



LEEDS
BECKETT
UNIVERSITY

Citation:

Bagnall, A-M and Coan, S and Rippon, S and South, J and Woodward, J (2021) ABCD Covid-19 Response Summary. Project Report. Leeds Beckett University. (Unpublished)

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7765/>

Document Version:

Monograph (Published Version)

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.



ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN LEEDS: IMPACT OF COVID-19

The Leeds ABCD evaluation was carried out from 2019-21. It gathered information from across the Leeds ABCD programme on how ABCD worked in local neighbourhoods and what changes happened. Researchers worked closely with community partners and used interviews with Community Builders, community members and professionals involved in ABCD, as well as quarterly reports by Community Builders.

This summary focuses on information from the evaluation about the effect of Covid-19 on the Leeds ABCD programme and how ABCD sites responded to the crisis. See main evaluation summary for more information on the ABCD programme in Leeds.

How ABCD sites responded to Covid-19

ABCD sites (funded through Leeds City Council) contributed to the pandemic response in the city, working within neighbourhoods and with community groups and volunteers. Some of the ABCD pathfinder sites were the COVID-19 response hub in their area.

Community Builders (staff who are employed through the ABCD sites) adapted their role and activities in response to lockdown and community needs. This included organising emergency support and making sure people had essentials such as food and medicine. This was described as a "lifeline" and included visits, calls, meals, shopping and food parcel delivery. Community Builders were well-placed to be part of the emergency response, but some were unable to continue working in the community (due to their organisation's rules). They used their time to identify assets (strengths) in the community, to increase their reach through social media and to find creative ways to reach residents e.g. films, newsletters, poetry, online craft sharing skills. The connections and assets that the Community Builders had already found before the pandemic made a strong foundation for the crisis response. The response was fast and worked well, but some people were worried it was not asset-based because in some cases there was a return to some people giving help and others receiving help, rather than everyone being involved using their own strengths:

"I think the hardest thing about the challenges we have faced over the last 10-12 weeks is that although we have tapped into a lot of assets in our community it is not always done in an ABCD way, but I still think it will lead to good things in the future."

[Community Builder]

The list below gives some examples of the range of work taking place in communities during the pandemic.

10 ways ABCD sites in Leeds responded to the pandemic

1. Moving existing groups online and setting up new ones e.g. online coffee mornings
2. Lending tablets to community members and teaching IT skills
3. Letters, phone calls and visits (where possible) for those who couldn't go online
4. Keeping residents up to date with local and national Covid-19 guidelines
5. Members of groups organising phone calls to each other and telephone befriending
6. Neighbourhood social media groups were set up
7. Socially distanced group meet ups
8. Craft projects to spread positive messages
9. Setting up a radio station – and radios for residents
10. Encouraging people to be healthy and safe by sharing healthy recipes and delivering face masks to residents



Positive change

One key theme was that friendships became stronger early in the Covid-19 pandemic. Community Builders saw friendships becoming more established as community members supported each other and shared skills (especially about how to use technology). The work of the Community Builders supported social connections by offering activities online, giving encouragement, and sending out activity packs.

“Good friendships that last can take time to develop. Friendships can be fragile when new, but during the Coronavirus challenges, people from the [area] are looking out for each other and the bonds between people are growing stronger.”
[Community Builder]

Community Builders saw people coming together to help each other out with everything from walking dogs to organising remote social activities. Sharing skills, such as tech know-how, helped people build relationships. Overall, bonds between people seemed to be getting stronger during this period:

“This crisis has acted as a catalyst for the community to come together.”
[Community Builder]

Friendships growing during lockdown

As part of the ABCD evaluation, a Community Builder recorded an interview with a Community Connector (Jacqui) over Zoom. Spontaneously, during the interview, Jacqui’s friend Naomi joined in. Jacqui met Naomi through an ABCD project for adults interested in performing and they found they worked well together and got on like a house on fire. On the day of the interview Naomi had gone to Jacqui’s garden to sing together and make some plans for the group. Naomi was also on hand to offer technical support to Jacqui for the Zoom call with the Community Builder.

“I met Naomi through this [...] and we’ve got a good friendship going on now.”
[Jacqui]

For more information contact:

Leeds Beckett University: community@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Leeds City Council Asset Based Community Development team: abcd@leeds.gov.uk

References to full reports and other summaries:

- Full Evaluation Report <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7640/>
- Full Evidence Report <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7641/>
- Evaluation Summary <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7763/>
- Evidence Summary <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7764/>
- Covid-19 Response Summary <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7765/>
- SROI Summary <http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7766/>

Authors: Coan, S; Woodward, J; Bagnall, A; Rippon, S; South, J June 2021
