



Glasgow Disability Alliance
Confident Connected Contributing



assist
social capital
Putting Social Capital into Practice

“Building Connections” Social Capital Summary Report

Key findings

Using asset based approaches, GDA delivers:

- **Increased connectivity** - 420% amongst those surveyed in GDA’s Drivers for Change (DfC) and Purple Poncho Players (PPP) programmes.
- **Increased confidence, capacity and resilience** to respond to the disadvantages disabled people face.
- **A high level of trust** based on shared values and identity, ownership and control over how GDA is run, and on knowing access needs will be understood and met.
- **Increased participation of disabled people has led to a grassroots surge in social capital** with a focus on enabling resilience and contributions.
- **A strong, articulate, cohesive and more resilient community of interest** has been co-created as a result of investment in social connections.
- **Vital assets** to local and national policy priorities in the form of both individual disabled people and GDA itself.

Working collaboratively can be transformative:

- GDA forges deep trust and connections, delivers empowerment and improves wider outcomes for individuals and the collective community.
- GDA’s ground-breaking work with disabled people is preventative in nature – tackling isolation, poverty and inequality.

By supporting disabled people as **assets** in and of themselves, building on skills, talents and strengths, GDA programmes **connect disabled people:**

- to each other through peer support and learning (bonding social capital)
- to other disabled people and wider communities (bridging social capital)
- to resources, information, services and opportunities as well as to more powerful decision makers through partnerships and coproduction which shape policies and services (linking social capital)

Background to the Report

In 2016 Glasgow Disability Alliance commissioned Assist Social Capital to carry out research examining the impact of and “difference made” by two specific GDA programmes. The focus was on the social connections and social capital of GDA members taking part. This research built on a previous 2014 study across the wider GDA membership and programmes.

Glasgow Disability Alliance

is a member-led organisation, run by and for disabled people since 2001. With over 3500 members, GDA aims to build disabled people’s confidence, connections and contributions, through accessible programmes of lifelong learning, activities and events. Building social networks, peer support and being people led are at the heart of GDA approaches.

In 2014 ASC found that by joining GDA, the average member:

- Becomes familiar with over 150 other GDA members
- builds a closer network of 11 people they see regularly
- forms close trusting relationships with 6 people from this network

This is comparatively higher than the national average found by the National longitudinal Household survey 2011/12 – all the more remarkable considering the higher levels of social isolation associated with living with an impairment or long-term health condition (*GDA’s Social Isolation Report 2015, Scottish Parliament Social Isolation Report 2015*)



Social Capital is the glue that binds people together - GDA demonstrates the value of social capital in action.

Social Connection: vital asset for a Fairer Scotland

Social connections are increasingly recognised by policy makers around the globe as being crucial to improving lives and communities.

- The Scottish Government recognises Social isolation as a major public health concern.
- Social connectedness is proven to improve resilience, aid recovery, and prevent crisis and ill health.
- GDA’s approach demonstrates the transformative power of recognising people as assets and putting them in the lead of finding solutions to the barriers and inequalities they face.
- Social Capital and social connections are an asset and a resource in and of themselves.

This research proves that investing in social capital can have transformative effects for individuals and communities. Social connections are shown to be crucial to allow people to flourish as assets to their communities and society.

Disability and Disadvantage in Scotland

- Nearly one in five people of working age (1 million, or 19%) in Scotland is disabled
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/disability/>
- Glasgow has highest rate of disabled people in actual numbers and second highest in percentage terms at around 25% (Census 2011 and Glasgow SOA). This totals well over 100,000 people and this number is likely to increase over time.
- Of the total households in the UK living in poverty, disabled people's households make up more than half (52%).
(Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Policy Institute 2016)
- Over 50% of welfare reforms fall on the shoulders of disabled people.
(Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee)
- Around 43 % of disabled people are employed compared with 80% of non disabled people - only 36% of disabled people are employed in Glasgow.
(Glasgow Centre for Population Health)
- 48% of Glasgow Housing Association tenants – living in social rented housing – have a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity – according to their tenant survey late 2015. *(Wheatley Group, Dec 2015)*
- Extra costs are associated with disability e.g. transport, fuel, equipment and access.
(Extra Costs Commission 2015)
- 22% of individuals in families containing a disabled adult lived in relative poverty. For families with no disabled adults, the figure was 15 percent.
(DWP Family Resources Survey, Households below average income datasets).



“Reducing Poverty among disabled people must be at the heart of any attempts to reduce poverty overall in the UK.”

A recent report by JRF and NPI found that, due to a combination of additional costs, reducing support, and multiple disadvantage in the labour market, 48% of people living in poverty in the UK are either disabled, or in a household with a disabled person.

(JRF and NPI 2016)

What is Social Capital?

Social Capital is a vital ingredient for social change. It shows us how relationships and social connections strengthen society. It describes how people help and support each other to deal with crisis, tackle barriers and fulfil their potential.

Social Capital is the 'people power' that brings us together, connects us through shared values, and enables us to work together towards common goals.

Elements of social capital

- Shared understanding
- Reciprocity
- Trust
- Networks

Types of social capital

- **bonding:** close, strong ties between members of a community: builds resilience
- **bridging:** horizontal ties across similar groups and communities : builds cohesion
- **linking:** vertical ties between groups with differing power (financially and/or politically): builds empowerment, participation and social change

About the Research

- To map and evaluate the social capital generated ASC held one-to-one interviews, asking the same questions each time, with 14 members of the DfC and 10 from the PPPs.
- Transport, access and support were provided to enable participation.
- A diverse range of members volunteered to be interviewed, with a whole mix of ages and backgrounds
- 8 had been in DfC up to 1 year, 7 were DfC or PPPs for 1-3 yrs, and 9 PPPs had 3+ years of participation in PPP Programmes.
- A number of people had longer term involvement in the GDA community which is significant as they were building on existing social capital.
- Interview data was analysed to map the number and types of connections before and after joining the programmes. Qualitative data was analysed to understand impacts of these connections for individuals and the wider GDA community.




Drivers for Change (DfC): a peer network within GDA, focussed on building capacity to speak out and contribute lived experience and expertise as disabled people, to influence decision makers, inform policies and improve services that affect them.

Purple Poncho Players (PPPs): use music, comedy and drama to portray their real life experiences on stage, share messages about the barriers faced and what needs to change. Performing for Government ministers and service managers, they aim to impact on policy, as spokespeople for disabled people. They also act as role models to inspire ordinary disabled people about what can be achieved if support is in place.

The Results: Social Capital in action




Social Network Maps

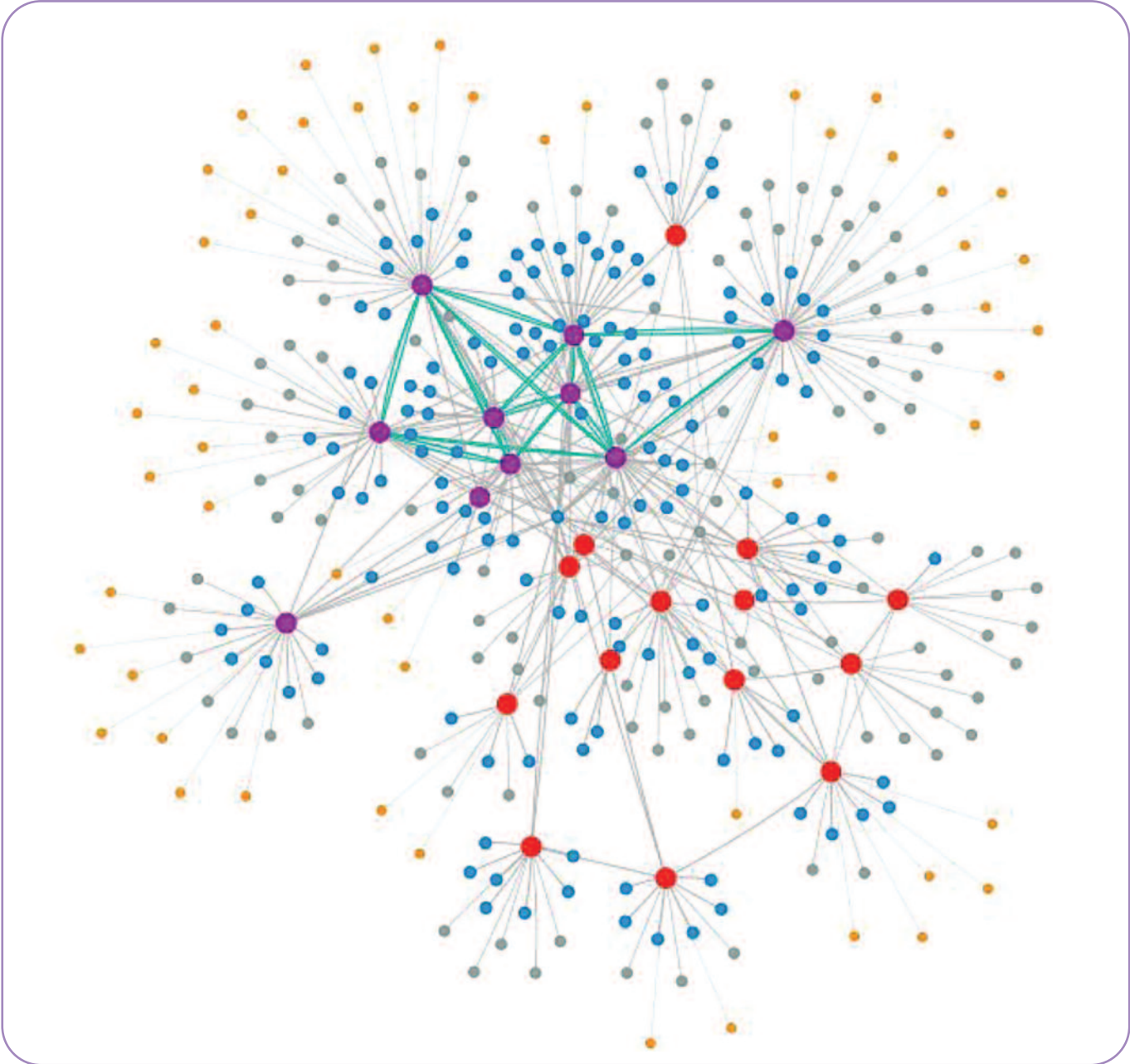
ASC used the interview data to produce 'Social Network Maps'. These show the number and type of connections made before and after joining GDA either the DfC or PPPs.

	● Driver for Change		BEFORE joining the network	Bonding 	Bridging 	Linking 
● Purple Poncho Player						
● Other member of the group						
● Person outside of GDA						
● Influential person outside of GDA						
	Drivers for Change ●		18	40	8	
	Purple Poncho Players ●		43	30	14	



The map below shows individuals' connections and the network this creates, after joining. It is clear that becoming part of GDA's networks creates a vast increase in opportunities for connections and social capital.

AFTER joining the network	Bonding 	Bridging 	Linking 
Drivers for Change ●	86	79	10
Purple Poncho Players ●	171	74	53






After joining, not one GDA member is isolated. Every member is more connected in multiple ways.

Each individual has gained new relationships with their peers in the groups and via these connections, externally to information and resources via both bridging and linking ties, whether or not they have direct connections themselves.

GDA Connections: up close

Here is a snapshot of just some of the personal journeys GDA members shared with ASC.

"JOE" Driver for Change	Bonding	Bridging	Linking
			
Before joining	0	2	0
Now	9	3	2

Before



Now



"Drivers for Change has helped me speak out – even for things like phoning the building factor and getting the back yard cleaned up. Before, I couldn't have done that. GDA and Drivers for Change know your situation – this has made a huge difference to my confidence. I remember I have some talents too. It's about people helping you and you helping them."

GDA grows community assets by developing social capital. The organisation demonstrates the value of asset based approaches in abundance through numerous case studies.

Before






Now



"If it wasn't for the GDA I wouldn't be in such a good place as I am in today. The whole of GDA is like an extended family - I have 'adopted' cousins here! Thanks to being able to get taxis from the GDA, I am able to meet people outside of my family and make friends."

GDA's ambitions make up a proactive, collaborative response to the risk of isolation.

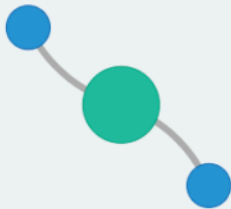
"MIRA" Driver for Change	Bonding 	Bridging 	Linking 
Before joining	1	0	0
Now	7	9	0

"There is an empathy in GDA because they understand. Other places have good intentions but they don't quite get it. You have to explain yourself over and over again."

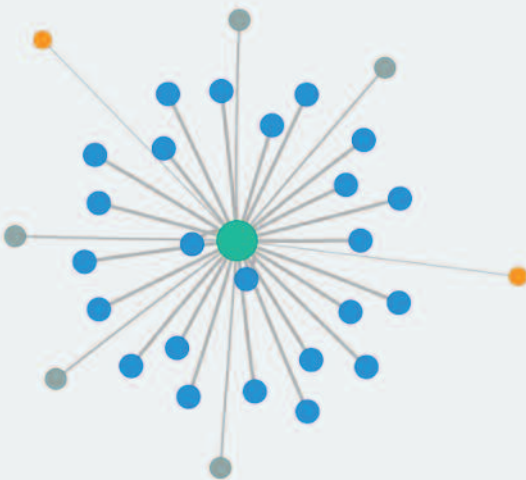
"Becoming disabled – I thought my life was over. GDA changed all that and kick-started me, to complete my degree.




Seeing other disabled people just getting on with things, seeing what it's like to have the proper support and personal assistance was life changing."

Before



Now



"SALLY" Purple Poncho Player	Bonding 	Bridging 	Linking 
Before joining	2	0	0
Now	24	5	2

GDA methodologies are part of a positive, asset based approach to prevention at the level of the individual members and the asset of GDA itself and its contributions to both Glasgow and Scotland.

When disabled people realise that they are not alone and are affected like other disabled people – by their external contexts and environments which are disabling, the results are incredibly powerful.

"Now I feel I can give something back – as a friend, advocate, mentor – I'm out working in the community now, with a life outside of GDA! I feel valuable and needed."

Before



Now






The creative platform of the PPPs creates a “performance dynamic” which reflects significantly higher scores for linking with power.

This is most likely based on confidence as a result of immediate feedback.

“My confidence has grown immensely – GDA create opportunities for us to bring our messages directly to influence the decision makers, like politicians or heads of Health or Social Care Departments.”

The PPP’s aim to impact on those influencing policy can be seen particularly in the linking scores: this in turn delivers substantial benefits to the individuals involved and the wider community of disabled people in Glasgow.

“KEITH” Driver for Change	Bonding 	Bridging 	Linking 
Before joining	4	5	1
Now	17	25	17

Conclusions

The Report evidences that GDA is helping its members build their autonomy and resilience by co-creating community capacity within the GDA network: GDA therefore delivers on the Community Empowerment Act by building community capacity that responds to the particular needs of disabled people as the experts in the *social and economic challenges they face*.

Participants of PPPs and DfC enjoy high quality relationships that support them to lead independent lives over which they feel more in control. This sense of taking control and resilience is fundamental to GDA's successful model which enables participants to access support and opportunities to improve their lives.

GDA's innovative approach is particularly crucial for today's policy priorities and tackling poverty in particular. 50% of Westminster's welfare reforms have fallen on disabled people. Glasgow has been hit especially hard, with its pre-existing higher levels of poverty, unemployment, disability and poor health. Positive outcomes for individuals and the collective community of GDA members have long-term cost benefits to the wider community.

The project has significant preventative impact, making it a highly cost effective organisation.

The collective social capital of these groups becomes an asset in itself where the group members become part of something that is bigger than themselves based on their shared purpose and understanding. Transformation in the lives of individuals comes about through effective integration of people who would otherwise be adversely affected by social inequality, isolation and poverty of both income and opportunities.



Relationships create a sense of community, resilience and increased ability to draw on supports and opportunities which improve lives and wellbeing.

Every member interviewed reported a significant increase in the number of social connections, and demonstrated improved wellbeing, confidence, and sense of control in their lives and communities. GDA's approach shows the value of social capital in action.

GDA is an inspirational example of a community of interest where disabled people are given the chance to help other disabled people to be more resilient and in control of their own lives.

Who better to provide that support than disabled people themselves, involving disabled people in exploring their circumstances, identifying solutions and planning actions?

Working together, they make decisions which affect their lives and create a more inclusive society.



This Summary gives an overview of the findings of Assist Social Capital - for a copy of the full Report, please contact GDA.



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