

# Using ALISS and asset mapping to discover, collect and share local community information



Supporting the elderly  
Suburban

DANCE 80+

Music APPRECIATION

physical activity

EXERCISE

LINK

# Turn local knowledge into open, sharable data



ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) is a search and collaboration tool for Health and Wellbeing in Scotland. It helps signpost people to useful community support, and with an ALISS account you can contribute the many and varied resources that our local communities have to offer.

You can use it to capture and organise knowledge about local assets ... and by assets we mean places, activities, services, groups ... the many and varied examples of support that communities offer. Information about these often emerges by simply asking people – what do you do to keep well?

By using ALISS to turn these discoveries into online collections of links you can use them to power your own service – and share them openly on the web for everyone else to use.

The result is a rich picture of what our local communities have to offer and a growing data set that can be used to enhance existing information services and create new ones.

You can use this resource to get started with:

- discovering examples of local support using asset mapping
- creating an online collection of your discoveries by adding them to ALISS
- thinking about how you might want to use this new picture of your local community that you're creating...

This pack links to other resources to print out and refer to. Your feedback is key to making this guide more useful so please get in touch and tell us what works and what doesn't [aliss@alliance-scotland.org.uk](mailto:aliss@alliance-scotland.org.uk)



# Assets?

By Assets we mean places, activities, services, groups ... the many and varied examples of support that communities offer. When we've asked people in the past what's important to them in their communities, they've told us about classes, choirs, book groups, beaches, cafes, videos, poems, books, parks, walks, sports clubs, views, cycle tracks, church halls ... you get the picture.

## Asset mapping?

It's often easier to describe these things by giving them a location when they have one - a video on the web, for example, won't but it might be as useful as a physical asset. For ALISS it's important because we like to record location. But when we're talking with people about what they do and where they go, location is an important part of describing an asset. So we usually use (or draw) a map.

We use asset mapping to discover examples of local resources that can then be converted into online records in ALISS.

It's a simple, fun exercise to do with friends, colleagues, conference delegates... you can do this too, with just a few people or a large group.

There are a range of activities that you can build into this and you can do as many or as few as you like. By asking the question "What helps you to keep well?" you'll be inviting participants to think about, discuss and share their own personal experiences and recommendations of activities, places, organisations or other examples of what they do to be healthy and happy.

Mapping can help to:

- reveal 'hidden' services, activities and places
- prompt conversations about keeping well and healthy communities
- prompt people to think about who and what's in their local network, how they might use local services and how they share this information
- develop ideas about how to use local information

Everyone can be part of the discovery process and, by using ALISS to capture the information, everyone can contribute to a national collection of local assets.

# Getting started

Well, this is all very interesting but how do you get on and do something?

## **Get to know ALISS**

Whilst this process is mostly about getting people together and having useful conversations, NOT about using technology, it will probably help if you take a look around [aliss.org](http://aliss.org) to begin with...

## **Plan some mapping**

If you already have a list of local links and you don't need/want to map, then skip straight to thinking about adding them to ALISS. If not, you can easily run your own workshop to make some local discoveries - have a think about what you'd like to achieve, the amount of time you'll have and the number of participants.

## **Do some mapping**

We've included some ideas on how we've run short and longer mapping workshops - you may come up with other ideas about how to do this...

## **Add your discoveries to ALISS**

You'll have your own reasons to map, but our hope is that you'll ultimately collect some information about resources in your area and add it to ALISS. It's easy, we can show you how.

## **Use the data, tell your story**

Once you've had fun collecting the information and adding it to ALISS, then what? How will you use the new collection you've created? How might others want to use it?

# Search

To search community resources available in your area, enter the location within which you wish to find resources in the 'location' box, and/or a word relating to the type of resource you wish to find in the 'keyword' box.

Location:

edinburgh

Keywords:

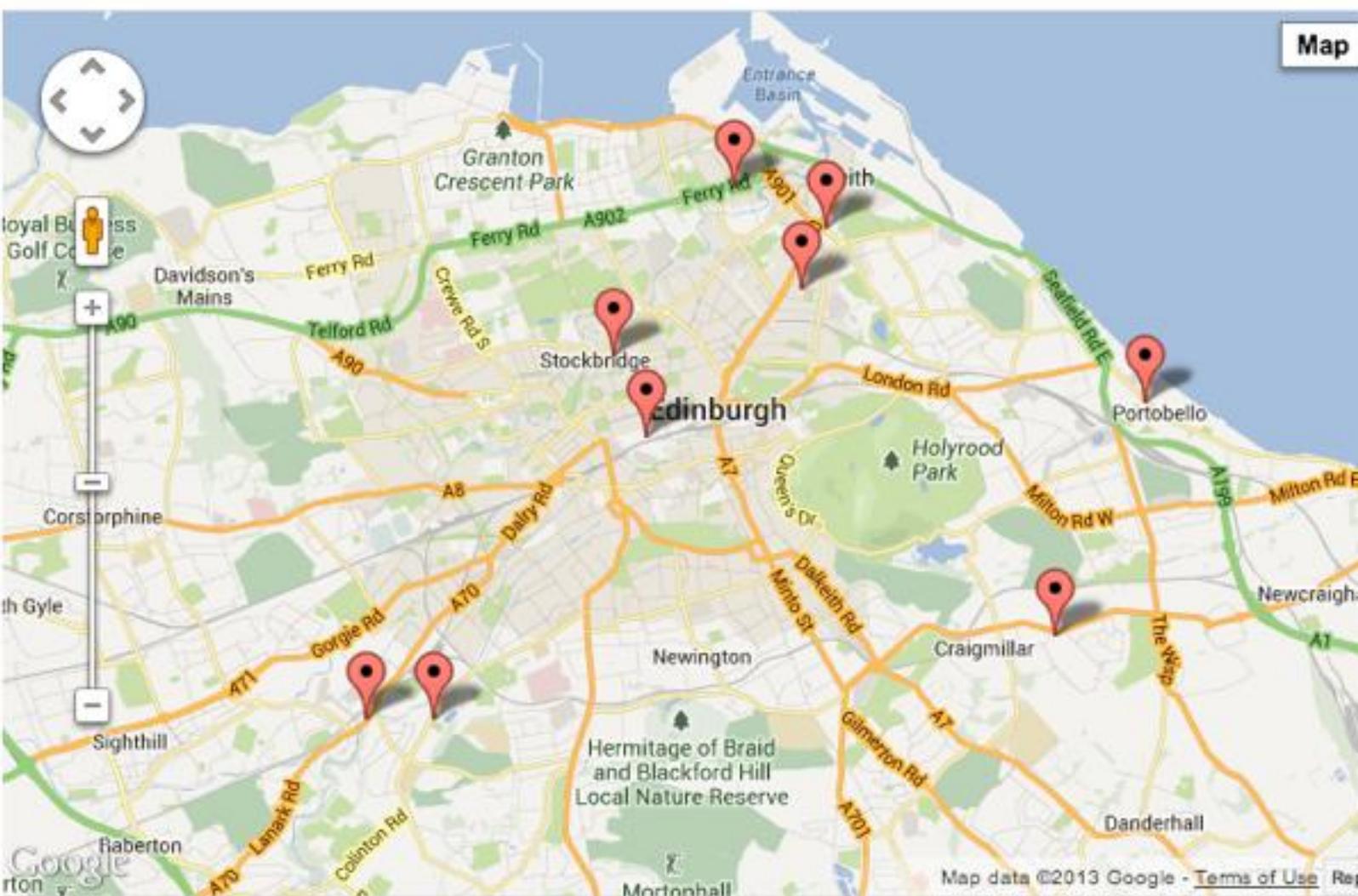
exercise

Show map

Search Now

Reset Search

Save Search



## Resources found for "exercise" in "edinburgh"

Select All

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ➔

**1. Edinburgh Parkinsons**

We aim to help people with Parkinsons, their families and friends in Edinburgh and Lothians in any way we can. We provide opportunities for members to meet, share experience and support each other. Information about health and life style issues and activities.

# 1. Get to know ALISS

ALISS is an online index of links to local community resources. It can include data from existing directory services and incorporates examples of local support based on our own experience – that includes you! We can all contribute. ALISS can help you in a number of ways:

## Collect

ALISS allows us all to collect links and create our own lists of local resources. Spot useful local activities and groups, gather a few key details (website, short description and location) and add them to your collection.

## Manage

Use ALISS to manage your links, find other resources contributed by others and add them to your own collection. Update records, connect with others.

## Publish and share

All collections created in ALISS are openly available to everyone. Use them to enhance your existing information service and provide a richer picture of what support is available in your community. You can do this by:

- Adding the [ALISS search box](#) to your website
- Or Creating a customisable web page
- Or we can integrate your existing service with ALISS, please [contact us](#) for more info.

## Why is this different?

Unlike other local directories, ALISS is an index of records created and managed by its users. Local communities can use it to create their own collections of resources that are meaningful to them. By simply pointing to, not reproducing, the original source of information, ALISS records are much less likely to be out of date. And since ALISS makes these hyperlocal discoveries openly available on the web, local and national services can use them to provide information based on

real, lived experience. It turns local knowledge into sharable, open data.

## **Take a look at ALISS**

It will help if you have had a look around ALISS ahead of time. Take a look at [www.aliss.org](http://www.aliss.org), browse the index, sign up for an account, add a resource or two. It's not compulsory, you can skip this, but it won't take long and it's likely to make it easier to think about how you might want to use the information you discover by mapping.

The aim after all, is to collect some local information and make it more findable on the web using ALISS.

## 2. Plan some mapping

You can easily run your own workshop and use ALISS to capture and share what you discover. The type of workshop we run is usually based on the amount of time we're likely to have with a group.

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### Less than an hour?

Are you thinking of incorporating mapping into an existing event? or maybe looking to do something different over a coffee with a local group? It doesn't have to be long and complicated. In a short time you can plan to achieve this:

- briefly describe ALISS and its approach
- have your participants discussing and sharing information and stories about local assets with each other
- share the group's discoveries on a map
- reflect as a group on what they've discovered
- reflect on the importance of community assets
- invite participants to take the same approach
- gather data to add to ALISS

### More than an hour?

With more time set aside, you can plan to achieve more:

- briefly describe ALISS and its approach
- have your participants discussing and sharing information and stories about local assets with each other
- share the group's discoveries on a map
- reflect as a group on what they've discovered
- reflect on the importance of community assets
- invite participants to take the same approach
- add data to ALISS and explore how participants might use it themselves
- encourage participants to add data
- explore with participants how they can use data in ALISS to drive existing information services
- explore with participants how they can use ALISS to start to design new services

## 3. Express mapping (< 1 hour)

In a short time you can explain the basics of ALISS, try out some asset mapping (collect the data for inputting later) and introduce the idea that your participants can do this too...

### You'll need

- A map of the area if participants are all from a similar geographic area ... or a map of the wider region/nation if participants are from a range of locations ...or a large sheet of blank paper to draw a map
- A few post-its each and some coloured pens
- one copy of the ['What helps you to keep well?' sheet](#) for each participant
- an [invitation](#) for your participants to try mapping themselves (one copy per participant)

### 1. Short intro to ALISS and asset mapping (ca 5 mins)

Here are some ideas for key points to introduce the session – add context that is relevant to your event/audience.

You can begin by introducing the group to the idea that we all use local resources to keep well – that some of these may be labelled as health-related but may not be. Give a few examples – a community centre that hosts support groups and dance classes, a quiet place to sit away from the busy high street or perhaps joining a choir.

- ALISS is an online index of useful community support and resources that everyone can contribute to.

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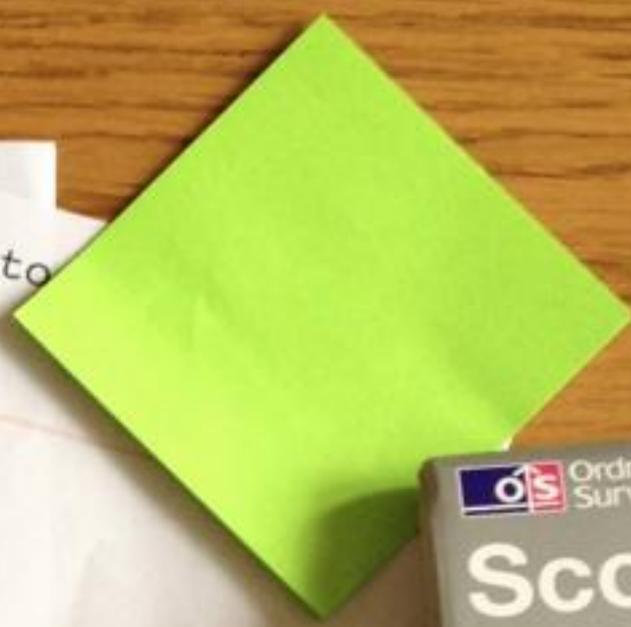
Description  
(tell us about it, draw a picture...)

Website?

Tags/  
keywords

Any event  
details?

Location  
(town, postcode...or draw a





Edinburgh

Dalmeik

Edinburgh  
Edinburgh  
Edinburgh

Dalmeik 801

Physical activity

MUSIC APPRECIATION

EXERCISE

LINK

### 3. Share experiences around a map (ca 20 mins)

After another 5 minutes or so, ask participants to gather around the map. Invite participants to add their example to the map, one by one, and describe their conversation/what they have written/drawn on the sheet. You'll need to allow ca 1 minute per participant.

If you're working with several small groups, give them some time to share their discoveries by creating their own group maps, and then ask them to shout out a few examples. If time permits, invite groups to move around the other tables to compare examples.

### 4. Reflect (ca 5 mins)

Reflect on what you've just collectively done:

- you've shared experiences and maybe learned about some new resources
- the map is likely to show some useful examples of good community support.
- it was (hopefully) relatively easy and participants could do this themselves

To encourage them to do so:

- hand out the [one page ALISS description](#) for them to take away.

This doesn't include any demonstration of using ALISS to capture the discoveries but you can invite participants to use the resources you've been using to learn more about how to do this.

### 5. Collect the data!

Remember that you'll need to collect the 'what helps you to keep well' sheets and the maps so that you can add the suggestions to ALISS later.

# A longer workshop (> 1 hour)

If you can devote a good amount of time (a couple of hours, a half-day session) to thinking about local community resources, you can plan to achieve quite a bit more than in the express workshop!

## Plan ahead

What are you wanting to achieve? What itch are you trying to scratch by doing this? You could try using [this planner](#) to think these things through.

## Speak to your networks

Who else might be interested in doing something like this? You might find that others are planning to do something similar. If so, can you work together? It's worth talking first with friends and colleagues such as:

- Local Area Coordinators
- Third Sector Interfaces
- the local volunteer centre
- local health professionals – GPs, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists etc

## Where?

You'll need a space – you can do this almost anywhere! We've mapped in community centres, libraries, hospitals, offices, conferences and even outside. Give yourself enough space to move around and accommodate a good number of tables with maps and large sheets of paper.

## Invite folk!

The best results come from involving a good cross-section of your community. In the past we've welcomed participation from:

- Librarians
- Community arts organisations
- Design Students
- Voluntary sector providers
- representatives of faith groups
- Health professionals (GPs, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, practice nurses...)
- people living with long term conditions
- carers and carers' groups
- police



Paperless

INTERNET ACCESS → ? Where

People's workspaces  
can be

Advertising  
(small units)

Facebook  
Twitter, group  
launch of A/S

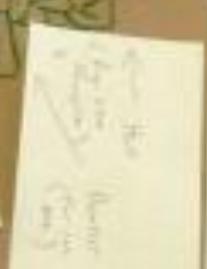
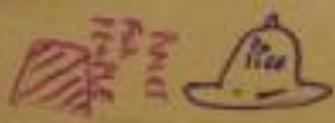
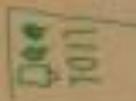


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? Also facilitator/  
patient



## 1. Setting up

Divide participants into manageable groups – say 6 – 10 people in each. You'll need a table per group – and a large sheet of paper taped down to each table (covering it if possible). Leave plenty of supplies on tables – post-its, pens, labels, lego, anything creative!

## 2. Introduce yourselves

Ever wondered who's sitting next to you? It always helps to break the ice and say hello.

- give participants blank stickers and ask them to make their own badges – gets discussion going!
- invite them to fill in [getting to know you sheets](#) – encourage drawing! Ask them to use these to introduce each other...

## 3. Introduction to ALISS, its aims and asset mapping

Here are some ideas for key points to introduce the session – add context that is relevant to your event/audience.

You can begin by introducing the group to the idea that we all use local resources to keep well – that some of these may be labelled as health-related but may not be. Give a few examples – a community centre that hosts support groups and dance classes, a quiet place to sit away from the busy high street or perhaps joining a choir.

- ALISS is an online index of useful community support and resources that everyone can contribute to.
- We use ALISS to capture information about local assets, based on lived experience, creating digital records that are shared openly on the web for everyone to use.
- Information about these resources is often discovered by simply asking people – what do you do to keep well?
- The resulting combination is a rich picture of what our local communities have to offer – it can be used to enhance existing information services or create new ones.
- Unlike other local directories, ALISS is an index of records created and managed by its users.
- Local communities can use it to create their own collections of resources that are meaningful to them.
- By simply pointing to, not reproducing, the original source of information, ALISS records are much less likely to be out of date.
- we're going to explore local resources with each other and share our ideas on a map
- we'll then take the discoveries and turn them into records in ALISS



## 6. Reflect

Reflect on what you've just collectively done:

- you've shared experiences and maybe learned about some new resources
- the map is likely to show some useful examples of good community support.
- it was (hopefully) relatively easy and participants could do this themselves

To encourage them to do so:

- hand out this [one page review](#) for them to take away.

## 5. Collect the data!

Remember that you'll need to collect the 'what helps you to keep well' sheets and the maps/post-its so that you can add the suggestions to ALISS later.

## 6. Add some examples to ALISS

It's easy to add a resource to ALISS. By demonstrating this or inviting others to have a go, you can help participants to feel confident to sign up for the own account and start adding their own links.

You'll need an account and access to the web to demonstrate this live. If you don't have web access you can download the video to show how to add a resource.

## 7. Discuss how you'll use the data

Another way of putting this is "So What?" We've discovered these local resources, but how will make this data work for us?

Here are some ideas for prompting discussion:

- Ask some groups to discuss how EXISTING services could be ENHANCED if the assets discovered were to be incorporated. Provide them with storyboards to draw their ideas!
- ask other groups to think about NEW services that might be developed using this new information that we have. Again, give them storyboards to draw their ideas – or just big pieces of paper...

- Invite everyone to think into the future! If we imagine the world five years from now, what will have changed if these ideas come to fruition? You can use the Newspaper front pages to prompt groups to think this through...
- Ask groups to distil their thoughts into one idea to 'pitch' to everyone.

We've taken some ideas through to business plans – and used large A1 planners to help groups to think this through. Get in touch if you'd like to know more about this...

## **8. Wrapping up**

Provide some space for people to talk about the services that they provide – it's a rare opportunity to talk to this gathering of key community connectors! Invite brief descriptions of new services that have recently started or are about to start...

Maybe wrap up with some general group discussion / sharing / networking time... explore who might like to take some of the ideas forward.

## 4. Adding resources to ALISS

Now that you've discovered local resources you can add these to ALISS and start making this information work harder for you and others. Here are some pointers to get started:

- sign up for an account - you'll need one to ADD resources (anyone can browse and use the information, without signing up)
- take a post-it note/leaflet/drawing/scribble from your workshop and see if you can find it on the web - it may not be online but that's OK
- go to [aliss.org](http://aliss.org) and search to see if the resource is indexed already. If it is you can add the existing record to your own collection without creating a duplicate.
- if it isn't in there already, use the 'Add a new resource' form - it just takes a few minutes.

## 5. Using the data

Now that you've got a growing set of resources developing in an ALISS account, what can you do with the information? It's likely that, until now, you haven't had such a rich and varied mixture of assets recorded in one place, where the data is openly available ... so what will you do with it?

### **Enhance your own service**

You can incorporate the assets you've added to ALISS into your own service by asking your system to talk to ALISS via its open API and request information, filtered in ways that are meaningful to you. For example:

'show me results that are from my account only'

'show me results from my account and another chosen account'

Some services are beginning to incorporate ALISS search boxes into their existing sites and we're developing something similar that you'll be able to use soon...

## Develop new services

Imagine a new service that takes full advantage of ALISS and its data – what would it be? what could it do?

- We're developing a service for GPs to search for community organisations in their area using ALISS as a data source.
- during one of our workshops, a group developed an idea for a service that could provide a local contact for people diagnosed with a Long term condition.

What would you like to do? How will you tell us/the world about how it went?

Self management of pain (older people)

1.

stretch!  
exercise!  
cognitive  
medication

2.

getting the info out - Different forums.

3.

written  
video  
WWW  
photos

4.

inter-organ  
map  
people from local area  
elder

How going to access Overripe provision.

5.

matching people together.  
Community Venue etc.  
importance of network

6.

Happier, healthier older people  
Support network

# Join in!

ALISS is a community effort – we can all get involved in some way, however small it might seem. If you decide to try mapping and add your discoveries to ALISS we'll be delighted! But there are lots of other ways to get involved. Here are just a few ideas:

- get in touch and say hello!
- tell somebody about the ALISS approach
- fancy helping out at one of our events? let us know what you'd like to do to help
- we can always use some help with managing the data (adding, tidying, that sort of thing) either in the Hub or wherever you'd like to work... or maybe as part of your existing role?
- Become an ALISS Mentor – we'll be looking for people to help out locally, across Scotland, from Portree to Peebles – people who can help us to link with local networks, coordinate events, support organisations in adopting an ALISS approach to information and generally encourage an asset-based way of working in the area... if that sounds like you let us know
- got lots of data? ALISS can handle long lists of resources as well as single additions. If you have a directory or list of links that you would like to contribute then get in touch!
- if you're an organisation that would like to use ALISS data, get in touch to learn more about how you can work with us.
- Interested in the tech? think we could do things differently? we're looking for people to test things out on the web and generally help us make the whole ALISS experience better.

Whatever you decide to do, get in touch, keep in touch, spread the word, tell us what works and what doesn't - this is a work in progress, always in beta...

Contact us by emailing [aliss@alliance-scotland.org.uk](mailto:aliss@alliance-scotland.org.uk) follow us on twitter [@alissproject](https://twitter.com/alissproject) or search ALISS at [www.aliss.org](http://www.aliss.org)



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