



# Act Locally

*Conditions to success: A Step by Step Process*



**Education  
Alliance for  
Life Chances**

TACKLING INEQUALITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN

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# Section 1: Context and Background

## Context

Reducing health and learning inequalities through education requires a ‘whole system’ evidence-based approach to child wellbeing, allowing effective pooling and targeting of resources, efficient operational alignment and a coordinated strategy. Schools recognise the primary impact of poor health and social care on children’s behaviour, attendance and readiness to learn. Schools and early years settings act as anchor institutions for local communities, and are best placed to link families to essential services. The ‘Act Locally’ approach aims to provide resource and leadership to catalyse change, for a new and more impactful way of working, at a hyper-local level.

The ‘Act Locally’ approach enables schools to lead data-driven, place-based partnerships for children. This works by schools being at the heart a local convening partnership - a self-identified local group of practitioners and community members. The focus of the convening partnership is to improve outcomes for children and young people. Local people with lived experience are encouraged to come together to agree on a set of mutually agreed priorities, and tackle one challenge at one time in their local community.

Three areas in Bradford have been identified and established their convening partnerships. These are areas with the highest levels of child poverty, poor school outcomes, and poor health: central Keighley, Manningham & Girlington, and Holme Wood.

These convening partnerships are acting as ‘test beds’ for new approaches to service delivery through partnerships. They are exploring new ways to deliver support for children and families. This includes deeper scale project outcomes, including establishing ‘School Health Hubs’ in each ‘Act Locally’ area to enable support for pupils and families from ‘cradle to career.’ As a result of deeper and more integrated work, children and families will experience earlier and better co-ordinated support in a trusted place near to where they live - a school.

This document aims to be a step by step guide to enabling further places to utilise their own ‘Act Locally’ approach.





## Background

Act Locally is built on ‘what works’ with evidence generated by its predecessor programme methodology, Act Early: Holme Wood. Act Early: Holme Wood was a Turing Institute-funded University of Leeds project, which involved analysis and modelling of data to identify key issues within a community, gathering of local input for a richer understanding of context, and creation of accessible findings and visualisations to guide solutions that addressed their issues. The seven recommendations of the Act Early: Holme Wood programme have then been used to inform the Act Locally methodology with further refinement by developing a solution for each of Act Early’s recommendations as outlined below:

**1. Focus efforts on the lives of Children and young people to generate the greatest impact.** There is a need to act early in order to address problems before they escalate. Acting early ensures we lessen the occurrence or intensity of deprivation-associated vulnerabilities for the upcoming generation.

**Solution:** Act Locally coordinates effort and activity around children and young people, promoting family wellbeing and connecting education and health services. Schools are empowered to lead data driven, place-based partnerships for children. The ‘School Health Hub’ model within Act Locally areas is based on prevention and early intervention.

**2. Adopt a whole-system approach to improve the lives of children and young people.** Individual social issues cannot be addressed in isolation and an effective approach will address multiple upstream determinants. This requires a multi-level, system approach with the collaboration of all relevant organisations, to address children and young people’s vulnerabilities.

**Solution:** The Act Locally convening partnerships collaborate on one collectively agreed issue, at one time. The model incorporates a ‘School Health Hub’ which brings a co-located, integrated offer of health and wellbeing services closer to the place where pupils attend and families trust – a school. A strategic, multi sectoral partnership will enable the Act Locally place-based work to flourish.



**3. Use routine data combined with local feedback and insight to provide a better understanding of local issues.** We need systems that pull on routine datasets and calibrate data with lived experience to tackle issues related to inequality.

**Solution:** After each Act Locally convening partnership agrees their focus priority, the Act Locally Co-coordinator and Research Partner will support them to write a Statement of Intent (Sol). This outlines the issue in more detail, within the context of data and local lived experience. The Sol will outline how the convening partnership see their collective effort working and what they require from wider commissioners.

**4. Create a multi-agency response through connected data.** Data from multiple agencies is critical for identifying issues. There is an urgent need for data to be connected across agencies, so that organisations work together most effectively to identify vulnerable children in need of services.

**Solution:** Each Act Locally convening partnership will work with their local schools to identify a suitable 'School Health Hub' offer of health and wellbeing services. An integrated, co-located offer, bespoke to local needs, will be the perfect catalyst for practitioners to share information on vulnerable pupils, to ensure they access support, including prevention and early intervention.

**5. Form unique solutions based on a place-based approach.** This approach involves a detailed understanding of the needs of an area, an understanding of how services interact in that locality, and the development of interventions that meet the unique needs of local people.

**Solution:** Each Act Locally convening partnership will come up with one or two key priorities that will be addressed over the course of 3 to 5 years. The first priority will have a Statement of Intent that dives deeper into the data and local understanding of the issue. The Act Locally Co-ordinator and the Research Partner will support the convening partnership to analyse data on the issue and understand research insights.



**6. Improve partnership working between policy makers, service providers and the community.** Communities need to be at the centre of designing service delivery and interventions. Alongside policy makers, communities can drive forward solutions. Local residents can provide essential information on community challenges, but results can only be achieved if policy makers and service providers work together.

**Solution:** Act Locally relies on a community convening partnership (made up of schools, local practitioners, researchers and community members) to drive the change that's needed. Through their Statement of Intent (SoI) they state their aims and recommendations for change related to their focus priority. Both the convening partnership and the multi sectoral strategic group need to work together to secure the right permissions, authority and resources, to ensure service providers and policy makers are able to respond effectively.

**7. Work closely with local schools to support children and young people effectively.**

Targeting all children and young people in an area is ambitious, but possible, as the majority are present in one setting for most of the year – schools. Whole system partnerships should be developed with primary and secondary schools, so that the schools can act as community hubs capable of supporting the needs of a family.

**Solution:** The whole premise of Act Locally is to coordinate effort and activity around schools as anchor institutions of local communities, hence why the focus is on supporting schools to lead data driven, place-based partnerships for children.

## How does Act Locally Work

- The 'Act Locally' methodology is an integrated pipeline of provision and support for children and families that complements the work of the school.
- It aims to grow local cross-sector community partnerships to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Its purpose is to use schools' and Early Years settings' position at the heart of communities to enable them to act as a hub of multi-service delivery within a geographical area or place as well as tackle local priority issues that affect children and young people locally.
- It aims to shine a light on how data relevant can help further understand priority issues and use the knowledge of academics and their research insights to demonstrate decision making on solutions needs can be data informed and evidence led at a hyper local level
- The 'Act Locally' blueprint can be rolled out to one area, reviewed and refined, and then replicated elsewhere.

## Section 2: Delivery

It is envisaged that each 'Act Locally' area has the following four key delivery elements (note that elements 1 and 4 do not require funding as the co-ordinator role could be offered by one of the partner organisations):

**1. 'Convening partnerships' (made up of schools, practitioners and community representatives) who live and work in the local areas, and agree and deliver on locally agreed priorities.**

Each convening partnership will be supported by:

- A Co-ordinator who will enable and support local action. Rooted in the community, these enablers will likely be from a local voluntary sector organisation or school.
- A Research Partner who will provide data and evidence around the convening partnerships' identified priorities, and support evidence-based decision making around developing any interventions or solutions

Collective impact is the underpinning approach to convening, prioritising issues and working together with local practitioners and community representatives. Collective impact is when individuals from different organisations come together around a common agenda to solve a specific societal problem, leaving their organisational priorities at the door. It is based on the philosophy that large scale social change comes from cross-sector coordination rather than the isolated intervention of individual organisations.

Each convening partnership utilises a 5 stage process: Access & Connect, Plan & Prioritise, Deliver & Act, Review & Learn, Share & Refine. (Please see section 5)

**2. A 'Community Budget' for the convening partnership to commission activity and solutions related to their identified priorities:**

- The budget will support the convening partnership's identified priorities. They will commission a range of activities, supporting above and beyond services and interventions already delivered locally.
- The framework guiding spending decisions will be 'Participatory Grant Making' (PGM), an approach which empowers communities to lead decision-making processes.
- Where offered our partner The VCS Alliance, will train and support each convening partnership and their Co-ordinator to make spending decisions that align with PGM and support onward grant-giving.

**3. A 'School Health Hub' - an integrated 'health and wellbeing' school-based hub for families, children and young people in each 'Act Locally' area.**

- This element will be tailored to each 'Act Locally' area's needs and context. One area will be identified with help from the convening partnership, with a suitable school identified.



- Once identified, local schools/organisations will be commissioned to deliver the hub offer.
- We will provide the schools or local organisations with a budget, to support a local offer of health and wellbeing services. The budget will be reduced over time to allow for sustainability – for statutory services to realign and deliver their services utilising the school hub model.
- It is expected that the identified schools or local organisations will utilise a ‘hub and spoke model’, to enable effective reach across their ‘Act Locally’ area.
- The budget may be spent on: staff time to coordinate the offer of health and wellbeing services, to commission additional services, for minor refurbishments of a designated room or space, and for costs associated with co-location of services, equipment, and sundry costs such as marketing.
- The ‘School Health Hub’ will work with the convening partnership to support local priorities.

#### **4. An Education Alliance for Life Chances style strategic partnership board (per local authority area).**

This partnership is a cross sector, multi-agency, strategic partnership. Key to supporting complex, detailed, place-based work in each Act Locally area will be a formal, Local Authority-wide partnership of system leaders from schools and the public and voluntary sector.

We anticipate that each Act Locally area will have a corresponding strategic partnership at local authority level. It will serve as:

- A ‘whole system’ enabler of improved social mobility, life chances, health and education of children & young people, through schools and nurseries
- A formal partnership of system leaders within a local authority area, which provides the permissions, resources and vision needed to connect services around families via schools
- A convener of schools, health services, the Local Authority, voluntary services, universities, faith leaders and businesses, that come together to drive change
- An enabler of schools to take a leadership role, without imposing unrealistic burdens or distractions from their core business of educating children
- A partner with a local ‘research & development department.’ This could be a University or wider research collaboration such as the Born in Bradford’s CAER . This partner will provide data on local issues, enable information-sharing, bring evidence and innovation around public service delivery and help the system test, evaluate, and share effective practice.





# Section 3: Theory of Change

## What are the benefits of Act Locally?

- Demonstrate that connected data is helpful in co-ordinated local problem solving
- Local convening partnerships effectively utilise their community budget through commissioning local support where gaps exist
- Children and families benefit from effective and better co-ordinated 'cradle to career' support through their local school or early years setting, designated as a Hub for local integrated, co-located services
- Schools report improved trust and closer working relationships both at place-based and strategic levels with services providing support within schools via a community Hub model.

We expect that Act Locally will also have a direct impact to children and young people because they will:

- Have their needs met directly (through an integrated Hub offer)
- Have an equitable offer of services – that better meets their individual needs
- Be empowered through direct involvement with the collectively agreed focus issue and the
- shaping of services locally

## Conditions to Success

- Secure buy in and backing from your multi sectoral strategic partnership (outline Collective Impact approach and Act locally methodology/Theory of Change)
- Identify a backbone organisation (the strategic and place-based convenor, facilitator and enabler role)
- Identify a Research & Development partner (to help with data, evidence & research insights, monitoring and evaluation)
- Go where the energy is (start with a 'community of the willing' and build up)
- Strengths based approach (Encourage local groups to look at the communities needs and consider the strengths of their partnership)
- Cumulative effect (work to 'lean in' offers and resources - get something going and other things will follow)



# Theory of Change

## If we...

### Use our eight ways of working

1. **Challenging** and supporting the 'research and development' overseen by the Centre for Applied Education Research (CAER) executive
2. **Driving forward** the research that matters to educational establishments and our major organisations (including health, police, the local authority, the voluntary sector etc)
3. **Supporting** further connections between educational establishments in the Bradford district and wider system (e.g. health and policy)
4. **Promoting** increased collaboration across organisations on cross-cutting programmes of work that involve educational establishments in the Bradford district
5. **Encouraging** improved coordination of activity across the education system so that schools find it easier to work together in the best interests of children and young people.
6. **Activating** support for initiatives in the Bradford district that will positively impact the education of children and young people
7. **Advocating** for the urgencies and issues facing children and young people in their education and broader life chances in Bradford
8. **Applying** for funding to support our programmes and interventions that benefit children and young people in our communities

### Apply evidence based interventions

- By partnering with the local authority, NHS trusts, police and schools, EALC aims to empower schools and early years settings to connect to other local services, to design and deliver evidence-based and integrated approaches to support children and families, in and beyond the classroom.
- EALC enables the research of the Centre for Applied Education Research to access schools and early years settings so that their unique access and knowledge of children and families informs organisations, practitioner and policy makers looking to obtain a holistic view of the factors that influence outcomes for children and young people.

### Work based on our theoretic foundations

- Social mobility
- Geospatial data science
- Citizen science
- Childhood health
- Population health
- Data acquisition and linkage
- Educational inequality
- Longitudinal birth cohort studies

### And grounded in our key assumptions

- Reducing health inequalities through education requires a 'whole system' evidence-based approach to child wellbeing - allowing effective pooling and targeting of resource, efficient operational alignment and a coordinated strategy.
- Schools have long since recognised the impact of health, care and other non-educational factors on children's behaviour, attendance and readiness to learn. By placing schools and early years settings as anchor institutions of local communities, they are perfectly placed to link families to essential services.

## Then...

### Our desired outcomes will be reached

1. Improve children's education and health outcomes through CAER led research
2. Improve teachers involvement and understanding in CAERs research and development themes
3. Improve integrated services through evidence based delivery with effective place based targeting of co-ordinated, multi-agency support to children and families
4. Improve integrated decision making through 'connected dataset's' enabling better understanding of families interactions and intersections with different services
5. Improve holistic public service delivery by enabling practitioners to share information securely and efficiently using 'secure data environments'

### Ensuring short term impact

- Increased education engagement with CAER research
- Increased evidence based decision making using connected data
- Increased place-based multi agency partnership interventions

### And long term impact

- Better child health outcomes
- Reduced attainment gap
- Improved life chances for children and young people from disadvantaged communities

## And so...

### Our vision will be realised

By 2040 we will support all major organisations across Bradford to be capable of supporting evidence based multi-agency work with and through educational establishments (e.g. schools and early years settings) to help children and young people secure good life chances and improve social mobility.

### Our mission will be achieved

To act as the catalyst to drive forward long-term structural change promoting a sustained reduction of inequalities. The EALC will champion schools and early year settings to make better use of data-driven, place-based, approaches to improve outcomes for children.



# Section 4: Collective Impact

## Understanding Collective Impact

We embrace the collective impact approach, through which organisations with a common agenda work together, in a structured way, to achieve social change. Collective impact is based on the philosophy that large-scale social change comes from cross-sector coordination, rather than the isolated intervention of individual organisations.

Collective Impact guides our approach to partnership and is embodied in our multi agency strategic partnership and is at the core of 'Act Locally'. It is based on the approach of Reach Foundation in Feltham, London and AllChild in West London & Wigan.

Our approach enables us to bring about sustainable system change. Local people are empowered to act on issues and priorities unique to their community. Local change makers help join services and support through a local 'School Health Hub' model. We build Act Locally convening partnerships, with five conditions needed to successfully drive change:

1. **Common agenda:** a shared vision for change.
2. **Shared measurement:** clear success metrics & structured data collection.
3. **Mutually reinforcing activities:** stakeholders coordinate their differentiated activities.
4. **Continuous communication:** regular meetings to develop approach and share learnings.
5. **Backbone support:** central coordination to manage the initiative.





# Section 5: Five phase blueprint

## Our 5 Phase Blueprint for Act Locally

1. Access and Connect
2. Plan and Prioritise
3. Deliver and Act
5. Share and Refine
4. Review and Learn



### Phase 1: Access & Connect

- Develop broad coalition of senior support through EALC-style Partnership To oversee whole-system approach and secure authority, permissions, resources.
- Secure buy in and backing from EALC style partnership Outline Collective Impact approach to working and Act locally methodology/Theory of Change
- Identify a backbone organisation The strategic and place-based convenor, facilitator and enabler role
- Identify a Research & Development partner To help with data, evidence & research insights, monitoring and evaluation
- Identify an area of focus Could be geographical e.g. a town, ward, housing estate or based on strong school network or data driven i.e. area of multiple deprivation
- Map area assets and allies Identify strong school partnerships/ school clusters, VCSE organisations/ groups or individuals/residents that can support and enable
- Plan monitoring and evaluation framework Work with research and development partner to establish robust data capture and impact evaluation

### Phase 2: Plan & Prioritise

- Hold a 'learning symposium' in the area Back bone org brings together senior reps from schools, local health and care services, with parents and community partners
- Outline Purpose Share Collective Impact approach and Act locally methodology
- Share and agree on a set of priorities for the area The biggest challenges facing children and young people in the area.
- Identify the people, places, projects and organisations Who will you need to work with and through, to reach children and families, and to change the way support is offered and delivered?
- Think about the likely barriers to change What are the resources and permissions you will need to get from local authorities and others if you are to overcome those barriers?
- Agree 3 focus priorities Rank in order of urgency

## Phase 3: Deliver & Act

- Develop a Statement of Intent (from the learning symposium in phase 2):
  - Outline the problem locally, include data/ lived experience to demonstrate rationale for focus issue
  - Agree a set of actions that can be implemented by organisations locally
  - Identify desired outcomes
  - Agree a set of recommendations for commissioners which seeks to secure further permissions, resources and support for focus issue
- Develop an Action Plan Detail specific actions agreed at the learning symposium so convening partnership can monitor
- Develop a Theory of Change Based on the focus issue
- Establish your Act Locally Convening Partnership Building on those who attended learning symposium plus community reps and young people
- Set Convening Partnership meeting dates Backbone organisation to facilitate termly meetings
- Secure Community Budget To commission support or interventions (on behalf of the convening partnership) from local and other VCSE orgs that can support further action on the identified issue (avoiding duplication)
- Involve commissioners and others Backbone org and convening partnership to secure further permissions and resources for focus issue
- Identify 'School Health Hub' within area Confirm accessible school site/facility that could support co-located integrated 'cradle to career' community support
- Plan School Health Hub offer e.g:
  - 'One stop shop' approach (offered on designated dates throughout the year)
  - Regular access to a range of services (timetabled throughout the week)
  - Co-located integrated multi disciplinary service offer

## Phase 4: Review & Learn

- Monitor progress Against Theory of Change and Evaluation Framework
- Capability Analysis Convening partnership to review and RAG rate current performance against six self evaluation areas
- Collect data sources linked to priority To demonstrate improvement
- Collect case studies To demonstrate impact
- Collect feedback From commissioners, community budget recipients/beneficiaries
- Collate early impact As defined by your convening partnership
- Learn Look at other successful place-based models

- Lessons Learned Work with both EALC –style partnership and Act Locally Convening Partnership (including community & young people) to reflect on what's worked well/ what could have worked better
- Share findings On methodology and impact
- Refine Theory of Change/ methodology

## Section 6: Outcomes

The 'Act Locally' methodology is well positioned to achieve the following outcomes:

- Demonstrable evidence that connected data is helpful in identifying patterns and testing hypotheses related to local challenges, and as part of developing and implementing solutions
- Local convening partnerships effectively address system gaps through commissioning of local services, made possible by the community budget
- Improved trust and closer working relationships between services and schools, both at place-based and strategic levels, and support effectively provided via a 'School Health Hub' model.

Informed by our early work so far, Act Locally can have the following direct impact on children through:

- More children receiving health services: dental care, vaccination, mental health support
- Increased health literacy for children, young people and their families
- More unregistered children and young people being registered with a GP/Dentist
- Improved school attendance and engagement

