Putting it into practice
Tools to support tackling inactivity through system change

Understanding the system you are trying to shape

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Understand the system you are trying to shape

There are many ways to understand systems. You can look at them in economic, political or social terms, but it’s the impact they have on local people that’s important. Working with the pilots has helped us understand local systems, and we’ve gained invaluable, practical insight into the effects they have on people’s daily lives.

This Common purpose/shared value resource will help to guide you through the tools, models and approaches being used by places to tackle inactivity through implementing a place-based approach. This is one of eight sections of our collective resource ‘Putting It Into Practice’ which is organised by what we’ve found to be some of the practicalities of system change. The full resource can be found on our website.

Questions you might be asking:
- How can I align physical activity throughout the layers of the system, across system settings, and against organisational priorities?
- How can I talk about the system in a way that engages people?
- How can I better understand the relationships that connect communities as a network and how these evolve and change over time?

System setting diagram (hot air balloon)
Social network analysis
Whole system approach, socio-ecological model
Actor mapping
The Essex LDP System setting diagram was driven by the Socio-Ecological Model (Onion Diagram) which shows how a Whole System Approach to physical activity is driven by a wide range of influences at multiple levels. A whole systems approach succeeds when it operates on a number of levels – individual, social environment, organisations/institutions, physical environment, and policy levels. Change is needed at all levels to deliver sustainable increases. Our LDP is not about delivering a large number of individual projects and interventions at a local level. We understand that we need to drive change at all of these levels.

Our system setting diagram evolved from the Socio-Ecological Model to create Essex LDP’s ‘Hot Air Balloon’. The balloon incorporates the Socio-Ecological model but extends to incorporate Essex’s system settings, underpinning themes, and target audiences.
The Essex LDP Core Team used the system setting diagram at an initial project scoping workshop to discover who our stakeholders were across our target areas Basildon, Colchester, Tendring and Essex-Wide. The core team was divided into groups with a handful of post-its and a system setting diagram (Hot Air Balloon) to pinpoint by writing down key stakeholders (organisations, partners, individuals etc.) and sticking them on the balloon in the most appropriate place. This exercise provided each area with a starting point to reach out to these stakeholders, understanding which areas of the balloon required more work and collaboration.

The Essex LDP System Setting Diagram ‘Hot Air Balloon’

Why would I use it?
• Use it to navigate through the whole system to ensure physical activity is hardwired across all aspects of the LDP programme.

Who would I use it with?
• To be used with any individuals, organisations, system leads to understand the breadth of possibilities for physical activity to be embedded with across the system.

How can it be used?
• Can be agile to meet requirements of systems settings, underpinning themes, and target audiences. A tool to use when presenting/engaging with audiences to explain the whole system approach that the LDP Programme seeks to hardwire physical activity into.

Advice to others
• Be flexible with the tool, adapt often, use to support strategic priorities and support LDP structure throughout the pilot.
• We printed the balloon up to A0 size to have on show at events, meetings and conferences to create a discussion with partners, officers and members to demonstrate the whole system approach the LDP is taking and how the system can be infiltrated at different levels.
Putting it into practice -
How the tool has been used

Who was involved?
Essex LDP team in collaboration with Collaborate CIC, University of Essex, Sport England.

Why was this tool used?
To have a model that would fit to page to present the whole system incorporating our strategic priorities and system settings and the resources which would be required to support and meet the target audience representation. The challenge was to have a clear concise model which we could share and explain to our stakeholders and show them how they fitted in and how physical activity could fit across the whole system.

What was the impact?
The system setting Diagram was always one of our main slides when presenting to organisations, partners, system leads, Officers, Members and paper A0 copies where used at community events and for discussion with individuals. The diagram was a good tool to be able to speak to and explain how the LDP was looking to impact and embed physical activity across the whole system, particularly in target groups.

What did we learn?
We learnt who our key stakeholders where across the whole system and that we needed to work alongside them to embed physical activity into their service.

We have continued to evolve with a new tool ‘LDP on a page’ which has a mission:

‘Use a whole systems approach to make transformational change, enable increased physical activity and improve wider social and economic outcomes, focusing on areas of deprivation, families, older people and those with poor mental health’.

Which helps support our investment proposal as a form of check list to understand that the projects meet our system settings, priorities, outputs and outcomes.
The ‘LDP on a page’ has been widely welcomed by all stakeholders of the LDP and Evaluation consortium. Our evaluation has evolved to prioritise how we are influencing the system rather than evaluate individual projects and investments.

However, Essex LDP continues to be agile:
- Various system settings have evolved to become more holistic. For example education now encompasses all of children and young people, and active travel is now part of the transport setting.
- A concise decision was made to remove Social Movements from the LDP.

Essex LDP are not so strongly focussed on the target areas of older people, mental health and children and families instead we are focussing Areas of deprivation IMD areas 1-4

As a result of system thinking, it has had a direct influence on the Essex Strategy for Physical Activity and Sport. This can be clearly seen below:

### Strategy 10-year vision: an active Essex to improve everyone’s health and wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 5 priorities</th>
<th>Strategy 5 foundations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Health and wellbeing</td>
<td>Tackling inequalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Active environments</td>
<td>System change</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Children and young people</td>
<td>Place-based working</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Strengthening communities</td>
<td>Measurement of impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Community sport</td>
<td>Proportionate universalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflections from those involved?

“I would use the balloon diagram with stakeholders, including those looking for investment. I have also used it when presenting to the patient participation group at the CCG to help explain”

Sarah Stokes
Colchester Local Coordinator

Things to consider:

Be agile with the tool, use it to start conversations, it helps to understand stakeholders across the whole system. Don’t make the tool too complex as it needs to be understood by all levels of stakeholders.

Where can I find further information?

Active Essex - LDP

Email: administration@activeessex.org

Summary of opportunities:
Opportunities to start a conversation with system leads to community groups and show how physical activity can be embedded in the whole system and the benefits what we can achieve for both parties by collaborating.
Greater Manchester Local Delivery Pilot

Greater Manchester (GM) Local Pilot (LP) covers 11 localities across the city-region and within a whole system approach, the LP focuses on getting more people active whilst addressing health and social inequalities. GM have adapted the Social Ecological Model to incorporate a layer relating to the ideology, ideas and beliefs in wider society that run through all the layers presented in the model.

Putting it into practice - how the tool has been used

Who was involved?
Key Workers Forum – a group of front-line staff from a variety of employability services, who we are working with to embed physical activity into their services and interactions with people on a daily basis.

Why was this tool used?
To be able to succinctly and simply describe a whole systems approach and relate it to the context in which they work.

How was it done?
The infographic was used as part of a presentation, and was described with examples from their work.

What was the impact?
It helped those involved to understand the work of the Pilot within a whole systems approach, and prompted them to think about how they could be encouraging the people they work with to be more active. This was evident in the discussion we had after the presentation, and interestingly, it also prompted them to think about their personal situations/context in terms of physical activity too.

What did we learn?
The power of focusing on the individual in the centre of the diagram, and the factors that influence whether they are active. It really does get people thinking about the opportunities/challenges that a whole system approach provides, in terms of improving an individuals relationship with sport and physical activity. There are a number of practical actions that members of the group have gone away to start exploring within their own services.

Reflections from those involved?
"It prompts individual thinking; in terms of themselves, their job role, the people they support professionally, the organisation they work for, and more broadly all the other ‘things’ in a system that contribute to someone being active or not."

Kate Ahmadi-Khattir, Greater Manchester Pilot Manager
Things to consider:
If you use a diagram like this, make sure that you explain it simply with relevant examples. Often a personal example is much more powerful and helpful (if you are prepared to share) in bringing it to life, but also examples that are relevant to those you are talking to often land better and create more opportunity for discussion.

Where can I find further information?
Visit GM Local Pilot website
Email: info@gmmoving.co.uk

Summary of opportunities:
It has opened up a much broader conversation about what they can see in their part of the system in terms of blockers or challenges that stop people being active. There are already a number of actions that they have committed to do themselves, but also the intelligence that we have gathered which will be incredibly useful in our conversations with broader partners and commissioners of those services.

What influences how much we move?

- Cultural norms and ideologies
  - Language, myths, metaphors, stories, hierarchy of values, know how, assumptions, mind sets

- Policy
  - International and national guidance and laws, local laws and policies, rules, regulations, codes, times and schedules

- Physical environment
  - Built environment, natural environment, green and blue spaces, transport networks, homes

- Organisations and institutions
  - Schools, healthcare, businesses, faith organisations, charities, clubs

- Social environment
  - Individual relationships, families, support groups, social networks

- Individual
  - Individual capabilities, motivations, opportunities, knowledge, needs, behaviours, physical and mental health and wellbeing
Social network analysis
Get Doncaster Moving
Local Delivery Pilot

Social network analysis is used to understand a ‘community’ by mapping the relationships that connect them as a network and understanding how these interact and change over time. CFE Research developed and implemented tools to support Get Doncaster Moving to explore the physical activity network in Doncaster. The use of the tool has helped to better understand where relationships are held, identify gaps and visualise collective impact.

Name: Social network analysis

Why would I use it?
• To identify the connections (i.e. social network) between people, groups, organisations and its partners in relation to addressing physical inactivity and how these evolve.

Who would I use it with?
• The organisation, partners with which it works, and people with whom those partners collaborate with to tackle physical inactivity.

How can it be used?
• To identify and illustrate the number and nature of connections between the LDP and its partners.
• This data is collected through an online partner survey.

Putting it into practice – How the tool has been used

Who was involved?
Partners in the physical activity system in Doncaster and contacts they work with to tackle physical inactivity.

Why was this tool used?
SNA enables the identification and illustration of the physical activity system in Doncaster and how it adapts over the lifetime of the approach. It can also identify where connections are based on only one individual – therefore identifying areas of weakness if an individual left their post.

How was it done?
The director of public health distributed an online survey across members of the Get Doncaster Moving partnership three times - July 2019, January 2020 and March 2021 - and each time partners were asked to forward it on to their own contacts. The SNA is based on questions in the partner survey which relate to:
• People with whom respondents currently collaborate with to tackle physical inactivity in Doncaster, and the organisations they work for
• Whether these professional relationships were developed before or after the commencement of the approach in 2018. The nature of the collaboration to tackle physical inactivity in Doncaster, ranging from informal working to making collective decisions
• The frequency they collaborate with the individuals identified to increase physical activity levels in Doncaster.

Advice to others
• Having a pre-existing list of contacts, from which respondents can select people they work with, can speed up the SNA survey process. However, it is good to be aware that respondents’ inferences about the organisations those people work for e.g. the council, could unintentionally lead them to think the network is led by a particular organisation. This could undermine efforts to increase distributed leadership.
• People with many contacts will require quite a bit of time to complete the SNA, particularly if prefilled lists are not used.
• It is important to note that the SNA is limited by who does and doesn’t fill out the partner survey. A network for addressing physical activity is likely to be larger and denser than reported by the SNA, but this is just one potential tool to try and understand the network dynamics.
• If individuals enter contacts in open response boxes – time is needed to clean this data and someone with knowledge of who individuals are is needed to support this process, if shortened names are used.
• To ensure the data is useful, consent is needed for non-anonymised data to be shared.

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What it shows:
The data collected has been used to create visualisations of the social network and how it has evolved. The key elements of the visualisations are:

- Each circle represents one person who is a member of the network
- For any data which is published the names of the people indicated by each circle have been removed to ensure both the anonymity of survey respondents as the people they have connections with who have not completed the survey themselves. The Get Doncaster Moving team receive data which has named individuals so they can see who is connected to who
- The organisation an individual works for has been categorised and is represented by the colour of their circle
- The lines indicate that one person has collaborated with another
- If two people in their survey responses indicate that they have collaborated with each other, ‘a collaborative pair’, this is shown by two lines in the network.

What was the impact?
The SNA has helped the Get Doncaster Moving team understand the influence of their work on the network of partners seeking to address physical inactivity in Doncaster. It has also illustrated potential gaps in partnership working and where relationships can be strengthened.

“For it is proving to be a useful tool to demonstrate the impact of our Pilot on connecting a network of stakeholders who are contributing to our shared vision. It is also helping us to identify where the opportunities are developing for stronger collaboration.”

The Get Doncaster Moving team are using the SNA findings to advance its ambitions by:

- Exploring new ways to engage individuals not already present in the social network to broaden the range of partners
- Developing more collaborative relationships between individuals in the network to reduce reliance on the LDP programme team and reduce the relationships that are based only on knowledge exchange
- Engaging with current partners, including the Get Doncaster Moving network, to increase the number of individuals championing physical activity in Doncaster
- Connecting with the outliers in the social network and grow their influence across their networks in order to enable the distribution of leadership across the system to think and act differently
- Increasing the strength of relationships in the social network so that more organisations can collaborate to tackle physical inactivity with less reliance on the Get Doncaster Moving team.

What did we learn?
Figure 1 shows the physical activity network as of January/February 2020. Key defining features of the network are:

- There are a range of different organisation types included in the network, reflecting the wide range of partners involved in the network
- Doncaster Council are represented in the network by the darker green circles. This highlights their influence on the network based on the large number of circles and their position close to the centre of the network
- Those individuals with the highest number of connections in the network are key members of the Get Doncaster Moving or funded LDP positions, highlighting there is still a reliance on these within the network
- There are some key individuals who are part of Doncaster Council who have a large number of connections positioned at the centre of the network who form a ‘bridge’ between others
- Only a small number of people who responded to the survey did not consider themselves to be part of the physical activity network in Doncaster (indicated by individuals with no ‘lines’ connecting them to another person).

Figure 1: The physical activity network in Doncaster – January/February 2020. Partnership survey 2020.
The SNA has demonstrated the nature of collaborations in terms of strength and frequency. The strength of the relationships between the people in the social network is shown in Figure 3. The darker the line the stronger respondents rated their collaboration with the person to which they are connected.

A comparison of the strength of the connections in the network in January/February 2020 with those in July 2019 highlighted that the network has not only grown but the proportion of connections that are based on problem solving and collective decisions has also increased.
**Actor Mapping**  
**South Tees Local Delivery Pilot**

You’ve Got This is one of the 12 Sport England Local Delivery Pilots. In the initial phases of the pilot, we wanted to gather information and understand what was already out there, being delivered locally, and who plays a role in leading that? We wanted to know where this was happening and what community assets and buildings were relied upon when engaging with people. We wanted people to talk about their issues and concerns; and what would support them to become healthier and happier? It is impossible to know and reach everyone in a place, but we needed to gain insight into the landscape and relationships within each area. This desire to know as much about our communities as we could led us to the development of actor mapping.

We thought actor mapping could provide us with a ‘visual’ depiction of the key organisations and individuals that influence a topic, allowing insight into the new and current players within a system’. The purpose of actor mapping is to identify opportunities to improve a system’s overall performance by, for example, strengthening weak connections or filling gaps in the system. We took an academic desk exercise [https://www.fsg.org/tools-and-resources/guide-actor-mapping](https://www.fsg.org/tools-and-resources/guide-actor-mapping) and from it created an interactive and engaging networking event. Inviting people from volunteers to professionals, inside and outside of our focus wards, enabled valuable cross sector engagement. The way in which the sessions were structured created an even playing field where everyone’s contribution was valued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Actor Mapping</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Why would I use it?** | • To better understand your ‘place and the people within it’.  
• To highlight what is being delivered, who within the community is being supported, where things are happening etc.  
• To highlight where the replication is and where the gaps are.  
• Challenging your assumptions of who is ‘important’ to work with in a place and anyone who fall outside the ward boundary but plays a large roll to support local people. |
| **Who would I use it with?** | Anyone that plays a part in the community or supports residents, such as residents, councillors, community hubs staff, local VCS organisations, housing associations, Active Partnerships, PCSO’s, health professionals, social prescribers and more…. |
| **How can it be used?** | • As an engagement exercise to bring people together.  
• To highlight where provision is lacking and where there is replication.  
• To understand who the community influencers are and who has trust within a place/area.  
• It can be used a number of times to see where the shifts are, where things are changing etc.  
• You can add an additional layer to then dig into the strength of the relationships between the actors also. |
| **Advice to others** | • Make the session engaging and interactive – sticky notes, big paper, get them to take ownership and add their own thoughts etc.  
• Allow time for discussion, networking and breaks - this can’t be done in just an hour.  
• Mix people up – discourage people sitting with people they already work with, integrate residents with ‘professionals’  
• Make sure there is a mix of organisations, perspectives and different ‘levels’ of the system as well as residents.  
• Set the scene first as actor mapping is quite an unusual concept, as it is not about mapping the delivery, it’s about mapping the ‘people’, you will need to remind throughout to focus on people’s names. |
Putting it into practice - how the tool has been used

Who was involved?
On the occasions we delivered Actor Mapping, we had up to 30 people in the room. Anyone and everyone that plays a part in our focus wards was invited and encouraged to attend. We made it quite clear that people attending did not necessarily have to be involved in physical activity, they just needed to support people in one way shape or form. Having residents there was important, as it gave a completely different perspective as they would be the ones on the other end of a service.

Why was this tool used?
As new programme officers, we wanted to learn who had influence in the wards and what people thought the ward lacked, who they trusted, what they did not like etc. We also wanted to use it to show that the pilot wanted to listen to the community and be as front facing as possible. It allowed us to build rapport and challenge our assumptions of who was ‘important’ in an element or place.

How was it done?
Delivered in a community space we displayed a map that covered two adjoining wards and was divided into four themes: Leisure; Education & Care; Social & Community; and Health. Some of these services and themes are not universal, so one side of the board was for adults and the other side for children. People were asked to identify individuals located in the wards, that delivered any services or support within these themes. We also asked for services and support that may be delivered outside of the ward, but that people travelled to, such as Children’s Mental Health Services. We asked how many people in the room knew this person and what they delivered in the community.

What was the impact?
- The resulting map produced from the workshop highlighted the key stakeholders in the place and their level of influence. The map also highlighted the level of activity within a specific theme within the wards and this can be mapped over a period of time to show changes in the ‘system’ on the ground.
- By using Actor Mapping we have created new relationships and introduced people to others that they had not met before. It has created an awareness of the gaps in community provision or highlighted duplication and potential for greater collaboration.
- It meant people went away and met outside of the room, it informed people that relationships need to be reviewed, and it also acted as a resource to support people with future projects, funding bids and ways of working differently.
- Created a clearer direction for the YGT Core team to have more conversations with the influencers in the community. Or identify who could ‘fill the gaps’
- Highlighted to the health professionals the gaps within the community sector to support people with Type II Diabetes

What did we learn?
That too many groups/services work in isolation and that people don’t look for new working relationships – they just work with the same people and then ultimately get the same outcomes.

The mapping has driven our consultation and relationship building with organisations, and this is something that should be repeated on a regular basis to see how the system is shifting.
As a team, we also learnt that the final map has become a really useful and powerful visual aid, that we have shared and allowed people to use for whatever they need it for.

Things to consider:
- Go with the flow of the session – you will have it planned to the exact minute but go where the energy is.
- Expect people to drop out and for people to not understand initially.
- Plan well and advertise early, you are expecting people to come for FREE so make sure you sell it as a great way to learn more about the community and what is going on currently.

Where can I find further information?
Contact the YGT core team – we have a number of photos and presentations that we can share that highlights how to run a session and how it looks.

You’ve Got This website
Email: hello@youvegotthis.org.uk

Reflections from those involved:
This is a different way of doing things and a great way to meet a lot of people all at once. It was visual and a lot more engaging than mapping by yourself and searching for contacts and services online.

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