boxes that are now being auctioned off at the Canolfan y Bont with all proceeds going towards the Foodbank.
- Hugh now sees his project as work and feels now he has a purpose and is of value. He remains committed and enthused.
- Janet reports that for the first time in a long time, Hugh gets up unprompted each day, 'goes to work' down the garden and she actually has to call him in for food and at night because as she says 'if he had his way he's move in there'.
- Her worries about Hugh have considerably lessened and she says 'it's like having my old Hugh back', her only complaint is that he now isn't around to do the dishes.

Below are a few quotes from other stories about Local Area Coordination:

From Michelle-Louise's story: "Donna (Coordinator) listens to me and doesn't judge, she lets me talk and explain how I am feeling, and offers me ideas if I ask her for them."

From Lyn's story: "I am proud of myself for starting to make changes and ringing people myself, thank you for listening to me and helping me to focus on what I needed to do."

From Marvin's story: "You have helped me to feel part of a something again. I used to spend weekends alone in my flat feeling very lonely, but now I can go along to the centre and know there is always someone I can talk to there. Sometimes will just sit with others to watch a film but I never feel alone now."

An academic evaluation in 2016 identified the great connections that Coordinators were able to make and also identified the level of social benefit already achieved would indicate a return of £4:£1 against investment. This is a consistent finding across the 15 other evaluations that have been carried out across the national network.

A second follow up evaluation has been commissioned which Swansea University are currently working on. The evaluation findings will be incorporated into the guide where appropriate.

While it is possible to calculate some of the cost avoidance value in the stories such as the value of reduced GP appointments, Mental health intervention, etc it is challenging to attach a financial value to the feeling of increased confidence, more friendships, self-worth, which are regular outcomes.

4. Need for guidance

Through the implementation of Local Area Coordination we have learned a lot of lessons that have helped us to shape the approach we are taking.

A clear role – The role of the Local Area Coordinator is clearly and consistently defined. This definition of the role should be communicated in a way that all parties can reference the Coordinator role including how the role integrates with their own approaches and processes.

Effective partnership working – How partners refer people to their Coordinator to get the best outcomes is important so having a well-defined and described approach helps all parties work well together to achieve this.

Opportunities for integration – Coordinators are visible in local communities but they do not have their own facilities or resources, meaning that they often rely on partners and stakeholders to help them integrate into the community. This can mean that space in community hubs, leaflets displayed in communal areas, scheduled “drop ins” with local providers and co-ordination on community events are valuable opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of Local Area Coordination.

Consistent processes – With twenty-three areas each supporting thousands of people across communities different approaches are required, but consistent processes, principles, standards and quality of the experience can be applied.

Recruitment – Full coverage of Swansea currently requires twenty-three locally-based Coordinators and the guidance is an important tool to support attracting and recruiting the most suitable candidates for the role in future recruitment activities.

Promotion and communication – Our approach requires ongoing promotion to raise awareness of Coordinators within communities as well as with Members, residents, stakeholders and partners. Communications based on clear information and evidence are more impactful so we need a clear definition of what we do to communicate it to all parties.

Staff development – With Swansea coverage currently requiring twenty-three community-based Coordinators, a clearly defined set of best practice standards will support the development and retention of staff. It also helps in applying best practice consistently for a high-quality service.

5. Content – Best Practice Guide

This section will describe the proposed content of the Best Practice Guide.

Section 1 – What is Local Area Coordination?

A clear definition and expectations about Local Area Coordination including:

- Definition of Local Area Coordination and the principles that underpin it;
- Overview of the processes involved in delivering this service;
- Benefits of effective Local Area Coordination;
- Quotes from service users who have been supported by Coordinators;
- Direction to the latest information online (e.g. current contact details for Coordinators).

Section 2 – Working in Partnership

The approach to partnership working across and within the communities of Swansea including:

- Defining the role of Coordinators in relation to working in partnership;
- Working with Elected Members;
- Listing the partners we work with including service providers and examples of local groups;
- Example / case study of Coordinators working with service providers;
- Describe the process for making introductions from service providers to Coordinators;
- Checklist for partners to use when deciding to refer people to Coordinators.

Section 3 – Part of the community

The approach to working as part of local communities to strengthen their capacity to welcome, include and support its people, including:

- Defining the role of Coordinators in relation to working with communities;
- Example / case study of Coordinators working with communities;
- Checklist for community groups to engage with Coordinators.

Section 4 – Walking Alongside

The approach to working with individuals to build and pursue their goals and dreams for a good life including:

- Defining the role of Coordinators in relation to working with local people;
- Example / case study of Coordinators working with individuals;
- Describe the process for making self-referrals to Coordinators;
- Describe the process for making Coordinators signposting or supporting referrals into relevant services;
- List of examples of various ways that individuals are helped to improve their own capacity and connections.

Section 5 – Working with communities

The approach to working with communities to develop their assets, build on their strengths and improve their connections including:

- Defining the role of Coordinators in relation to community development;
- Example / case study of Coordinators supporting strengths-based improvements;
- List of examples of various ways that communities are helped to integrate with service providers.

Section 6 – Further information

Sources of further information about Local Area Coordination including:

- Sources of further information about Local Area Coordination (e.g. website addresses);
- How to share feedback about the service;
- Direction to the latest information online (e.g. current contact details for Coordinators).

6. Approach to co-production

We intend to embrace the principles of co-production in our approach to developing the Local Area Coordination Best Practice Guide. This approach will include:

- Capturing insight and contributions from individuals to enhance the content of the guidelines;
- Involving individuals and their representatives in the design and content of the guidelines;
- Involving Members, residents, partners and stakeholders in the design and content of the guidelines;
- Involving current Co-ordinators in the design and content of the guidelines;
- Involving the LAC Network and Swansea Leadership Change Group in the design and content of the guidelines;
- Identifying ways to make the guidelines accessible to all.

7. Next Steps

Input from target audience

We will include our target audience in our development of the guidelines to make sure that they are designed to meet their needs. This will include working with Members and members of the Local Area Coordination Leadership Group. All of these contributions will be collated and analysed to ensure we develop guidelines that meet the varying needs of our population.

Outputs of evaluation

We will incorporate the outputs of the two ongoing evaluation exercises (including the one led by Swansea University which is scheduled to be published in the coming months; preliminary findings will be available by the end of October to inform early drafts of the guidelines).

One Page Summary

Given the depth of information that will be presented in the Local Area Coordination Best Practice Guide – to cover the detail and varying interests of the target audience – we can produce a simple ‘one pager’ quick reference version of the guide to support communication and engagement activities.

Promotion of guide

Once the Local Area Coordination Best Practice Guide has been drafted, reviewed, approved and endorsed by all parties, we will launch the guidelines with a focused communication campaign that will:

- Raise the profile of Local Area Coordination in Swansea;
- Share the guidelines directly with Members, residents, partners and stakeholders;
- Share the guidelines and promote the approach across the Council;

Annex A – List of Local Area Co-ordinators

Area	Name	
1	St Thomas, SA1 Waterfront & Bonymaen	Dan Morris
2	Dyfatty, Mount Pleasant & Waun Wen	Jon Bevis
3	Swansea City Centre, Marina & Sandfields	Zara Simisker
4	Brynhfryd, Manselton, Cwmbwrla, Cwmdu & Gendros	Emma Shears
5	Sketty, Sketty Park, Tycoch & Derwen Fawr	Lindsay Cable
6	Brynmill, Uplands, Ffynone & St Helens	Fiona Hughes
7	Gowerton, Waurnarlwydd & Cockett	Donna Kendall
8	Gorseinon, Penllergaer & Kingsbridge	Rachael Cole
9	Pontarddulais, Pontliw, Tircoed, Garnswllt, Felindre & Waungron	Joseph Barry
10	Townhill, Mayhill & Gors	Bethan McGregor
11	Blaenymaes, Portmead, Ravenhill, Fforestfach	Pete Russell
12	Llansamlet & Birchgrove	Ian Miller
13	Clydach, Craig Cefn Parc, Glais & Mawr	Sally-Anne Rees
14	Morrison, Caemawr, Ynysforgan & Bryntawe	Byron Measday
15	Hafod, Landore, Plasmarl & Parc Avenue	Cerri Goodfellow
16	Clase & Llangyfelach	Beth Pike
17	Loughor, Penyrheol & Grovesend	Anne Robinson
18	Penlan & Treboeth	Dominic Nutt
19	Dunvant & Killay & Upper Killay	Sarah James
20	Mayals, West Cross, Mumbles & Newton	Amy Because-Evans
21	Bishopston, Pennard	Seren Aldron
22	West of Gower	Natalie McCombe
23	Penclawdd & Three Crosses	Brian Farr