

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

Having the right conversations

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Having the right conversations

This having the right conversations 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 nine 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](#).

Building trust and relationships that last means talking to people in an honest, two-way conversation. Listening closely is often more important than what you have to say, and it can often help you find a missing detail or provide a spark of insight that illuminates the whole picture. Never presume to know the answer and try to find the right people to ask the right questions.



Questions you might be asking:

- How can I support partners to identify their level of influence and develop meaningful conversations with key audiences?

Influencer
matrix



Appreciative
inquiry



Influencer Matrix

Active Calderdale

Local Delivery Pilot



Name: Influencer Matrix

Why would I use it?

- To get individuals and organisations to think about what they can do to stimulate their audience, to feel more motivated and capable on an individual and social level, and through their infrastructure.
- Dovetails into the COM-B model around behaviour change. COM-B model of behaviour identifies three factors that need to be present for any behaviour to occur: capability, opportunity and motivation.

Who would I use it with?

- Applicable to all organisations and people.

How can it be used?

- Use the matrix to ask them what they can do to help people to move more – individually, socially and through their infrastructure – to increase their motivation and feeling of capability.
- Can be used in a routine business meeting or in a workshop – to get people to think about what they would do (making the task action-oriented enables easier engagement) .

Advice to others

- This is a valuable tool that enables assets to think through what they can do to help the people they have influence over to move more – their residents/community and employees/ volunteers (workforce).

Putting it into practice - how the tool has been used

Who was involved?

Transport team within Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Why was this tool used?

To understand how the asset is currently influencing an individual's physical activity behaviours and identify where there are gaps and opportunities to better influence their audience's behaviour.

How was it done?

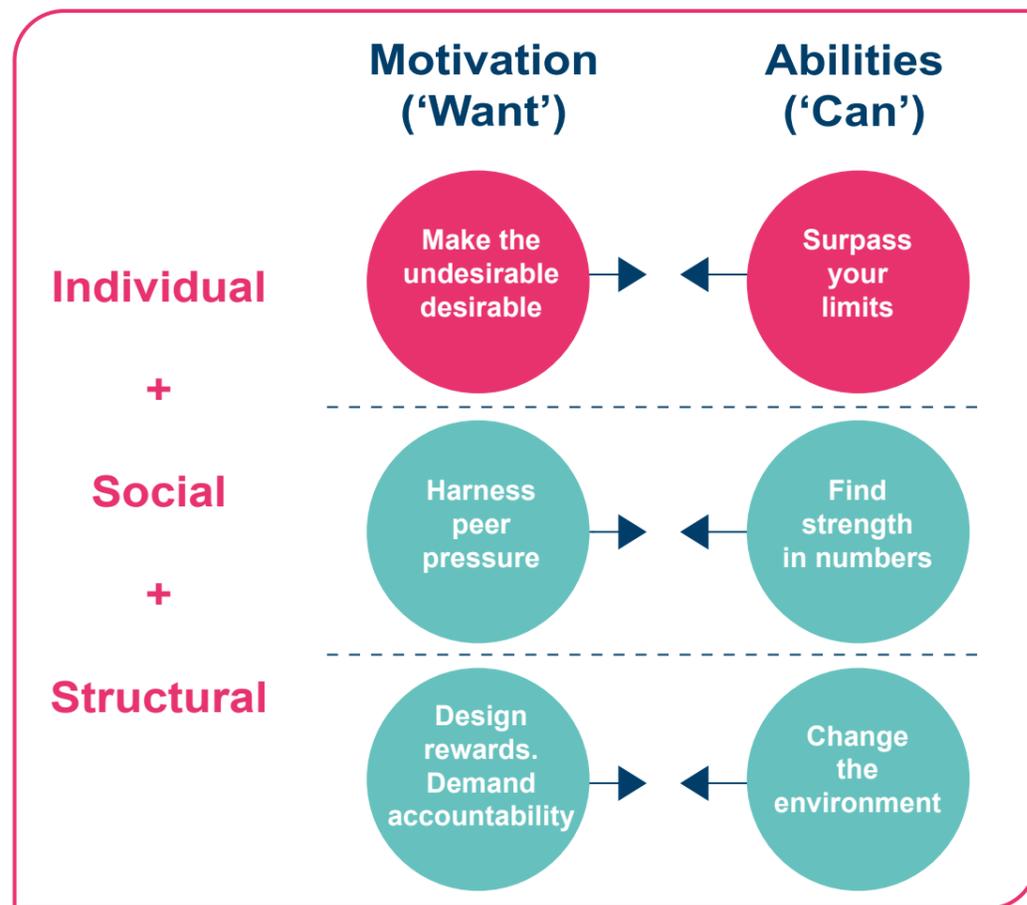
During a two-hour workshop, individuals from the asset were educated on the influencer matrix and then worked through tasks to help uncover what influence they've got over their service users' physical activity behaviours. The asset scored each of the six circles of influence (out of five, with one being the least influence and five being the most influence), about how well they currently influence behaviour and what they've done to influence.

What was the impact?

By encouraging service providers to score themselves, it gave them an understanding of where they had gaps or opportunities to strengthen their influence over service users' physical activity behaviours. The wider impact of this is not yet known, but by making the system aware of opportunities to influence, it is hoped that they'll look to embed physical activity into those areas. Before you apply the Influencer Matrix it's important that you have developed a relationship with the organisation, helping them to see they're part of the system/solution and value physical activity as a means to deliver their priorities. For example, Transport want to improve air quality, by reducing car journeys via walking and cycling. Physical activity can help to deliver their priority.

What have we been learning?

The tool allowed the opportunity to baseline where the asset currently has influence over physical activity behaviours of their service users. Going through the influencer matrix was a useful process and helped bring to the fore the importance of the asset influencing physical activity behaviours.



Where can I find further information?

[Active Calderdale website](#)

Email: activecalderdale@calderdale.gov.uk

How well is your service doing at...

...making individuals want to do more activity?	...helping individuals to build skills to be more active?
2.5> started to do some works on wayfinding strategies for some but not all settlements. Need a continuous cycle network through the key settlements of the borough	2> done some training of individuals in cycle confidence, pedestrian training, road safety
...creating social groups in the local area for being more active?	...encouraging local people to help each other become more active?
2.5> set up and support of borough cycle forum, support from borough disability access forum	2> walking buses, travel planning
...creating ways to feel rewarded for being more active?	...adapting local spaces to show how, and then be, more active?
1.5> failure to manage the demand, parks and public transport	4> adopted transport strategy and cycle strategy, developing an LCWIP, don't currently have a wellbeing strategy, station development, public rights of way, air quality, re-location of road space, public road improvements

Key: 1 = not a lot 5 = all the time/effectively

Appreciative Inquiry

Active Devon



Active Devon and Plymouth City Council have been exploring the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a tool that adopts a positive, asset-based approach.

This enables contributors to think playfully, in story form, drawing from 'what's good' and considering how 'what's good' can lead to a better co-designed future.

Name: Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Why would I use it?

Appreciative Inquiry refocuses attention on what works, and considers what people really care about. It initiates and strengthens relationships in a system and builds trust.

Who would I use it with?

We'd use it with diverse groups who care about social change where they live and work.

How can it be used?

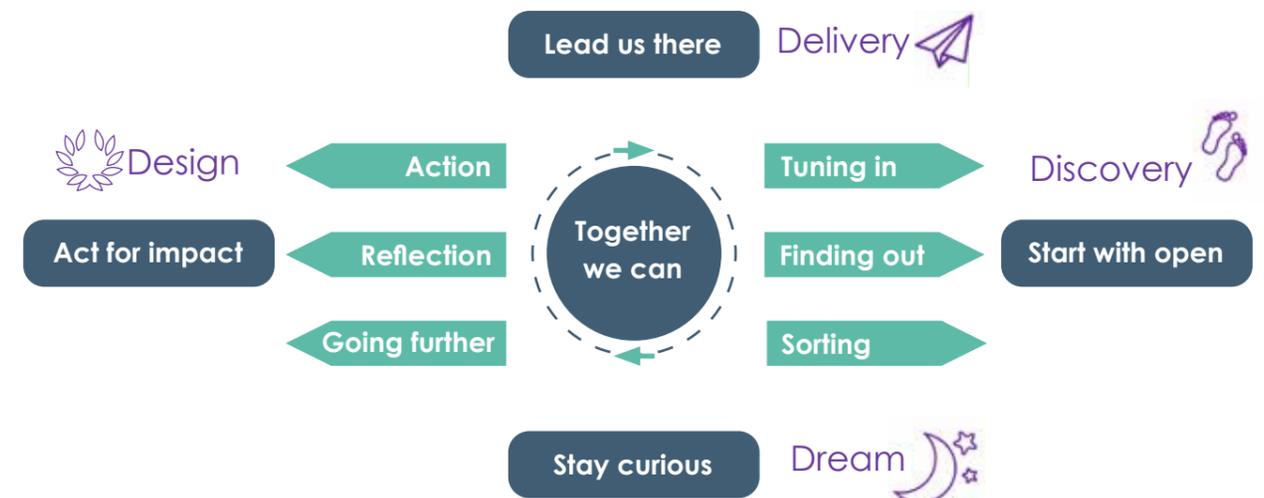
It's used as a framework following the principles of Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver. It's founded on a question or the reason for inquiry. In this case 'How can physical activity contribute to tackling inequality in Plymouth?'

Advice to others

- Take time to understand the Appreciate Inquiry (AI) approach, look into the research and do any possible training.
- Pre-work to develop considerations for inquiry, questioning and plan approach.
- It's important to ensure buy in with at least one other system partner to develop a sense of collective across a locality.
- Ensure dedicated administration support to help maintain momentum, such as: sharing actions, compiling conversations, research, booking of meeting spaces etc.
- It's important to have strong facilitation skills, especially in holding space and maintaining flow.
- Sessions planned with resources to support, in person or online, from flip charts and pens, to mural boards and breakout capability.
- Appealing and simple slide decks.
- Ability to move from different ideas to collective approaches.



The 4 D's of Appreciative Inquiry



Embracing the 'art of the possible' in tackling inequality through physical activity, movement and sport is at the heart of Active Devon's work. Equally, the challenge of addressing health inequality is core to Plymouth City Council who holds a deep ambition to see a thriving and active city. Through this common purpose, Active Devon and Plymouth City Council have come together to explore questions such as:

- How could physical activity contribute to tackling inequality in a meaningful way?
- What shape could this take?
- What do we know now?
- What's possible?
- Who's important?
- How can we embrace a participative approach to design?

All these questions became a forerunner to initiating an Appreciative Inquiry process. This asset-based approach follows the inquiry principles 'Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver' and it revolves around:

- What's good?
- What works?
- What could be?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) initiated originally by social scientists David Cooperrider and Suresh Sivastra, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Ohio. AI helps to bring people together to refocus attention on what works, and considers what people really care about. It initiates and strengthens relationships in a system, and helps to build trust through making time and space for collective contribution and exploration.

Active Devon took a lead role in initiating the work supported by the Director of Public Health at Plymouth City Council. The deliberate intention was to convey a tone of open heart and open mind, maintain a sense of curiosity and remain interactive throughout. Active Devon continually stepped into the role of convenor, organiser, facilitator and protector of space, inviting all contributors across many sectors and communities to adopt the mindset of social change agents.

There was a purposeful intent to avoid simply 'telling'. With the aim being 'informing' instead, always encouraging collaboration and making space for contribution. The process took over 12 months involving system partners from different divisions: public sector, health and care, corporate industry, voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors. It included many face-to-face sessions, time spent making sense of the findings and developing iterations of progress. The work led to two aspects:

1. Identifying a focus on Children and Young People embracing Trauma Informed Approaches.
2. Further supporting the city council in growing the interdependence of blue, green and built environments as a means to Plymouth becoming Britain's most thriving and active coastal city.

The work continues.



Putting it into practice - how the tool has been used

Who was involved?

The work involved Active Devon as lead, and Plymouth City Council across multiple departments with specific leadership support from the Public Health department. Other local authority input included councillors, environment and Open Space team, leisure services and Children and Young People leads. Further involvement came from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector with a cross-sector of charity and social enterprise organisations from community development, to groups working with social prescribing. The corporate sector ranged from housing providers to marketing companies. In addition, there was also involvement from the health sector to include primary care leads in commissioning.

Why was this tool used?

The tool was used because it's a positive and asset-based approach enabling contributors to think playfully, in story form, drawing from 'what's good' and considering how 'what's good' can lead to a better co-designed future. Whilst it doesn't ignore existing systemic challenges, the steer is continually towards 'what works', 'what's strong', 'what's connected' and how can this be a catalyst for change.

How was it done?

Active Devon coordinated, planned and facilitated four AI sessions over the course of 12 months. These were focused on the core principles 'Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver'. The work was broad and diverse with multiple partners at the Discover and Dream stage. As the questions for inquiry were formed and explored, partner

engagement adapted to smaller focus groups. The sessions were in-person initially as the work was initiated pre-pandemic.

What was the impact?

The impact was two-fold. Firstly, it led to a focus on Physical Activity with Children and Young People working with Trauma-Informed approaches, which are ways of supporting people that have specific needs as a result of past or ongoing trauma. This was implemented through a Pathfinder Project in specific wards of the city. Secondly, the process led to the initiation of a Physical Activity strategy led by Active Devon, working with the local authority with particular attention to the interdependence between blue, green and grey (built), and an ambition to become the most active coastal city.

What did we learn?

- People value an approach that pulls them out of the problems and focuses on assets, whilst recognizing there are inherent and systemic challenges to be met.
- People value a structure, but not over-production. It required competent facilitation to ensure that thinking was both focused and on-track in line with the identified questions.
- People really care about where they live and work and value connecting with others who also care. The process enabled relationships to strengthen and we noticed an increase in empathy across the system.
- This isn't for everyone, and whilst most embraced this intuitive and creative process, there were some who felt it too unclear and complex and may have required a more directive project-based approach.

- Occasionally, we had to be secure in ourselves with working in complex and uncomfortable environments and be ok with stepping into spaces without fully being able to predict how it would go. Equally, this was very life-giving and we were open in our thinking about utilizing a spirit of measured vulnerability and transparency.
- People like to work with ‘what’s wrong’ and find this is the easiest go-to point. It required constant help in re-framing thinking to strengths in a system whilst recognizing the challenge.
- People thought about physical activity in various ways but not initially as a means to bring a system together or for social change. It led us to notice a perception change in the role of physical activity, movement and sport in connecting others to a higher purpose. It was refreshing to see people re-think this.
- We reflected that, as physical activity professionals, it’s easy to think towards the outcome we imagine. Therefore, we have to sense-check that we aren’t subtle-steering anybody’s opinions. Unconscious-bias is particularly at play always.
- Co-creation is valued and powerful when underpinned by stores of lived experience. However, it still needs leadership and this is also appreciated.

Things to consider:

1. Take time to understand Appreciative Inquiry as an approach and scenario-test it with a small group, asking yourself what we hope to achieve and why would this process help?
2. Build-in early support networks, such as an AI action team, committed to supporting the process with administration support for coordinating events and meetings.
3. Ensure this is used as a tool to influence place-based working and that it’s embedded in the local approach.
4. Be comfortable with discomfort in social and public settings as the process will elicit many and varied responses.
5. Always make sense of what happened from each public session, avoid letting this drift. Ensure capture tools are used throughout (they’re a lifeline). Use a third-loop learning option to enhance evaluation sessions. In essence, an individual who might not have been in the real-time work but can ask questions of the evaluation.
6. Check any bias in reflective time. Is this what people said or is this your interpretation of what was said? how did people feel? etc
7. Be open to having one-to-one conversations with collaborators outside each session, helping each other make sense of the work.

Where can I find further information?

<https://youtu.be/QzW22wwh1J4>

Reflections from those involved:



When you start with the things people value, you’re already building momentum for tangible social change. Eliciting what’s good through Appreciative Inquiry to tackle local inequality was a life-giving, emotional, frustrating, occasionally scary and always-empowering process. It showed us that physical activity was not just a thing to do but a means to connect systems and people, for a better world, in place.



Gareth Dix

Also in this series:



Understanding value

Understand the lived experience

Distributed leadership

Capacity and time to reflect

Test and learn

Power shift

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shared values**

Understanding the system you're trying to shape

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