

Webinar: Strength Based Practice - the Darlington Journey



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Showcase webinar from
the Social Care Institute for
Excellence

14 July 2023

With Ellie, Martin and Joss





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Ellie Haworth: SCIE



**Strength
Based Practice**
in Darlington

**"Knowing our
Adults, Families and
Communities
in Darlington"**

Darlington Adults
Social Care Services

**Strength Based
Practice Framework**

Adults Services Strength Based Practice Framework

The Darlington journey...
a brief overview.

Welcome to the session



- **Joss Harbron – Assistant Director, Adults Services, People Group, Darlington Borough Council**

I joined Darlington 2 years ago as Assistant Director. I have worked in social care for over 30 years with roles as diverse as supporting people with disabilities to find paid employment, managing care and support services, to commissioning services, to holding the role as the Valuing People lead. Throughout all my roles I have had a commitment to strength based approaches, practice and provision.

- **Martin Webster – Workforce Development Manager, People Group, Darlington Borough Council**

...which pretty much means 'Jack of all trades'. As Workforce Development Manager I work across the whole directorate, supporting training and staff development, culture development, emotional health and wellbeing, voice (staff, local communities and partners) and whatever else is required. I really enjoy my job, and appreciate the local, regional and national work that goes into making the Social Care Sector special.



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A relational approach

What is Strength Based Practice?

- a. A shared approach to celebrating and supporting/promoting independence
- b. Weight Training with the Adults and Communities we work with?



Do you work in a Strength Based way?

- a. Yes, all of the time!
- b. No, I've never heard of it?
- c. Sometimes, but not always consistently or by design



Five reasons to live in Darlington

Darlington is becoming a popular place to move to of late. Why? Perhaps it is our perfectly placed location, with just 2.5 hours to London by train, 24 trains to the capital each day and Teesside International Airport on our doorstep.

Or maybe it's because Darlington itself is going places. With millions being invested in the town, Darlington is taking up its rightful position as a hugely desirable place to live, work and invest in the North East.

With both the Yorkshire and Durham Dales as well as the Tees Valley on our doorstep and ready access to Newcastle, Manchester, Edinburgh and London, Darlington is just the ticket for people who want somewhere that's both urban and rurally desirable, offering a phenomenal work/life balance, without the London price tag.

We've pulled together our top five reasons for relocating to Darlington below, you can also [download a guide to moving to Darlington and the Tees Valley](#).



Reason 1: Our borough



Reason 2: House prices and housing



Reason 3: Education and learning



Reason 4: Leisure and amenities



Reason 5: Transport and travel

Darlington... a little town in the North East of England



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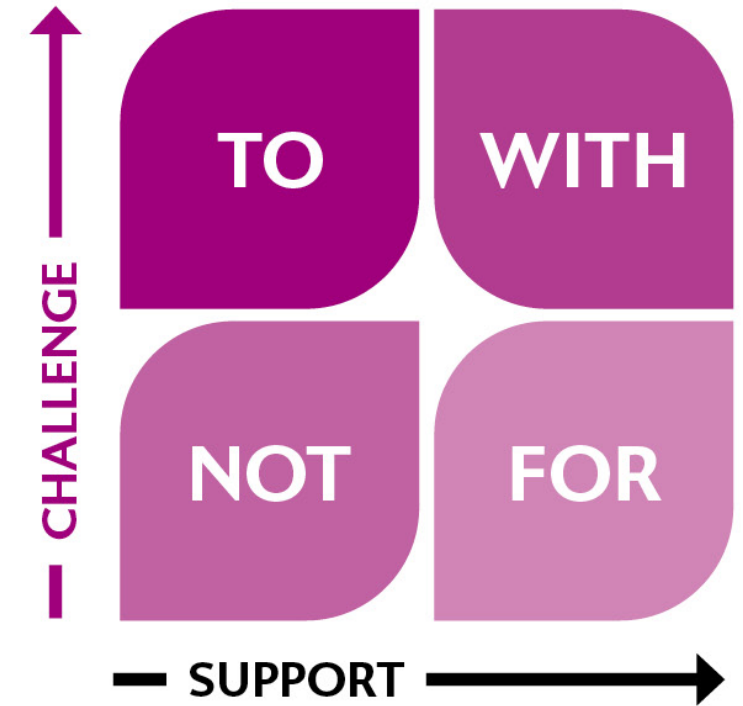
Why a Strength Based Framework?

- Strength Based approach and the Care Act
- Darlington's journey – Impower and MINDSPACE
- Working WITH rather than doing TO, FOR or NOT
- Clear methodology that shows trust in professional judgement, giving staff choice based on the needs of the individual/family they are working with
- Consistent Directorate approach

The Social Discipline Window

We believe that by working WITH adults and families we can help and support them to make positive change where and when needed.

We will give high support (listening, encouraging and helping) and high challenge (setting limits and boundaries)



High Challenge and Low Support = Punitive/authoritarian = Doing things TO people
Low Challenge and Low Support = Neglectful/not interpreted = NOT doing much of anything
High Support and Low Challenge = Permissive/rescue/makes excuses = Doing things FOR people
High Support and High Challenge = Restorative/Authoritative/Relational = Doing things WITH people



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What is Strength Based Practice?

Our approach is rooted in:

- 1) **What theory and government guidelines tell us**
- 2) **The views of our staff and partners**
- 3) **The views of individuals and families**

We focus on the individuals' strengths (including personal strengths and social and community networks) and not on their deficits. Strengths Based practice is holistic and multidisciplinary and works with the individual to promote their wellbeing. It is outcomes led, not services led and works with a variety of interventions and settings. It follows a relational and restorative approach, and is about doing with others, rather than doing to them or for them.

Strength Based Practice brings together the people involved and gives them the opportunity to make situations better.



Strength Based Practice in Darlington is about...

- Knowing ourselves
- Knowing our communities
- Knowing our multi-agency partners, locally/regionally/nationally
- Asset Based Community Development
- Voice and Coproduction

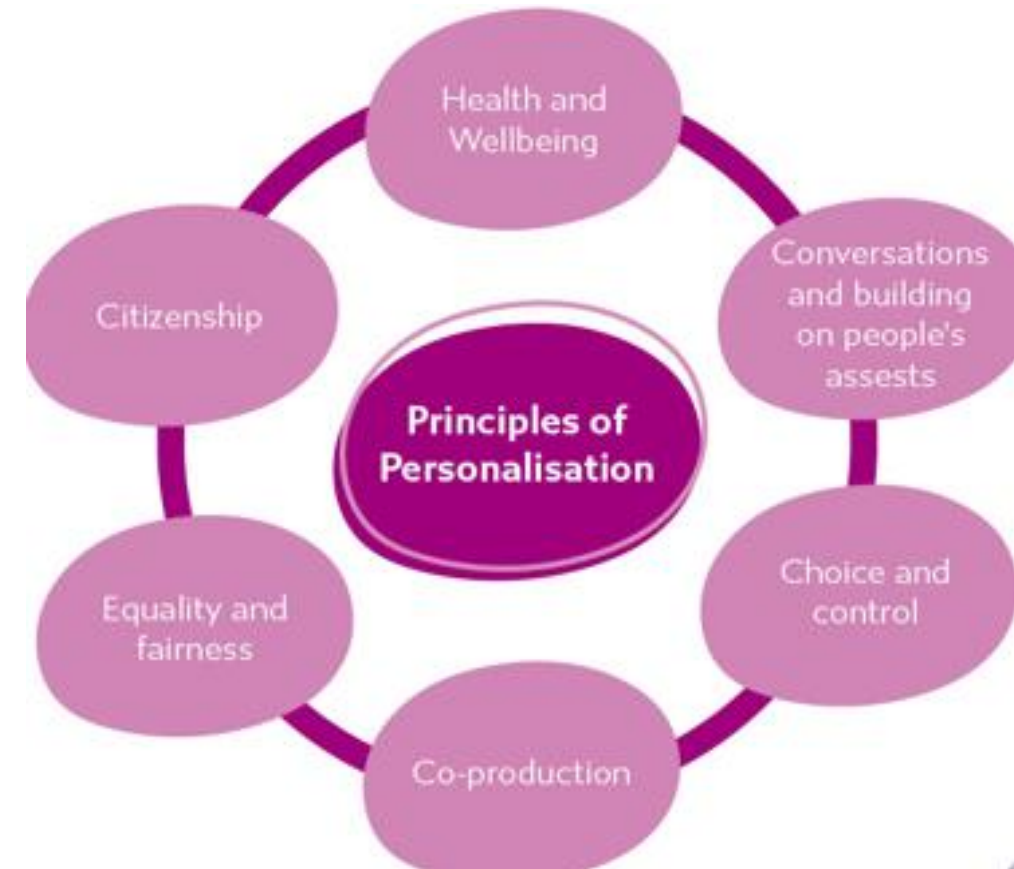


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Key Aims and Principles of Personalisation

Our key aims for Adult Social Care in Darlington are to ensure that:

- People are supported to feel safe within their community
- People are at the centre of planning their own care and support
- That community, services and organisations work together to support people with their care, support and well-being
- That support is delivered that encourages the person to have goals, expectations, outcomes and achievements.



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SCIE on a wall – Darlington Borough Council Adult Services

Project to develop a Darlington Adult Services
'Strength Based Practice Framework'



The views of staff

- Staff Working Group
- Adults Social Care Staff Forums
- SLT input throughout the process



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We asked, teams said!

What do our teams say about Strength Based Practice?

A Strength Based Practice approach focuses on what a person or a group can do, rather than what they may not be able to do. It is about supporting the individual or family to stay as independent as possible, for as long as possible.

- A Strength Based approach focuses on the strengths and positive qualities of a person or a group, rather than the deficits or negatives.
- Everyone has unique potential, strengths and capabilities that can help them on their own journey.
- Be careful with your words and language. Our language creates our reality.
- Life and our world are always changing. Try to adapt and own that change.
- Support others as wholeheartedly as you can. This will truly strengthen your relationship.
- Listen and value the story that people tell.
- Use and learn from experiences to help support people and make improvements
- Working together helps us achieve more. Be open to other ideas and value different opinions.



Taking the
time to do
things
properly



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Our commitment to working with adults and families means...

We recognise that everyone has a strength, something they are interested in or an aspiration. We will focus on this and reflect it back to the person.



The network around people (family, community and multi-agency partners) can help to support their needs and draw out their strengths - maximise the use of community assets.



We use relational, evidence based and positive 'can do' approaches that help to promote independence and manage expectations.



We support the development of independence so that people can "live their best life."



We will be curious, interested and compassionate in our approach.

We will focus on positives and help turn perceived weaknesses into strengths.



The language we use and the approach we have can help to empower the people we work with.



We recognise our own strength as a team/service - we will be creative and think outside of the box.



The people we work with are experts in their own life - listen and don't make assumptions.



We recognise that change can be frightening - we need to be relational and person centred in how we support people, making use of digital technology.





Strength Based Practice -
the real voice of some of
our Adult Social Care
communities in Darlington

The views of our Darlington communities



Q3 Why is it important that professionals (e.g. care workers, doctors, social workers) listen to you?
Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	So they can understand any problems	3/13/23
2	So that we can get the support we need to be able to keep caring effectively	
3	Because you might prevent it getting to the point where the family end up homeless.	
4	They need to meet my needs, not me them. They won't know anything about me if they don't	
5	Cause I have to put lots	
6	Because we know recorded accurate	
7	To get you feel	
8	Because they	
9	I am of value	

Q1 How do you want professionals (e.g. care workers, doctors, social workers) to behave when supporting you or working with you?
Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	With respect	3/19/2023 6:25 PM
2	Kindly and to have good communication and to be well informed	3/15/2023 12:58 PM
3	Offer me suggestions of the services that may be suitable rather than asking what I want for my sons	3/14/2023 9:42 PM
4	With respect, friendship, listening ears and support according to my needs	3/14/2023 7:51 PM
5	With respect and not to be treated like I don't know nothing	3/14/2023 6:02 PM
6	To listen, to not judge, to respect. To record things as we say them, not as they interpret them.	3/14/2023 1:22 PM
7	Professionally, with care and respect.	3/14/2023 10:43 AM
8	Not appearing and disappearing	3/14/2023 10:41 AM
9	Professionally and show empathy and understanding with their active support	3/13/2023 11:56 PM
10	Compassion and understanding. The carer is impacted in their caring role as well as the sufferer.	3/13/2023 7:28 PM
11	Real and honest	3/13/2023 7:27 PM

Q2 What kind of behaviour makes you not want to talk to or work with a professional (e.g. care workers, doctors, social workers)?
Answered: 22 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	People who don't listen	3/18/2023 6:06 PM
2	When they don't follow through with what they say they're going to do	3/15/2023 12:58 PM
3	Saying that they will do things then don't. Being passed from one service provider to another because my son's never seem to meet the criteria. Saying he doesn't meet the criteria for help, unable to pay the mortgage and making the home situation more stressful	3/14/2023 9:42 PM
4	Supercilious, not listening, talking over me, using abbreviations and techno talk.	
5	Respect and caring and know they want to help	
6	Inconsiderateness, inconsiderate, rude, dismissive, flart, not recognizing	
7	Not listening to your side of things and how you are	
8	False hope	
9	When they do not listen, talk	
10	Condescending attitude	



We worked with our local communities to ensure their voice is clear and present throughout the Strength Based Practice Framework



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Co-production, Voice and Action

A quick poll!

- What is co-production?
- Why is co-production important?
- How do we make co-production work / meaningful?
- Who has the responsibility regarding co-production?
- Examples of good practice?



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Working WITH...

- “Connect before Content”
- Importance of authenticity
- Good will builds good will
- What we don’t repair, we repeat
- What does it look, feel and sound like?
- If it is predictable, it is preventable
- Humans first, professionals second
- Removing threat isn’t the same as creating safety
- The quality of the relationship will determine the quality of the outcome
- Listen with the intent to understand rather than the intent to reply
- Empathy drives connection – sympathy drives disconnection
- It isn’t about doing things 100% better, it is about doing 100 things 1% better
- Not everything we count counts, not everything that counts can be counted

High Support, High Challenge

Our approach will be about working “WITH” – Maximum growth, support and ownership. We will work together to support individuals, families, relatives and friends to find solutions to problems.



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Our methodology, approach and training model

Outcome and Solution Focused Practice	Person Centred Practice	ABCD (Asset Based Community Development)	MINDSPACE
<p>Outcome and Solution Focused Practice supports individuals and families to articulate, understand and achieve realistic goals based around wellbeing and aspirations.</p> <p>This approach supports a positive, creative, respectful and effective way of helping people to make changes or adaptations that are important to their lives.</p>	<p>Person Centred Practice supports personalisation, empowerment and shared decision making. It is an approach that recognises that people want to be treated as a whole person by professionals they trust, involving them in decision making and supporting them to actively manage their own health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Person Centred Practice puts the person at the centre of everything we do, respecting individual needs and preferences.</p>	<p>ABCD is an approach that supports individuals and families to stay as independent as possible for as long as possible by identifying and supporting the use of existing and often unrecognised assets.</p> <p>ABCD is about building on and enhancing assets found in the community, promoting proportionate and appropriate support and strength based work. It isn't about services abdicating responsibility, but ensuring the right support is available.</p>	<p>M - Messenger. We are influenced by who communicates information</p> <p>I - Incentives. Think of positive gains rather than losses</p> <p>N - Norms. Understanding what our peers are achieving</p> <p>D - Defaults. Consider how we present options available</p> <p>S - Salience. Simple, accessible, relevant and fun</p> <p>P - Priming. Positive outlook/ language encourages positive thinking</p> <p>A - Affect. Knowing likes and dislikes, understanding emotions</p> <p>C - Commitment. Active SMART/committing to actions</p> <p>E - Ego. Sincerity in supporting people to feel better about themselves. Build on positives.</p>

Our Strength Based Umbrella

Strength Based Practice Umbrella

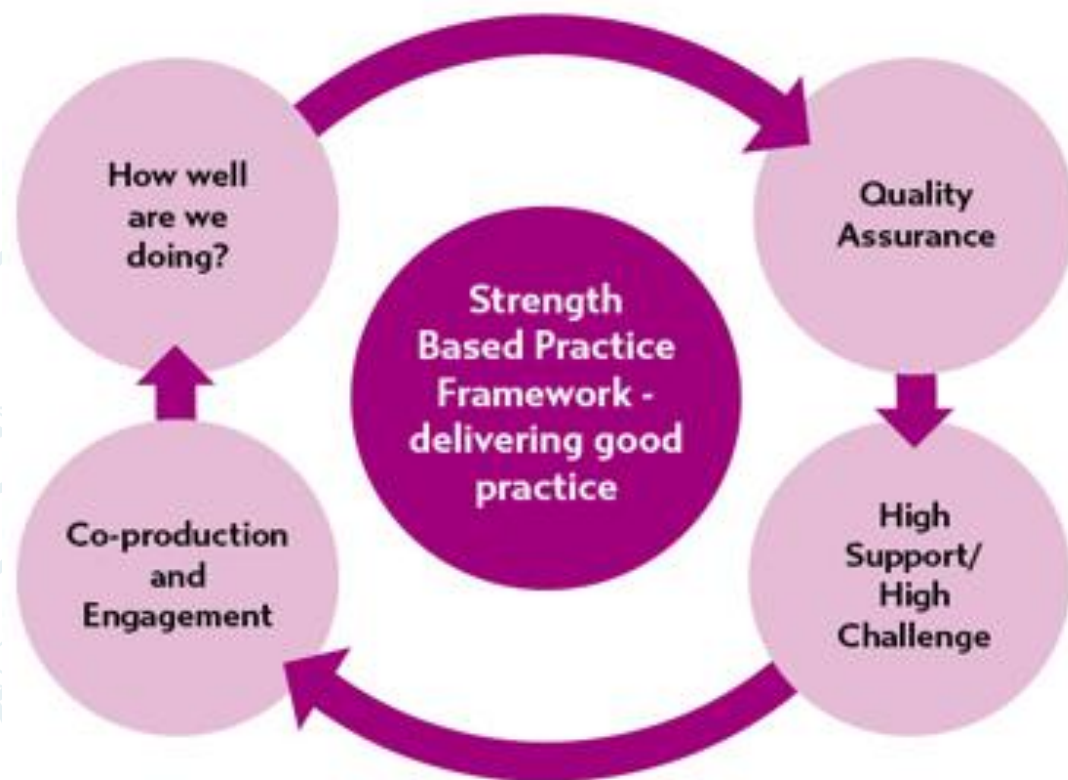


Dimensions of change



Keeping on track

Part of our Quality Improvement Journey



Strength Based Practice Framework - delivering good practice in Darlington

- **Quality Assurance** (checking and auditing our work) Seeking feedback on our delivery of Strength Based Practice.
- **Co-production and Engagement** - listening to and acting on the voice of our local partners and people.
- **High Support/High Challenge** - implementation of a 'Critical Friend' process, where sector leading professionals challenge and measure our progress on the Strength Based Practice journey .
- **How well are we doing?** - Measuring our performance locally and nationally, working alongside local partners and organisations. Ensuring we are inspection ready.



Next Steps

- Launch and Communication – briefing sessions, printing, posters, podcast, etc.
- Implementation Plan – how it becomes an active/live document
- VAK approach
- Consistency and confidence

**Strength
Based Practice
in Darlington**



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Thank you



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If you or your colleagues haven't done so already,
why not register for SCIE's occasional newsletter,
SCIELine

<https://www.scie.org.uk/myscie/register>

scieline

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