

## What is C2

Connecting Communities (C2) is a unique, tailored programme designed to equip participants with the necessary set of evidence-based skills and capabilities for community engagement and collaborative working.

Aimed at people with a portfolio for service improvement and delivery, C2 is an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) programme which is delivered as a series of vibrant interactive workshops and site visits.

C2 is evidenced based and has been developed by the Health Complexity Group at the Peninsula Medical School. Developed from inspirational case studies of transformational change, the programme

uses complexity science as the evidentiary framework with which to understand enablers and barriers to change and improvement.

### Learning outcomes:

- To view the community as a potentially rich resource and catalyst for change.
- To co-create enabling conditions which encourage community capacity release and emergent leadership.
- To embed fresh thinking resulting in effective collaboration with partner agencies and residents.
- To listen and deliver sustained improvement based on community aspirations.

- To develop an understanding of Asset Based Community Development using insights from complexity science.
- To introduce the concept of community-led Local Operational Partnerships as a model for successful neighbourhood governance.



## Why Sport England commissioned C2 in the South West



Graham Jones (Development Manager at Sport England South West) first heard about Hazel Stuteley's C2 work at Falmouth about two years ago, when Jim Clarke (Regional Director of Sport England South West) returned from a meeting enthusing that he had heard Hazel speak about her 'wonderful' work with disadvantaged communities in Cornwall. Graham decided to contact Hazel and set up a series of meetings between Hazel, himself and the seven County Sport Partnership (CSP) leads from across the South West region. Hazel's stories from the communities at Falmouth, Redruth and Camborne provided Graham with 'compelling evidence' of the potential value of C2, and many of the CSP leads found that the experiences described by Hazel, often resonated with experiences in their local communities.

Whilst the themes of leadership, empowerment, and listening to the community really struck a chord with Graham and the CSP leads, no one was sure how this relationship with Hazel and her

colleagues at the Health Complexity Group, would progress. Graham says: 'I was a great advocate of C2, and I was aware that we needed a paradigm shift if we were to achieve our target of 1% participation year-on-year. I wanted to expose my colleagues to as many opportunities and different ways of achieving the target as possible. For me, C2 clearly presented a new way of engaging with the communities that we serve, and therefore of helping us go some way to meet our goal'.

His goal is to have regional and county-level leaders that are fully-fledged advocates for C2, who can understand and translate what C2 is about, and appreciate how it could help at the next level of leadership (i.e. at the community level). Graham suggests that C2 represents but one piece of a wider jigsaw, but nevertheless, an important piece.

Graham reflected; '...the hub of C2 lies in the power of partnership working, and at Sport England we realise the strength of engaging non-traditional

partners (e.g. the police, housing and health) in helping us achieve our targets. This makes change more sustainable. Change becomes self-sustaining, and the CSP's will continue even if Sport England changes priorities. Our aim is to put the energy behind the community and encourage change to happen'.

Sport England South West have long recognized that promoting sport to those communities that are traditionally perceived as 'hard to reach', requires concentrated efforts to think, behave and engage in different ways. In May 2007 leaders of the seven Community Sport Partnerships (part of the delivery chain for sport and active recreation) from the South West region, met with their key strategic partners in Falmouth for a two-day event, where they heard stories from front-line workers, who have actively worked within local communities to bring about positive change. The event culminated in a visit to two local communities where changes had occurred, so that participants could meet and listen to the experiences of residents themselves.

## What the participants thought of C2

“ We use sport as a tool for inclusion... to build active, safer and healthier communities ”

“ ...we don't want to lose sight that we are trying to work with people to get people to do something and that is our focus... so it's about building relationships with people and the organizations they are in... ”

“ Networking cannot be underestimated. Good transferable theory enables conversation between agencies ”

“ CSP's are relatively new and most of us have changed host bodies in the early stages.

Most of us have been taking on staff and growing, but we are getting an awful lot of pressure to be running before we can walk, and I think we are in danger of doing everything poorly, rather than doing things really well ”

“ We have our own set of partnerships but I didn't realise how agencies didn't work together. I wasn't aware of the challenges facing communities ”

“ And I want to give them [the Community Sports Networks] the choice to say whether they think that this [C2] is something that would be useful for them in accelerating what they do... It needs local ownership and clarity about what it is that we are trying to achieve ”

“ I'm unsure how C2 fits with my work as we do engage with the community already ”

“ It [C2] was not the sort of project I would lead, so I was a bit confused why we were there ”

## What happened next?

After an initial reflection on C2 and how it might benefit sport, a C2 programme was delivered across the South West to the seven CSP leads and their regional partners and potential partners:

*'We were successful in getting the influential people around the table, and we exposed them to C2 and to what it could achieve'*. In addition two CSP leads have decided to roll out versions of C2 in their local communities (as described in the case studies on this page), and Graham Jones expects that more examples may follow as the learning from the Wesport and the Wiltshire & Swindon County Sports Partnership projects begins to filter out across the region. Finally, many of the CSP leads were interested in learning more about complexity science and about 'operating on the edge of chaos' and as a result of exposure to these theories within the C2 programme, some facilitated work sessions have been held with the CSP's to try and understand more about complexity.

## Connecting Communities Through Sport –

### the Wiltshire & Swindon County Sports Partnership project

Although this exciting project has not emerged directly out of the Falmouth event, it has been based on the principles that underpin C2 and follows discussions between David Bareham (CSP lead for Wiltshire) and Hazel Stuteley during the developmental phase of the project. Connecting Communities Through Sport is an innovative partnership project involving Community First, Age Concern Wiltshire, Youth Action Wiltshire and the Wiltshire & Swindon Activity & Sports Partnership (WASP) as the core group to support and deliver the project.

The aim of the partnership is to work across Wiltshire with rural and isolated communities to increase the availability of sport and active recreation in a coordinated manner – in order to improve health and build stronger communities.

The focus of the project which started in the autumn of 2007 will be on reducing barriers for the groups who are currently significantly under represented in sport and active recreation in Wiltshire. These groups are, the over 50s, females, the disabled, and those on lower incomes. The project will encourage more people to take part in sport and activities; increase the opportunities for intergenerational work; encourage wider partnership working, and offer rural people the chance to take part in sport and activities in their local area, with people they know, utilising existing facilities.

The key difference with this project is that it aims to use sport and active recreation as a tool to help build stronger communities and thus not only improve health, but also tackle community cohesion issues such as fear of crime. With both Age Concern and Youth Action Wiltshire in the partnership this project offers a real opportunity to break down some of the barriers that frequently exist between older and younger people and thus improve intergenerational respect.

The need for activities and sport in rural areas is often highlighted but provision and access to existing services is often very difficult. Transport is limited in rural areas with some areas having minimal services during school journey times only. Elderly people find it difficult to access leisure facilities and have similar transport problems. This leads to inactivity across the age range in rural areas.

For more information on this exciting project, please contact Helie Franklin on [hfranklin@communityfirst.org.uk](mailto:hfranklin@communityfirst.org.uk) 01380 72247

## Wesport: the West of England County Sports Partnership project

Wesport, under the leadership of Steve Nelson, has invited us to run a C2 programme for people engaged in community regeneration work within the West of England County Sports Partnership patch. The C2 programme has taken place over 6 sessions on the 3rd and 4th September 2007 at the Eden Project and on the 11th November 2007 at the University of the West of England in Bristol. In addition, the HCG has developed a support service for Wesport delegates of C2, which includes:

- An ongoing coaching and advisory function, filtered through Susanne Hughes, who will direct the request to the appropriate facilitator;
- Telephone advice and support, again filtered through Susanne Hughes, who will direct the request to the appropriate facilitator;
- Access to our website, where we are currently developing an interactive forum with the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and other partners for the sharing of stories, experiences and best practice.

Participants at the Eden event identified a range of outcomes from their participation in C2:

- 'Meeting people and hearing their stories has been so valuable'
- 'Helped me to listen better when I went back to work'
- 'Recognition of the value of asset-based work'
- 'Tap into pride and power within a community – a good way to capture and channel energy'
- 'Need to celebrate and share our/community successes'
- 'Reinforced the strengths that we can find in communities'
- 'Could relate to the projects in Falmouth and Redruth and feel that we can use a 'template' from what we heard and transfer it to our patch'
- 'Really liked the use of the 'listening exercise' and the post-it notes and now use them a lot – good for people who would rather write something down than talk about it in front of others'

Participants also discussed several challenges that they faced within their communities, for example, transient populations, lack of drive or passion to change things within that community, difficulty in re-energising communities half-way through NDC input, and cultural and religious issues that can really restrict some work programmes, but on the whole the Wesport group were really optimistic about what they have achieved so far and what they can achieve in the future.

The next step for the Wesport group is to plan a celebratory event for young people from Cornwall and the West of England County Sports Partnership to take place at the Eden Project in the summer of 2008. This event will act as an opportunity for young people to 'showcase' their achievements in fitness and wellbeing (e.g. the TR14Rs dance troupe from Camborne and the cheerleaders group from Bristol), and will provide an opportunity for adult residents and agency workers from both communities to share experiences and learn from each other.

For further information on this exciting work, please contact Karen Lloyd on 0117 922 3778 or [karen.lloyd@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:karen.lloyd@bristol.gov.uk)



### Getting more information

As part of this work for Sport England South West, the Health Complexity Group conducted an evaluation to run alongside the delivery of the C2 in Falmouth and at the Eden Project. A copy of the full evaluation report is available on [www.healthcomplexity.net](http://www.healthcomplexity.net)

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