

**LAC – LOCAL AREA COORDINATION
EVALUTATION STUDY IN GLASGOW
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Since writing up of this report, *National Guidance on the Implementation of Local Area Coordination* has been published by the Scottish Government (March 2008)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is an evaluation study of two Local Area Co-ordination (LAC) projects based in Glasgow City's Social Work West and East CHCP areas. Social Works Performance & Research Team has conducted the research in collaboration with Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (SCLD) and members of LAC reference group¹ from both projects.

The purpose of this report is to:

- ◆ Assess the effectiveness of the LAC approach in East and West CHCP
- ◆ Learn lessons from the 2 pilots
- ◆ Inform the future development of LAC across the City.

1.1 Briefing Paper

In August 2006 a briefing paper was presented to Glasgow's Learning Disability Partnership on the two LAC projects in Glasgow. The purpose of the paper was to:

- ◆ Provide information on progress relating to the two pilot projects between 2005/ 2006
- ◆ Facilitate the strategic planning process for the development of LAC in Glasgow, in line with *The same as you?*² And the *21st Century Social Work Review*³
- ◆ Propose the commissioning of a robust evaluation of both projects in 2007/2008

Shortly after the briefing, Social Work's Research & Performance Team was approached in August 2006 to conduct an evaluation of the two LAC projects. Money (£3000) was set aside to support the full participation of people with learning disabilities and their families. This came in the form of utilising services of the SCLD who had specialist knowledge/ techniques in working with such groups of people and their families. Their support was invaluable as they contributed in numerous ways, ranging from working alongside chair at Steering Group meetings, to supporting focus group sessions to writing up simpler form of the final evaluation report aided by LAC members.

¹ The reference group has been the main driver of LAC locally. In the East it is made up of service users and carers whereas in the West it includes service users, carers, and local project reps.

² Scottish Executive (2000): *The Same As You? A Review of Services for People with Learning Disabilities*

³ Scottish Executive (2006): *Changing Lives: 21st Century Social Work Review*

1.2 National Evaluation

At the time of Glasgow's evaluation study, a National Evaluation⁴ funded by the Scottish Executive had just been completed (May 2007) and its outcomes were eagerly awaited. The research was much broader than the local evaluation and concentrated mainly on investigating the following:

- ◆ What are the lessons from the implementation of LAC across Scotland?
- ◆ What are the outcomes of LAC work?
- ◆ What is the future scope for LAC?

Both Glasgow projects participated in this study.

⁴ Scottish Executive (2006): *Evaluation of the Implementation of Local Area Co-ordination in Scotland*

2. BACKGROUND TO LAC

Local Area Co-ordination is an innovative approach developed in 1988 in Western Australia as a support to Australians with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues and their families. The development of LAC was accompanied by a reduction in the capacity of existing services to people from these client groups, such as residential placements, day services, health beds, and care management. The development of the Local Area Co-ordination service was an attempt to refocus resources on supporting people with disabilities to take a full and active part in the social, educational, cultural and economic life of the community, rather than spend their lives in segregated service settings.

LAC offers people with disabilities and their families a different relationship, one which is focussed on the principle that individuals and families know best what they need and want. Also that people with learning disabilities can and should be full and active members of the local community. LACs support individuals to work out and achieve their goals. LAC is unique in that it supports individuals with their own agenda, and also works with community groups and services to make them more able to respond to that agenda. A core function of LAC is to assist groups and organisations to identify and tackle the issues, which prevent people with disabilities taking part, and accessing mainstream services. LAC can be a vital support to these agencies, which are often prepared to make changes, and become more inclusive. LAC also builds the capacity of people with disabilities, their family and the local community to grow new initiatives and projects, and contribute to the wider community in this way. Thus the LAC role is to work both with marginalised individuals and their families and with the local community.

The roll out of LAC in Scotland was encouraged via recommendations emerging from the Scottish Executive review on learning disability: 'The same as you?' (2000.) This resulted in the development of a number of LAC projects across Scotland. Although, the Review recommended all local authorities should invest in LAC, new money was not made available, and local authorities were expected to develop LAC using existing resources. Unsurprisingly, local authorities took different approaches across the country, resulting in mixed LAC provision. Several local authorities did not develop LAC at all. In an attempt to support local authorities with the LAC agenda, the Short Life Working Group on Local Area Co-ordination issued recommendations to the Same as You Implementation Group in 2002, stating;

"...an examination of roles and responsibilities, target populations, management arrangements and resources made available shows clearly that local area co-ordinators will be performing very different functions in different areas and in some cases may not be following essential principles."

The Key points from the resulting guidance are:

- ◆ Local area co-ordination has a strong base in the community
- ◆ It is available for children and adults
- ◆ It is based on an established set of principles and is defined by the outcomes it will achieve
- ◆ It will enhance community supports as part of an overall reorientation of investment and provision
- ◆ It is different from care management
- ◆ Local area co-ordinators have strong strategic links with health, education, social work and the voluntary sector
- ◆ Local area co-ordinators work directly with individuals and families but are integrated into, not marginal to, service systems and mainstream budgets.

The guidance clearly describes LAC as a role rather than a task, and LAC's overall aim to help people with disabilities and their family take forward their own agendas;

"When an individual wants to change or develop something in their life the local area co-ordinator can work with them in an individualised and person-centred way to identify strategies and support. The local area co-ordinator can also advocate and negotiate access to services where needed. They will therefore need to liaise closely with social workers and others...."p5

The guidance states that LAC is not about denying services to people with learning disabilities. It is about supporting people to achieve a life, which may include services, but moves beyond service provision. A life where citizens with disabilities are active local people, who contribute to the community at large and lead fulfilling lives. In achieving this, LAC's support people with disabilities to access a full range of community resources and funding. The guidance states;

"The local area co-ordinator can access a small, flexible budget to make things happen. Over time they will work towards accessing other funds and build partnerships to create new

opportunities. However they are not a replacement for services that people need. They are known and valued by the community and have a recognised role across service networks." P6

In 2005, the Scottish Executive funded a national evaluation through Stirling University's Social Work Research Centre. The results of this study were published in 2007 and taken forward to the Same As You Implementation Working Group for action (SAYIG). As a consequence of this, and in the light of recent policy developments, (including "In Control", changes to the Direct Payments arrangements, and the move towards self-directed support and personalisation,) the 2002 guidance issued by SAYIG on LAC is currently being updated.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- ◆ LAC was first recommended in '*The same as you*' (2000) where it was a key recommendation to be implemented across Scotland in order to deliver to individuals and families the outcomes they had asked for.
- ◆ It was further reinforced in '*Partnership for a better Scotland*' (2003) which sets out a commitment to ensure that 'public services are designed and delivered around the needs of individuals and the communities within which to live.'
- ◆ It has also been recognised as a model of good practice in '*21st Century Social Work Review*' (2006). It supports the principle that people should have the maximum say possible in their own lives and the services they receive and builds their capacity to do this. Consequently, it sits well with both the self-directed model and the model of service outline '*In Control*.'
- ◆ As part of its core funded programme for the Scottish Executive, the Social Work Research Centre at the University of Stirling was asked to *conduct 'an evaluation of the implementation of local area co-ordination in Scotland'*
- ◆ At a more local level, LAC has been endorsed within Glasgow Learning Disability Partnerships '*Partnership in practice agreement*' (2004-07) and has also been included in both the East and West CHCP Development Plans, as a new service provision from 2007 onwards.

4. LOCAL AREA CO-ORDINATION IN GLASGOW CITY

4.1 Structure

Both LAC projects within Glasgow City have been established for almost two years. The East LAC project works with young people with Learning Disabilities aged 10 to 25 years. The West LAC project works with adults with learning disabilities aged from 16 years. Both projects employ a single LAC worker on a full or part-time basis, and both have additional support from Community Work.

There are more similarities than differences in terms of the structure of the projects, which is detailed below:

East	West
♦ Half-time LAC, increasing to 3 days from September 2006	♦ Full-time LAC, post vacant due to lack of funding from April 2007
♦ Lac is employed utilising resources from East ALDT, at Practice Team Leader level	♦ LAC was seconded from Community Work, and paid at basic grade level
♦ Worker is based in East ALDT	♦ Worker was based in West ALDT
♦ Supervised by Operations Manager (later Head of Service)	♦ Jointly supervised by Senior Community Worker, and Operations Manager (later Head of Service)
♦ Dedicated Community Work time to support LAC user and carer Group and group work developing out of LAC	♦ Dedicated Community Work time to support LAC user Group, and group work developing out of LAC
♦ LAC led by LACdotCOM, a fully constituted community group, wholly made up of service users and carers	♦ LAC supported by LAC Reference group. A fully constituted community group, wholly made up of service users
♦ Short life working group established initially to set up the project, Area Manager, Ops manager for Learning disability, Senior Community Worker, Community Worker and LAC. Group was disbanded in April 2006, once set up was achieved.	♦ Advisory group was set up with representatives from Learning disability services, Community Work, LAC and outside agencies. This group continues to meet.

Both projects came about because of national and local policy. Both developed a similar structure, and both are focussed on supporting people with learning disabilities.

The two Glasgow pilots also subscribe to the same set of 10 'LAC Principles' which were developed from the Australian model by the Short Life Working group on LAC, which came out of the Same as You Implementation Group (SAYIG)

This said, a key feature of LAC is that it responds to local need, utilises local resources, and taps into local capacity. Unsurprisingly, there are similarities and differences in the ways that the projects in East and West have developed.

4.2 Focus of LAC Work in Glasgow

4.21 EAST

Here, there has been an emphasis from the start on allowing people with learning disabilities and parents to lead the project. Support for that to happen has come from People First, Community Work and Common Knowledge. From the outset, people with learning disabilities and parents using local research, and planning tools such as LEAP and PATH set the LAC work priorities. This means that the LAC is working to agreed priorities that are reviewed and agreed with LACdotCOM (a fully constituted community group made up of people with learning disabilities and parents, which lead's and promotes the LAC work in East) on a yearly basis.

SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR FAMILIES

LAC's give people 1:1 support to improve their lives, and achieve their goals.

LAC in East has been in contact with over 51 people with learning disabilities, and 30 parents. Different people have been in contact with the project in different ways. And have had different levels of support. The LAC in East described this contact in the following way;

Level of support	Number of people
Intensive, longer term	12
Regular, longer term	5
Shorter term, with the probability of longer term support	14
Information and sign-posting	20

Individuals and their families have been supported to take forward a broad range of issues including

- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Employment
- ◆ Help to set life goals
- ◆ Support to establish new groups
- ◆ Help with Benefits
- ◆ Help with accessing community services, groups, clubs and organisations
- ◆ Help with applying for non social work funding
- ◆ Help to access social work services
- ◆ Help to access health services

It should be noted that any of those who have been in contact with the LAC project can come back for additional support at any time, and that LAC, sees itself as long-term (potentially life-long) support, and does not close cases.

GROUP WORK AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The East priorities and the LAC work emerging from them are summarised below:

PRIORITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN EAST	RELATED LAC WORK
Getting involved in sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Creation of East Area Sports Group (comprising Culture and sport, Eastend Healthy Living Centre, Local providers, people with learning disabilities and LAC) ◆ Weekend 5 a-side football coaching (adults) ◆ Weekly football coaching (teenagers) ◆ Local research on young people with learning disabilities and sport
Getting involved in social groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Researching different models of support ◆ Working with a national provider on bringing a befriending programme to young people in East Glasgow ◆ Working with organisations which run local youth clubs. ◆ Raising the profile of people with learning disabilities by joining the East End Youth Network ◆ Supporting concerned Mums to take action on the lack of social opportunities for teenagers with additional support needs.
Supporting people with housing issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Working with 5 families on housing issues ◆ Helping 3 families take forward dreams of extending their homes ◆ Raising the profile of the housing needs of people on the autistic spectrum with social landlords ◆ Working in partnership with voluntary and community organisations to raise awareness and address the above issue ◆ Linking families in with Housing Associations formal consultations on relevant housing policy ◆ Identifying housing support agencies
Helping people get a job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consultation with people with learning disabilities and families on their employment support experiences. ◆ Creation of the Employment Support Group (user led, peer support group) ◆ Coming up with the idea of Travel Buddy (paid sessional work for people with learning disabilities to teach others with learning disabilities to use public transport.) ◆ Finding funding to pilot Travel Buddy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Working in partnership with Enable to develop and implement the Travel Buddy pilot.
Getting better information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establishing a new newsletter in East, aimed at people with learning disabilities and families. ◆ Linking people with learning disabilities, parents, local organisations, John Wheatley College. ◆ Identifying funding to bring the Big Plan to East Glasgow. ◆ Working in partnership with Enable to run 2 Big Plan groups, enabling 20 young people and families, some positive support to start thinking and planning for a good life after school. ◆ Recruiting a team of volunteers from a wide range of agencies to support the above ◆ Organising facilitation training for the volunteers, to be better able to lead future Big Plans.

4.22 WEST

LAC in the West was developed through a local community based group called the Adult-A-Team which is a registered charity operational within the Drumchapel Area for the past 11 years.

They are a group of adults with learning disabilities who meet to support each other and organise various activities. The current membership is around 25. At their 9 year mark the group made a film about their dreams and aspirations and this was used to start the then new initiative of Local Area Coordination. This is led by a service user Reference Group of 14 representative individuals from all LD services and groups in the West of Glasgow. Membership for the Adult A Team and the LAC is open to adults with learning disabilities from West Glasgow.

Here, like the East there has been an emphasis from the start on allowing people with learning disabilities to lead the project. The group have a rolling programme of consultation events involving a wide range of adults with learning disabilities in West Glasgow. It is from that consultation that the work area and priorities are set for LAC.

Again like the East project the work and priorities are monitored on a monthly basis and reviewed a yearly basis through consultation and events.

The West priorities and the LAC work emerging from the consultation are summarised below;

PRIORITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN WEST	RELATED LAC WORK
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Community safety event involving emergency services and local safety Forum
Getting involved in sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Organise an support football training ◆ Facilitate coaching skill development from membership ◆ Support participation in Local and National Tournaments ◆ Encourage and support participation and integration to existing local coaching /training sessions ◆ Support set up of Women's Health group
Getting involved in social groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Working with a national provider on developing a befriending programme to West Glasgow ◆ Link with groups from other areas to experience new social and community opportunities. For example Halloween night with Pollok group ◆ Encourage and provide taster session to explore and experience social activities for example signing workshop and theatre productions
Information Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Planning a party ◆ Going on holiday ◆ Advocacy/legal (information on how to access) ◆ How to keep safe ◆ Independent Living Advice ◆ How to develop a relationship ◆ Housing ◆ Local services ◆ Jobs/support ◆ Money advice ◆ Sports ◆ College ◆ Community groups
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consultation Road shows, questionnaires and events to establish issues and priorities for adults with learning disabilities in west Glasgow ◆ Working in partnership with Parallel Transport Liaison Group to consult on transport issues
Issue based work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Anti bullying workshops at local primary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Drama Sketches ◆ Consultation Workshops (facilitated by group members)
Representation on decision making structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ PTLG ◆ Making a difference in the West (LDPIG) ◆ Local Service User Network ◆ City wide Voices For Change ◆ Public Partnership Forum ◆ Community Health Care Partnership (via ppf) ◆ Community Planning (via ppf) ◆ Glasgow PLANIT
Accessible information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ "Best in the West" newsletter produced in partnership with Clydebank College ◆ Making a difference booklets (2) aimed at individuals an organisation
New Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Merge with Adult A Team and develop A.A Team as activities arm of LAC

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Steering Group

A working group was set up to progress the work of the evaluation. Membership of the group included representation from both LAC groups, Social Work staff from East and West projects, Social Work researcher, SCLD Director, and Employment & Development manager from ENABLE Scotland.

5.2 Timescales

The evaluation was to be conducted over a 9 month period starting January 2007.

5.3 Consultation

Stakeholders involved in both LAC's were targeted for consultation on their views and opinions on service performance and delivery to date. Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods were used involving key stakeholders, particularly service users and their carers, at all stages of the research to address issues of mutual concern⁵.

The following briefly outlines selection process of groups consulted:

- ◆ Service Users/ Carers - LAC workers approached users/ carers to participate in the research. A good mix of people were required in terms of: gender balance, old & new clients, those with good & bad experiences.
- ◆ Staff - Heads of Service Managers (learning disability) in both teams were contacted by the researcher in terms of staff to be targeted for the research. In align with advice given, the following social work staff were asked to participate: LAC co-ordinators, head of service managers for learning disability, care managers, community workers, and day care managers. In terms of agency staff, Momentum and ENABLE Scotland staff were approached.

⁵ This did not always go according to plan due to the research time restrictions and availability of service users who were often tied up with other planned activities

5.4 Tools used

A range of methods were used to gather information from stakeholder:

- ◆ Users/ Carers - through steering group meetings; face to face interviews using semi-structured questionnaires; focus group discussions using qualitative questions; and short stories on their experience of LAC.
- ◆ Social Work/ Agency Staff - through semi-structured postal questionnaires; focus group discussions using qualitative questions, and short stories on their experience of LAC.

In addition to the above, statistical data held by both projects on service users and carers using LAC service was analysed.

5.5 Research Questions

The following areas were considered for the research evaluation:

- ◆ Numbers using the service over the last year
- ◆ Cost Effectiveness of LAC to the service user, carer and Social Work Department
- ◆ Access and Availability
- ◆ Level and type of support received
- ◆ Satisfaction levels
- ◆ Effect on personal and social development
- ◆ Benefits of the programme
- ◆ Future of LAC
- ◆ Force field analysis on both projects to monitor driving and restricting forces

5.6 Reference Group expectations

The following comments from service users and carers gave an indication of their expectations from the evaluation study:

'to help raise profile of peoples lives with a learning disability' (East)

'to make things better for us' (East)

'it might help other services learn from it' (East)

'to allow LAC to continue' (East)

'to remove anxiety' (West)

'help with funding' (West)

'report could help us take service wider to benefit others' (West)

'make us famous' (West)

6. ANALYSIS

6.1 Monitoring systems

Information systems used to record LAC data by the two projects:

- ◆ Were robust, easy to maintain and held a wealth of information evidencing effectiveness of the service. Maintenance in the West was problematic since LAC post was vacant but could be picked up again very easily
- ◆ Used Microsoft Excel spreadsheets but were not standardised in their set-up. Type of information and level of detail recorded across the two projects also varied but there was some room for comparability.

Where comparisons could be made with the data, analysis has been carried out and tables produced accordingly.

Table 3: - East Information Base

Work involving	female	male	Male & female (2 carers)	Total
Carer	25	3	1	29
Individual	12	38		30
Individual + carer			1	1
Total	37	41	2	80

Table 4: - West Information Base

Work involving	Female	Male	group work involved	Total
Carer	2		1	3
Client	3	4	6	13
Other Agency	2		7	9
Provider	5	2	9	16
Total	12	6	23	41⁶

- ◆ East Team had dealt with a total 80 cases in comparison to Wests 41 since its set up, as shown in tables 3 and 4.
- ◆ Of the 41 cases in West, the majority at 23 involved group work but it is not known how many individuals were within each group. In the East the bulk of work was carried out with individuals and carers.
- ◆ Tables 5 and 6 show the areas of support provided by each LAC project to its clients. In both teams, clients have received help in more than one area but Information & advice was most commonly sought.
- ◆ Comparatively, East has supported a higher proportion of people in each of the areas highlighted on tables 5 & 6 than West.
- ◆ In table 5 under 'other' (East LAC), the majority of cases were offered support with the Big Plan, LACdotCOM & newsletter enquiries.
- ◆ On further examining the information base, it was evident that both projects offered ongoing support to many families. A detailed history on each client case was maintained with the type of support offered and

⁶ Total figures for West LAC appear lower than for East as their information system has not been updated since the LAC post became vacant

Work involving	advice & information	leisure & recreation	employment	education	welfare rights	personal finance/ debt management	health related	housing	other
Carer	29	23	15	17	4	1	2	3	24
individual	39	37	26	22	2		1	4	33
Individual + carer	1	1							
Total	69	61	41	39	6	1	3	7	57

Work involving	advice & information	leisure & recreation	employment	education	group support	learning development	personal development	health related	housing
Carer	3				1		1	1	
Client	10	4	1		10	3	8		1
Other Agency	7	1	1		4	1	1		
Provider	14	5	1	1	11		4	1	
Total	34	10	3	1	26	4	14	2	1

Note⁷

6.2 Stakeholders consulted

In total 64 stakeholders were consulted for the evaluation study of which 29(45%) were from East and 35 (55%) from West Team.

East	West
<p>Of the 29 consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Nine were service users and 10 carers. Fourteen individuals took part in face to face interviews and 5 in a focus group session. ◆ Ten were staff. Four took part in the postal questionnaire all representing Social Work. Six took part in focus group discussion of which 3 were from other agencies, which included ENABLE Scotland, Accessible Housing Solutions and Autism Resource Centre. 	<p>Of the 35 consulted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sixteen were service users and 4 carers. Eleven individuals took part in face to face interviews and 9 in a focus group session. ◆ Fifteen were staff. Six took part in postal a questionnaire of which one person was from an external agency (Momentum) and the remainder from Social Work. Nine took part in the focus group discussion all representatives from Social Work.

⁷ Some individuals have been recorded more than once in table 5/6 as a combination of support areas may have been provided

6.3 Service Users and Carer Findings - Face to face interviews/ focus groups

The findings of the face to face interviews and focus group sessions have been jointly presented for East and West teams below. Broad headings have been formulated capturing common themes emerging from discussions.

6.31 LAC CO-ORDINATOR

OVERALL IMPRESSION OF LAC WORKER

Without exception, interviewees (East and West LAC) spoke enthusiastically and positively over support received from the LAC worker. Common words such as 'very approachable', 'helpful and easy to talk to' were used to describe both workers. The following is a sample of what was said:

'very nice, very helpful & very supportive. Acted as an advocate for us.' (East)

'fantastic, very helpful. Very good with kids. Pointed us in the right direction because we have had a bad experience with Social Work.' (East)

'brilliant worker & we miss him' (West)

'easy to talk to. Very good listener & always did follow up work. He was very supportive & good to work with' (West)

Individuals then went on to say why they thought the worker was so good at his/ her job. The most frequent responses have been categorised broadly and presented below:

- ◆ A good listener
- ◆ Full of knowledge & new ideas
- ◆ An advocate
- ◆ Involving the whole family (In the West more emphasis was placed on work with individuals than with families)
- ◆ Good networker & making the right connections for individuals/ families Social connector
- ◆ Very supportive & encouraging people to get the best out of their community.

Not one person interviewed had anything negative to say about either worker. It was apparent the LAC worker had been able to formulate a trusting relationship with all accessing the service which had consequently led to many individuals returning to LAC for more assistance. Several people spoke about 'bad experiences' with other agencies, including social work, and felt that 'an

attitude problem' towards people with learning disabilities existed which needed addressing. LAC was seen as being totally different where such prejudices did not exist.

CONTACTING LAC WORKER

All service users and carers consulted (East and West LAC) said they had found it easy to contact the LAC worker. The worker at their initial contact had made them feel at their ease and had been very approachable making any subsequent contact or meetings easy. It was also appreciated by some (4 in East and 2 in West) that the worker frequently did follow up work to ensure needs had been met and that individuals or families were satisfied with service provided. They felt this was beyond the call of duty, which showed the workers commitment to fully supporting people with learning disabilities.

These findings demonstrate an important aspect of the effectiveness of the LAC approach, increasing the access of individuals and families to information and support. This was a key goal of 'The same as you?' and is the direction of travel recommended in Changing Lives. One way that LAC achieves this is by being locally based, and linked with local networks.

6.32 LAC RESOURCE

AWARENESS OF LAC

When asked how individuals had heard about LAC in their area (face to face questionnaire) the following findings emerged:

Table 7: How did you hear about LAC			
CHCP Area	Friend or family	Social work	Other
West	2	3	5
East	2	3	9

Of those reporting 'Other' in East Team: 2 had heard of LAC through their Day Care Centre, 2 through school and 5 through m8's UTD⁸.

⁸ a club based in Baillieston for school children on the autistic spectrum

Of those saying 'Other' in West Team: All 5 had found out about LAC through the LAC worker who had personally approached them to speak about his work and how it could offer support for them.

Three people in the focus group discussion in East team said that they had not been aware of LAC until they had attended The Big Plan⁹.

AVAILABILITY

In the East, many individuals said there was a restriction on time as to when they could access the LAC service due to LAC post being part-time; often enquiries were put on hold or fitted in with her work time. It was commonly felt that a full time LAC worker was needed or other additional support put into place to meet demands of individuals. At least 6 people had mentioned this in the face to face interviews and the subject also arose in the focus group discussion. The following are a sample of comments noted:

'good if there was a full time worker' (East)

'need another worker to cover for LAC worker when she is not around' (East)

'More LAC time - because we have to fit meetings around the days LAC worker works' (East)

In the West, since the LAC co-ordinator had vacated his post, service users relied heavily on the community worker for support. The worker was however limited in the amount of work time she could spare as she also had her own caseload to deal with. In terms of LAC work she offered assistance with group activities but not one to one. All those consulted were keen to get back on track with LAC and wanted to see a new worker in post as soon as possible.

'more help needed to keep it continued' (West)

'would like the new co-ordinator to be as good as the last' (West)

'bring more staff in' (west)

Thus the continuity and sustainability of the service were major concerns for those consulted.

⁹ The BIG Plan is an activity lined with LAC and is a way of working with young people and their families to help them think about the future. It uses person centred planning techniques to discover what the person's ideas are about what a good life means to them, and looks at the supports that are necessary for them to achieve this.

ACCOMODATION

In terms of accommodation used for LAC base in the East, a significant number of people (8) said the location was undesirable as it shared premises with another social work resource. There was often stigma attached with social work, which put people off from accessing service from it. In addition, some individuals felt the meeting rooms were inadequate; there was no privacy; and sometimes around the foyer/ corridor area there was overcrowding which made some people uneasy coming into the reception area. The following remarks were noted:

'LAC worker is not in the right accommodation' (East)

'meeting rooms have to be negotiated, sometimes they are not adequate' (East)

'not good for drop in- would be good if it was' (East)

On the other hand, 2 individuals were satisfied with the LAC location as they already attended another resource on the same premises.

No reference was made to accommodation in the West by any of the service users or carers consulted. The reason for this could be that a budget of £2,000 (applied for through the local Service User Network (Voices for Change) on an annual basis) was used to fund room bookings and hospitality. This was used as and when required for LAC reference group meetings. Since no 'one to one' work was being carried out, none of the individuals consulted would have had the need to access LAC service at a given address.

6.33 LAC SUPPORT

NEEDS MET

Almost all service users & carers (West & East) participating in the research said the level of support received through LAC had been high and that their needs had been met. One case from the East highlighted the frustration and anger felt over inadequate support from several agencies in dealing with her situation, yet LAC had been able to offer assistance she desperately sought. It had not been easy but the time, commitment, persistency and professional expertise of the LAC worker had made a difference. All the right meetings had been set up with the appropriate agencies and things started happening. The matter is still not totally resolved but considerable progress has been made since involvement of LAC, and support is still ongoing:

'LAC supported me with my application for an extension - it was a nightmare. I got extra support from LAC worker - being a single mum was hard. I felt good knowing someone is listening. The support with the application was a long exhausting process and needed someone to tie it all together. Through my enquiry housing policy is changing' (East)

In the West, individuals consulted tended mainly to speak of the group work they were involved in, progress made by it and the level of support received from the community worker. There were not many cases where personal stories were relayed, possibly due to the absence of the 'one to one' LAC work at the time of the consultation exercise. On contacting the service for assistance, individuals were frequently given appropriate support and also encouraged to join LAC reference group. This had given many people a sense of worthiness and belonging in the community.

'got me out of the house & meet other people. The support I got was quite good' (West)

'enjoy going to LAC & college - drama, cookery. Also have done pathways 1 & 2 - to do with how well you are coping in the house. I want to stay this busy. If LAC is taken away then there will be nothing left' (West)

'get you involved in lots of things. If it wasn't for LAC I wouldn't be going to different places which I enjoy' (West)

The self-esteem and confidence gained by many of these individuals has encouraged them in return to offer the same support and opportunities (possibly more) to others with a learning disability in their community. In the West this has been achieved through promoting LAC work and highlighting ways of supporting people with learning disabilities via 'easy access' leaflets, which they have produced, and through carrying out road shows.

TYPE OF SUPPORT

The following are common areas through which individuals said they received LAC support in both East and West teams¹⁰:

- ◆ Information & Advice
- ◆ Empowerment. Individuals self esteem and confidence was built up. The 'feel good factor' was mentioned by many individuals:

'has given me the confidence to open up' (East)

'helped me a lot i.e. how to speak up, meet new people and introduce myself to them. I have a lot of confidence now. I'm able to ask people what their jobs are about' (East)

'I was isolated in the house and not getting up because there was nothing to do. Now I am doing so much because of LAC. It has boosted my confidence to get back into the community.' (East)

'has given me a lot of confidence. Helps you get out & about keeps me busy & occupied' (West)

'has given me confidence. Have met new people & made friends' (West)

'feel wonderful because like to get out & about & this lets me travel to meetings. I really enjoy LAC' (West)

- ◆ Connecting people to the right networks. To name a few, doors were essentially opened up in terms of Employment, Education, Benefits, Housing, and social activities. In particular, reference has been made to: work connected to LAC reference group; football activities; the Big Plan (East); various college courses; 1st Path¹¹; travel buddy scheme (East); Making Connections book¹² and fundraising.

'I am the chair of Planning Implementation Group. I enjoy meeting people & get a lot out of meetings.' (East)

'we're involved in the football. We organise it, get people together, organise time and place. We meet up Saturday morning at Haghill Sports Centre' (East)

¹⁰ See also tables 5 & 6 on page 22

¹¹ PATH is a person centred planning technique, which involves people working out a dream (or goal), and results in a detailed action plan around how to realise it. You can do a PATH around one person, or use it to plan with groups and organisations.

¹² Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability (2006): Making Connections

'started doing lots of things through LAC i.e. football, drama, newsletter group (did this at Clydebank College. Lectures help with typing & computer work' (West)

'LAC got me involved in Clydebank college I'm not sitting around the house, it has got me out & about' (West)

- ◆ Listening & acting on individual and family needs. Often acting as an advocate on the family's behalf. There was more family inclusion in the East LAC than there was in the West.
- ◆ Involving people in LAC work - this ranged from getting the LAC reference group started to encouraging individuals to attend various conferences & seminars; feeding back to LAC; writing newsletter... Under this umbrella, a lot was done to get individuals included in society and be part of the local community.

'reference group is the bees knees. Everyone supports each other & it is good to see people coming back...' (East)

'going to be involved in newsletter through LACdotCOM & another will advertise new things. Football team for young adults - we applied for funding to get football strips. I've been asked to talk on local radio & talk about LAC' (East)

'LAC co-ordinator made contact with my school & invited pupils from our school pupil council to attend LAC meeting. Felt it was difficult at first because not know what input to give. Was confused initially. But now have confidence to talk openly in front of other people at these meetings. This was all due to LAC' (East)

'we did drama sketches to raise awareness of bullying in schools in front of 40 people and got feedback from the school saying 'well done,' (West)

'LAC is really good. Gives you a good life - variety of activities going on' (West)

'brilliant & love it. Gives me pleasure by being on the committee of LAC reference group - last year went to City chambers won an award for LAC then went to shipyards near Kelso Street & won another award' (West)

6.34 COST EFFECTIVENESS

All service users & carers consulted (East & West) said the LAC service had not cost them anything. In the East, many individuals spoke of being referred to other services where money had been an issue but had always been supported by LAC worker to find suitable funding sources. The worker never abandoned them and was always keen to help out until appropriate

money had been sorted. Many carers also pointed out that LAC work had helped save Social Work Department money in lots of ways. The statements below were all related to money matters:

'Money for travel buddies was made available' (East)

'have funding for LACdotCOM which is about to run out' (East)

'cost effective - not much money involved' (East)

'would cost Social Work much more if doing the same thing through different approach' (East)

In the West, individuals mainly spoke about shortages in funding and in particular the need to sort out transport issues related to money. Although they had generated some money through various means i.e. Local Heroes Award, there were always money problems. Also, LAC reference group had applied for money through CHCP to fund a LAC post and were delighted that money had been secured. Having said this, there was anxiety at the same time on length of time it was taking to put someone in post. The lack of funding could again be partly to do with absence of LAC worker and no initiative to source further funding.

'more money to help LAC going' (West)

'LAC should get fund raising night - both projects should be involved' (West)

'still in its infancy - can only get better if the support is there. Some people very sceptical i.e. some times things move & progress & then carpet is pulled from under them & funds taken away. If LAC can get parents & carers to support LAC & give their voice it will be a big advantage' (West)

6.35 ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

In both teams, service users and carers were unsure of LAC future - more so in the West than in the East. However, both communities spoke of how much LAC had made a difference to their lives. It was an invaluable resource, which they wanted to further enhance so that it could offer even better opportunities to others in the local community. Both projects were seen as cost effective, easy to access, and very supportive where others had failed. In wanting the best out of the service, individuals were prepared to speak openly on improving the service further.

Discussions focused mainly around areas highlighted below by CHCP area:

East	West
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criteria should change so that more people with learning disability can access the service and benefit from it. 2. Accommodation currently is unsatisfactory and location should change 3. Publicity should be heightened - at the moment the resource is known only through word of mouth 4. LAC worker time & availability should be increased. Social Work has to offer this support 5. LAC reference group needs to expand and bring in new faces - issues around time, commitment, availability, transport & advocacy will have to be looked into 6. Service should be rolled out City wide. Others in the City should be able to feel the benefits of this work approach 7. Can this model work for other client groups 8. Share ideas and good practice across both projects 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criteria (as in East discussion) 2. Currently lack of existing networks 3. College/ Work - time off from college or work to attend LAC meetings can be a barrier. Flexibility is reducing in college, permission must be sought and there is risk of losing bursary. There are also similar issues with Thomas Fortune Centre 4. Funding can be an issue with several activities eg football. Money is needed for football strips, coaching, training and trips out 5. Transport at the moment is inflexible and it doesn't always suit individuals 6. Roll out City wide (as in East discussion) 7. No guarantee that LAC will stay. There has been constant battle with petitions. It would be good to get back to the way things were when the LAC co-ordinator was there 8. Need to organise more roadshows where LAC members were involved in visits to speak, attending conferences, etc.,

6.4 Staff Findings – postal questionnaire & focus group discussion

As in the case of service user and carer analysis, the findings of the staff consultation have been jointly presented under broad headings capturing common themes.

6.41 ROLE OF CO-ORDINATOR

Most staff consulted (social work and external agency) had a clear understanding of LAC co-ordinators role which reflected the tasks as outlined in the national guidance (see page 8).

However, in the West focus group session, a couple of social work learning disability day care staff were unaware of LAC work and the first they had heard of it was the morning of the discussion. This became the talking point for some time, and was concluded with senior managers suggesting that the profile of LAC work be raised through learning disability staff induction, team meetings and circulation of relevant papers relating to LAC work.

HAS THE ROLE OF CO-ORDINATOR CHANGED SINCE PROJECT WAS SET UP?

Co-ordinators from both projects said their role had not changed but how they worked depended on where the requests for service were coming from. Aside from the individual work, priorities were often laid down by LAC reference groups determining work input i.e. covering broader issues such as hosting events, training programmes, community safety etc.,

'I don't think the way I see my role has changed that much, but I am learning all the time about how to be good local area co-ordinator. My best allies in this are definitely the people from LACdotCOM. I get good support from them...I think my understanding of how LAC works has deepened...' (East Co-ordinator)

HOW HAS LAC MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

All interviewed had said that LAC had made a difference to the local community in terms of the following:

- ◆ Had broken down barriers
- ◆ Helped people with learning disabilities to make a positive contribution
- ◆ Had raised issues and awareness concerning learning disability
- ◆ There was more community development & partnership work
- ◆ Changed peoples perceptions about learning disability
- ◆ It impacted on local agencies that provide services i.e. housing, employment, education and culture & leisure
- ◆ Stimulated a great deal of reflection amongst professionals from a range of agencies regarding how to change the lives of people with a learning disability.

6.42 MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Discussions in both groups were lively on the topic of achievements as it was felt a lot had been accomplished over a short space of time. The following are areas around which discussions took place:

EAST	WEST
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of the community group LACdotCom 2. LACdotCOM's presentation to Senior Management at the East CHCP highlighting benefits & achievements of LAC 3. Travel buddies Group established with ENABLE Scotland to employ people with learning disabilities to help others with a learning disability to travel independently 4. Employment Support Group set up (a peer support group) with a focus on employment issues 5. Establishment of the east area sports development group. 6. Supporting three people with learning disabilities to set up a weekly 5-a-side game at a local sports centre which has been running for 18 months. 7. Impact on mainstream agencies to include people with learning disability in their service provision ie working around issues concerning housing, culture & sport, education & employment. 8. Engaging with community groups to ensure people with learning disabilities are more included in society 9. Big Plan. In partnership with Enable has supported around 20 young people and their families to think about a good life after school, and create their own action plan. 10. Newsletter Group set up through LAC 11. Autism Awareness Training initiated for GHA staff, and sports agencies 12. User led therefore more likely to meet needs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting LAC on the map 2. Development of LAC reference group. Individuals have had the confidence to run activities and be more inclusive in the local community. 3. LAC reference group won the Evening times Local Heroes 'Breaking down Barriers' Award. 4. Football Team formed and play tournaments Glasgow wide. 5. Drama sketches from the LAC reference group exploring issues around support & isolation ie bullying. About to be made into a DVD. 6. Changing peoples perceptions about people with a learning disability in the local community and wider setting. 7. Publications produced by LAC reference group inspired by achievements. This includes booklets, leaflets and newsletter. 8. Getting people with learning disability into mainstream services. 9. Befriending project set up. 10. Roadshows carried out locally. 11. Preventative work crisis avoidance - driven to achieve goals 12. Links made with local community 13. User led therefore more likely to meet needs 14. Service users'conference attracting 65 service users and 18 local services & projects.

6.43 WHAT HAVE BEEN THE CHALLENGES OR BARRIERS?

Staff spoke very openly on this discussion area. Tackling barriers or challenges facing LAC service could determine amount of work and resource investment needed to further improve both projects.

East	West
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate staff support. There was frustration around difficulty in making links with community planning structures at strategic levels in the community. The Australian model shows LAC worker supporting upto 50 people. With the part time support available - pro rata should equal 30 but more families are being supported and feel they are not all getting highest level of support 2. Gap in service ie LAC doesn't support children aged 0-9 and anyone 26+ 3. There is generally a lack of understanding about LAC across organisations and the local community 4. Lack of strategic drive re implementation 5. Needs increased resource/ financial commitment to the project 6. Need more carer and user involvement 7. Agreed commitment from Social Work and Children & Families to include staff in East didn't happen as planned 8. Knowledge & understanding of other agencies - other professionals don't always appreciate or understand LAC way of working. 9. Health & safety issues for some initiatives 10. Location will be an issue if LAC expands 11. Bureaucracy 12. Attitudes & reluctance to change 13. Geographic criteria 14. Local infrastructure 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding re LAC coordinator post. There has been lack of stability of funding for post. Potential isolation of work practice. There has been no individual work carried out only group activity. 2. High demands on just one person 3. People not understanding LAC at the start - have had to change perceptions of other establishments 4. Inflexibility of other establishments ie college & work placement to be involved in LAC work. Chance of people losing their bursaries. 5. Need to have LAC factored into development of Care Plans and not as an add on 6. As in East LAC - there is a gap in service ie not open to children or being used by people with more profound difficulties 7. LAC does not fit in with Housing & Social Work bureaucracy 8. LAC should challenge other areas of working with learning disability 9. Little known or understood about LAC including SW employees as well as othe service users. It may encourage an unrealistic expectation by service users that they need no formal support service at all 10. Needs more partnership working

6.44 COST EFFECTIVENESS OF LAC

The cost effectiveness of LAC work was seen as one of the main attractions in offering the service. Both projects had been able to demonstrate how they had been able to generate money and use funding from other source, saving the Department money. However, in the west, money had become a major issue in that momentum to generate money had declined, as the LAC driving force in this area had been the co-ordinator.

EAST	WEST
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income generated over last 18 months by LAC has amounted to £75,000. Funding sources have included housing associations, European Social Fund, National Lottery, Young Scot, Sports Relief, Culture & Sport, and Jinky Johnstone Trust 2. Referring individuals or families to appropriate community resources has managed to reduce people's reliance to access statutory services ie East End Healthy Living Centre; Urban Fox; John Wheatley College & Wellhouse Hub 3. LAC working with organisations to better meet local needs. As a result several new initiatives have come about ie travel buddy; big plan and employment support group 4. Person Centred Planning - LAC uses a person centred approach, which encourages people to ask for what they need rather than fitting them into block funded services. This usually results in them asking for less money, but can be problematic, as it is difficult for statutory services to identify even small amounts of new money <i>i.e. 'one young person who asked for weekly support to go to local activities instead of going to centre based respite several times a year. The yearly cost of the weekly support is equivalent to 10 days of the centre-based respite.'</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Income generated to date by West LAC has amounted to approximately £35,900. Funding sources have included LSUN (local service user network); Local Heroes Award; BAE systems; CHCP; SIP 2. Referring individuals or families to appropriate community resources has managed to reduce people's reliance to access statutory services ie Drumchapel Opportunities; Hospital radio volunteering; ENABLE Scotland; Digital Learning Centre; the Three Eyes Project 3. New initiatives started through LAC ie West area befriending scheme; football; 4. Person Centred Planning

6.45 EXTERNAL AGENCIES WORKING WITH LAC

Only one agency representative had taken part in the evaluation (postal questionnaire) in West CHCP so comparability across the two teams is difficult in what was said. Staff did however mention at the focus group session that they wanted to concentrate more on partnership work as things had slipped since the LAC worker left his post.

Agencies on the whole spoke very positively about LAC and were keen to continue the partnership work. Widening the involvement of more agencies would enhance the work of LAC further. One person said:

'I think the project has raised the confidence of the families involved - the LAC in the north East has strong connections to local families - from seeing their relationship with the LAC I think this is a key strength'

Linking up with LAC was refreshing for some organisations. Some felt that over the years a gap had developed between them and social work yet this new way of working

'Had brought a lot of organisations together again with social work'

'Had put life back into their job - You are now looking at another way of doing things. It is very easy to get bogged down with the same work routine'

Having said this, although most felt that LAC had made a difference to their local communities there was an awareness that more could be done with changing peoples perceptions around disabilities.

'There needs to be more understanding and support from communities to encourage and integrate people with disabilities. There are still too many barriers and bullying that occurs.'

In addition, it was noted that although some people with learning disability have integrated well into their local community, it was happening in groups which could essentially still leave individuals feeling excluded. This was also voiced in the staff focus group in the West.

Another person pointed out that LAC had brought a lot of challenging work to housing in relation to dealing with people with learning disabilities. This had been good for the organisation as it had help raise awareness of issues they had not otherwise considered. Much of this work had led to some changes in their work practice i.e. training.

In terms of workload, another organisation said that although there had been an increase in the number of cases they saw

It was not a negative increase in work. The extra work facilities improved outcomes e.g. funding

The Autism Resource Centre had noted that the LAC in East was supporting a large number of young people on the spectrum. It was said that LAC work had probably reduced crisis situations.

A lot of what had been achieved in the East regarding organisation of events such as the Big Plan or starting up of new initiatives such as Travel Buddies or Employment Group could not have been done without the partnership work. A lot of hard work had gone into these success stories and more was foreseen.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Effectiveness of LAC approach

The following areas highlight the effectiveness of LAC in Glasgow, much of which has been evidenced in the main body of the report:

- ◆ A significant number of people have received support through LAC service since the establishment of the two projects. In the East, 80 individuals or families have been supported in comparison to 41 in the West¹³. The lower West figure is indicative of its LAC vacant post. The support in itself as been invaluable.
- ◆ People are better informed of what is available in the community, as both workers have held a wealth of information and have worked diligently to open new doors for individuals.
- ◆ LAC has been able to offer choices to individuals and not set packages. The holistic approach has worked well as it concentrates on the person than on what the service can offer. It finds ways for people to get the support they want and prioritises issues that are important to them.
- ◆ LAC has encouraged more social inclusion and has succeeded in every instance. It looks beyond services and supports people to develop their lives in the local community. The LAC can open up and co-ordinate local resources and develops networks that bring benefits to the local community. It provides a focus that community organisations willingly engage with.
- ◆ There is clear evidence that many individuals have taken on leadership roles in both projects i.e. In the West, service users have produced DVD's, community leaflets, raised profile on antibullying, organised & managed football etc., In the East, Travel Buddies Group has been set up, LACdotCOM did presentations to Senior Management in Social Work as well as organising & managing a football team etc., These are innovative projects that have attracted resources from outside Social Work.
- ◆ Both projects have been able to demonstrate their cost effectiveness which would have otherwise cost the Social Work Department huge sums of money (see page 29).
- ◆ LAC has provided specialist support, which was not otherwise available. Although care management and/or community work have picked up some of these referrals in the past,

¹³ See page 21

it was more service led than user led. LAC looks at the needs of individuals and offers choices, which is where part of its success lies.

- ◆ LAC has also empowered people receiving support who in turn have gone on to help others, initiated new resources, mixed in with community groups etc., It has given them more control of their own lives and make their own decisions on various issues.
- ◆ Needs of individuals or families have been fully met and all using the service have spoken very positively about the service. Many stated that LAC workers never abandoned or turned anyone away and were always committed to the case until it had been resolved
- ◆ Relationships and strong bonds have been created with individuals and their family, which has encouraged many to keep in close contact with their local LAC service and use the service freely as required.
- ◆ Linking people to the right organisations has been a major part of the job, but more importantly it shows the workers professionalism & expertise in directing people to the appropriate services. Tables 5 and 6 in the report (page 22), show the range of agencies LAC workers in both projects have referred people to or contacted in providing the necessary support i.e. education, employment services, health, housing, leisure & culture...
- ◆ Partnership working has been taken to another level which didn't otherwise exist. All partners consulted had said they had welcomed the joint work and wanted to see more of it.
- ◆ The right people were employed for the post in terms of qualifications, specialist knowledge, local networking, sensitivity, building relationships etc., This has meant the workers have been fully equipped in supporting individuals and families whether it be as a mediator/ facilitator, advocate, social connector, or just a good listener.
- ◆ Awareness of disability issues has been raised. In the East, training was initiated with Autism Centre and in relation to housing policy. In the West, DVD's and leaflets have been produced as well as carrying out presentations and organising anti bullying campaign. The reference group have won local heroes award and have managed to positively influence the community's attitude towards people with learning disabilities.
- ◆ LAC has also been able to effectively manage crisis situations.
- ◆ Monitoring & evaluation systems are in place for strategic developers or funders to consult when drawing up future development plans.

7.2 Lessons to be learnt from the two projects

In order for LAC to flourish in Glasgow, lessons must be learnt through this evaluation study and acted upon. Acknowledging mechanisms that have worked well in both CHCPs in relation to LAC (see page 34) and incorporating them into future models is essential to good practice. In relation to barriers or challenges faced (see page 35), issues have to be strategically supported and improved on, such as:

- ◆ Need to increase human resources to improve access and availability
- ◆ Security of funding required to maintain goodwill of individuals, families and community and to continue work of including marginalised people
- ◆ Work towards accessible base in East and West
- ◆ Important for situation in West to be resolved so that there can be an LAC to work with individuals as well as to continue the group work
- ◆ Rethink current criteria used to allow more people to benefit from LAC
- ◆ Standardise information systems across projects to allow comparability studies if necessary.

7.3 Future development of LAC across the City

Both projects were seen as a vital resource by all those consulted for this study. The support provided was seen as being at an individual level where positive outcomes were achieved changing lives for the better. The local communities were passionate about holding on to this resource as a result of all the benefits it had brought them. However, there was also realisation that further developments were needed which would inevitably enhance it even further, such as:

- ◆ To achieve equity, roll out LAC city wide
- ◆ Need to ensure LAC role is clear and well known to all across the city (professionals and the local community)
- ◆ Need strong strategic lead so work continues to follow the Principles and can therefore offer a distinctive approach, which can achieve outcomes that individuals and families want
- ◆ Move towards full role i.e. based in local community and working with people throughout lifespan
- ◆ Essential that continues with a group of individuals and carers in a steering role and that there are resources to maintain this

- ◆ Should continue dual role of working with individuals and families and also have structures and influence to exercise strategic role to enable feedback from LAC work into policy and service development.
- ◆ Model has been successful for people with learning disabilities. Possibilities to extend to others in future.

8. SHORT STORIES

The following stories have been collected from service users, carers and LAC staff to give an idea of what LAC has meant to them.

Story 1 (carer)

This is the first time I have been involved in a local community group. I have an autistic daughter who is 13. She is a twin. The reason why I got involved with LAC was because I wanted my daughter to get as much out of her life as her twin sister.

At that point I felt quite isolated. The only input for my daughter was with her primary school. We still have no regular assistance from social services. I heard of the LAC at an open day. This was held at Gesh about 2 years ago. We set up the reference group there after, helped by a community worker.

Our group is a mixed group of mothers as well as teenagers and adults with learning difficulties. The LAC person also attends. Our numbers can vary from 10 to 15. We meet about once a month and because of these meetings I no longer feel as isolated. The LAC person from social work was the only one to ask the simple question "How can I help?"

After a year, we held an information day and invited MSP's, councillors, educational and health groups to highlight resources and lack of resources in the area for people with learning disabilities. We also carried out a questionnaire asking, "If you had a magic wand what would you like to change?"

In conclusion, from feeling isolated and having to fight to get my daughter into a special needs school at the age of 5. I now feel through LACdotCOM I know more about groups and facilities available. I am willing to give up my free time as I feel I have a say in matters and someone is listening, in particular the LAC worker. However, unfortunately it has made me also very aware of what is not available for children with learning disabilities. I have been able to cope with my daughter so far but I do worry about her future and what assistance will be available.

The LAC worker has tried to help me to apply for a grant to allow me to have a garage conversion to give my daughter more breathing space and her own room. At present she shares her bedroom with her sister and this is causing friction. I was put in touch with GCIL and they

provided architectural plans free of charge. The LAC worker has also made a referral to the Occupational Therapy Department in January 2006 who is at present assessing our claim.

Story 2 (LAC worker)

This is a story I have chosen to tell for several reasons: partly because it shows what some families are up against; also because it has something to say about where LAC sits in relation to other services, including care management. Mostly though, I want to tell this story, because this family, and the situation they find themselves in, has affected me.

Carol is in her early 30's, and is mum to 9-year-old Lisa. They share a flat in one of the rougher bits of Glasgow. It's a tenement flat and there are half a dozen flats in their close. A couple of the other tenants have drug and alcohol problems, with the disruption and frequent disturbances that entails. The close is shabby and often smelly. Carol and Lisa are sometimes the target of abuse and intimidation. This has often been verbal, but they have also had graffiti scrawled over their door and in the close. Lisa was diagnosed just over a year ago with Aspergers syndrome. She is a bright, creative person. She also has difficulty sleeping, and has very sensitive hearing and an acutely strong sense of smell. She is physically ill with the smell of wall paint, for example, and finds it hard to be near people who have been eating strong smelling foods like crisps. Her home is in many ways, a difficult place for Lisa to be, with the noisy neighbours, and the strong smelling close. At times it is hard for her to go out into this. Her own sleep patterns are frequently disturbed by the noise in the close, and she, and therefore mum spend many sleepless nights.

Carol contacted me a year ago, during the time when she and Lisa were coming to terms with the fact that Lisa has ASD. She had been talking to another mum and got my number from her. When we met, she told me her main goal was to move out of the flat, into a new place somewhere in a different part of the city. I was able to put her in touch with a housing support project, which is now helping Carol look into this. Carol has struggled with depression over the past few years, and she told me that apart from visits to immediate family, she hadn't been out socially for years, and had no close friends. This situation had been made worse by Lisa's difficult behaviour over the years, and the fact that Carol has felt branded, both by professionals and family, as a bad parent who can't control her child. Once Lisa was diagnosed, she moved from a mainstream primary, which she had been refusing to attend, to an autism unit,

which has really helped her, and has led to her coping better, and so behaving in more acceptable ways. Carol began to feel that it was her own bad health holding Lisa back: she was ready to branch out and do more, but Carol wasn't well enough to support her. She became worried about the amount of time Lisa was spending in the flat, her lack of exercise (and her weight), and her lack of a social life.

LAC always starts with people's own networks and tries to help people move forward with their own agenda. Carol and Lisa didn't have many positive networks, and so I did some thinking with the family about how to develop new networks. They both love art and crafts, and have talent and motivation, so it was straightforward to start here! I first linked Carol in with a local art studio for artists with mental health problems. As a member of Social Work staff, I was able to refer her, and Carol started making stained glass. Through the contacts she made with the staff at the studio, she heard about an art class for her daughter, which she has been going to. I also managed to find time with a local art therapist for Lisa, which she is keen to continue going to, but has stopped now as the organisation require him to be taken by a professional person, and not mum. Carol doesn't have any paid staff that could take her.

Carol became very unwell, and about six months ago was told that she had a neurological illness, and has been undergoing tests to find out what it is. Things got so bad, that she asked me to help her find a way to get Lisa out and about. I talked to her about different options, and made a referral to Children and Families social work, as this kind of help would cost money. Carol also wanted to discuss emergency and future plans, as her health was deteriorating rapidly, and she needed to plan for the worst. She was ready to ask for a formal assessment. It took a further six months for Lisa to be allocated a worker from Children and Families, and even then I did a lot of lobbying within the department on her behalf. I was with Carol during the assessment, which she was very nervous about. Because we had spent time together talking about the different types of respite, she was able to make more informed decisions, and was very clear about what she thought was best. She didn't want centre-based respite; she wanted a few hours of individual support for her daughter to go to activities through the week, in and around her own community. Ironically, this 1:1 weekly support is much less expensive than the centre-based support. A year of 1:1 support costs roughly the same as 10 days centre-based respite. In effect by asking for only what she needs, Carol is saving the Social Work Department several

thousand pounds a year. After we had done some research, Carol even gave her social worker details of a specialist ASD organisation that provides the type of support she wants for Lisa.

The assessment has now been done and funding for 4 hours a week of 1:1 support for Lisa has been requested. This would be respite for both of them, and mean that she could get help to pursue some interests, and mum could get a few hours off a week.

Carol has a diagnosis herself now, and I am busy checking out what support she can access as an adult with physical disabilities in her own right. I am also linking her in with a national organisation, that has a therapy centre in Glasgow. Lisa has done a lot of growing up this summer, and has been a star in the way that she has accepted what has been happening to her mum. I'm working on a couple of ideas about things she could do with her support worker. Recently Carol took a severe allergic reaction to some medication, and was admitted to Hospital for a couple of weeks. Carol's family took care of Lisa, which is a first, and which has opened up the possibility of reconciliation. I guess they now realise Carol can't just 'pull herself together and get a grip of her daughter.' Carol, is feeling more positive now than I've ever seen her...she knows what she is dealing with, and has the beginnings of a good support network.

The rest is in the lap of the Gods....

Story 3 (service user)

I'm a member of People First in Glasgow. I live in my own house in Carmyle and I'm the Chairperson of the People First Shettleston group.

I heard about the North East LAC group from another member. He invited me along to an Information Day in Easterhouse. Lots of local Projects had stalls and people came to learn more about LAC.

After the Information Day I became a member of the NE LAC group. That was about two and a half years ago.

We've done lots of things since then, like getting information about local groups to give out to parents and young people with learning difficulties in our area.

We have also been looking at setting up a newsletter for East Glasgow and I've been part of the group working on this. The first issue of the newsletter is almost ready.

We have a constitution; a bank account and I've been elected as the Co-chair of the group.

I really like being the Chairperson for the group. I get the agenda ready for the meeting and make sure we all get a chance to talk about what's important. I don't feel nervous or find it difficult being the Chairperson because the other people in the group give me lots of support.

At the end of last year I was part of a presentation about our LAC project to the Managers of the East CHCP. We told them about the work we had been doing and that we hoped to get more money for LAC in our area.

The group have done two PATHs since I started. This helps us to see what we have already achieved and what we want to do in the future.

I find it hard to think of anything negative to say about LAC because it has been such a good experience. The only point I would make is that the project only works with people up to the age of 25 and it would be good if it could help all people with learning difficulties in Glasgow.

Story 4 (2 service users)

We got £420 from the lottery to help with coaching costs.

We got given 16 new strips from the Jinky Johnstone Trust. One of the parents from LACdotCOM put in that application.

We hope to get involved in coaching. Maybe coaching some of the young people coming through schools.

We want to get more funding, so we can keep the football free of charge. We are looking into the Kelloggs Trust.

We want to keep the football going. We started over a year ago. Over 25 people have been playing during that time. We think this is a big achievement.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

SERVICE USER/ CARER FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Purpose of the focus group is to get views of users and carers about the LAC project. You will be taking part in the session on a voluntary basis. Your name will be kept in confidence but your views will be shared with others when writing up the report. You can pull out of the session at any time if you do not wish to take part in the discussion.



QUESTION 1

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES USING LAC OVER THE LAST YEAR? (Prompts: Contacts made; joined new activities i.e. football; improved quality of life etc.,)



QUESTION 2

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES USING LAC OVER THE LAST YEAR? (Prompts: Financial problems; transport; out of hours-contact; legal stuff etc.,)



QUESTION 3

WHAT WAYS CAN LAC BE IMPROVED?

(Prompt Out of hour's service; more workers needed; money)



QUESTION 4

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF LAC?



QUESTION 5

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING THIS RESEARCH WILL DO FOR LAC?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN TAKING PART IN THIS FOCUS GROUP

Appendix 2

STAFF FOCUS GROUP SESSION

QUESTIONS

1. Why was LAC piloted in West CHCP? (10 mins)
2. What are the main differences between West & East LAC projects? (15 mins)
3. Has LAC work had an affect on workload of any other SW staff in West CHCP? (15 mins)
 - ◆ Care Managers
 - ◆ Community Workers
4. Force field analysis – driving force & barriers
 - ◆ Staffing
 - ◆ Financial
 - ◆ Networking
 - ◆ Support from Senior Management
 - ◆ Resource implications
5. Can you talk about any LAC achievements in West over the last year? (25 mins)
 - ◆ Awards
 - ◆ Publications
 - ◆ Networking
 - ◆ Presentations
6. How has West LAC been promoted across the West? (15 mins)
 - ◆ Through LAC members
 - ◆ Publications
 - ◆ Newsletter
 - ◆ Word of mouth
7. How would you like to see the future of LAC rolled out in West/ across the City, and is it achievable? (15 mins)
 - ◆ Staff
 - ◆ Money
 - ◆ Strategic development

Appendix 3

AGENCY STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE (POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE)

Organisation _____

1 What is your understanding of the role of LAC co-ordinator?

2 What has been your involvement with the project?

3 How do you see this involvement progressing in the future?

4 How do you think the project has made a difference to the local community?

5 What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the project?
strength: _____

weaknesses: _____

6 How do you see the future of the project

Appendix 4

CARE MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE (POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE)

1 How do you see the role of LAC co-ordinator?

2 How do you think the project has made a difference to the local community?

3 Can you say how the project has affected your workload if at all?

4 What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the project?

strength:

weaknesses:

5 Do you think any new services have developed as a result of the service?

6 How do you see the future of the project

Appendix 5

SOCIAL WORK COMMUNITY WORKER QUESTIONNAIRE (POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE)

1 How do you see the role of LAC co-ordinator?

2 How do you think the project has made a difference to the local community?

3 In your opinion, briefly say what the main achievements of the project have been to date?

4 In your opinion, briefly say what barriers or challenges the project has had to face?

5 What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the project?

strength:

weaknesses:

6 What networks do you think have been formed through work of the project?

7 How do you see the future of the project

Appendix 6

HEAD OF LEARNING DISABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE (POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE)

1 How do you see the role of LAC co-ordinator?

2 How do you think the project has made a difference to the local community?

3 In your opinion, briefly say what the main achievements of the project have been to date?

4 In your opinion, briefly say what barriers or challenges the project has had to face?

5 What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the project?

strength:

weaknesses:

6 What networks do you think have been formed through work of the project?

7 How do you see the future of the project

Appendix 7

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE (FACE TO FACE)

Male/Female	User/ Carer		
1	How did you hear about LAC?	A friend or family member told you You read about it You phoned up Social Work You saw a poster/ leaflet somewhere Other Please say what other is	<input type="checkbox"/> (1) <input type="checkbox"/> (2) <input type="checkbox"/> (3) <input type="checkbox"/> (4) <input type="checkbox"/> (5)

2	Did you find it easy or difficult to contact LAC person?	easy difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> (1) <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
3	Is there anything you would like to say about the LAC coordinator?		_____ _____
4	Did you manage to get what you wanted when you phoned LAC?	yes no	<input type="checkbox"/> (1) <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
5	If no, what did you do next?		_____ _____
6	Name 3 things you really like about LAC:		(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____
7	Name 3 things you don't like about LAC or would like changed:		(1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____
8	How has LAC helped you?		_____ _____
9	Did you have to pay anything to use LAC?	yes no	<input type="checkbox"/> (1) <input type="checkbox"/> (2)
10	Is there anything else you would like to say about LAC?		_____ _____