

ALISS Asset Mapping Toolkit:

Discover, collect and share information about community resources



ALLIANCE
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
ALLIANCE SCOTLAND
people at the centre

 **ALISS**
A Local Information System for Scotland

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Who is this toolkit for?

Everyone can use this toolkit to explore and capture information about the things that keep people well in their local area – whether you are a service provider or a member of the community.



We encourage you to involve as many people as possible in your conversation. The best results come from engaging a diverse cross-section of your community. Consider inviting:

- Local area coordinators.
- Health and social care professionals.
- Carers and support workers.
- Librarians, teachers, youth workers.
- People living with long term conditions.
- Young people, students, and older adults.
- Volunteers.



This toolkit is for **anyone** who wants to better understand what strengths already exist in their community and how to build on them.





How can you use this toolkit?

The contents of this toolkit have been designed to be informative and flexible. Whether you are running a quick community conversation or planning a more in-depth mapping project, this toolkit will help you get the most out of your activity. You can use the toolkit to:



- Prompt conversations about community wellbeing.
- Discover examples of local support.
- Start developing ideas about how to use this new information to benefit your community.
- Identify any gaps in service delivery.
- Share your discoveries with others by adding them to ALISS.
- Support planning, funding applications, or service design.



You don't have to do it all at once. You can simply use the parts that fit your purpose or adapt it for your own context. The most important thing is to make your mapping activity collaborative and community-driven!



1. All about asset mapping

What are assets?

According to Cambridge Dictionary, an asset is “a useful or valuable quality, skill, or person”, or “something having value”. In a community context, assets are the strengths and resources that exist within any community and can support further community development.

When we asked people in the past about the things that keep them well in their community, they told us about classes, choirs, cafes, book groups, sports clubs, church halls, allotments, etc... You get the picture! In other words, assets can be places, activities, services, and groups – the many varied examples of support that a community has to offer.



What is asset mapping?

Asset mapping is the process of identifying the tangible and intangible resources of a community. With tangible resources, we mean physical assets such as youth centres and allotments. With intangible resources, we mean personal assets such as skills and knowledge ([GCPH, 2012](#)).

Through asset mapping, you can record these resources and make them visible for people to find. In turn, this can help address issues in the community – by knowing what is out there, people will be able to access and use these assets as sources of support.

Asset mapping is a strength-based approach, focusing on what a community has rather than on what it needs. It values the capacity, skills knowledge, connections and potential in individuals and communities ([Iriss, 2012](#)).

Mapping methods

There are several ways to map assets in your community. Below we have set out three different methods. Pick the method that best suits your project and participants' needs.

In-person workshop

Having an in-person workshop is a great way to start conversations and build connections between different participants.

Things to consider

You can only invite a limited number of participants which could mean that the group is not representative of the community. Make sure you invite as many participants from different backgrounds as possible. Meeting in person can also create accessibility issues. Think well about the spaces you want to meet in. Are they accessible to all participants? Are they easy to get to and welcoming? Make sure you meet with people in places they feel comfortable, this is how the best conversations start.

What you will need

- Tables with enough space for small group discussions.
- Printed maps of the area (one for each table).
- Post-its, pens, labels - anything to be able to get creative.
- Refreshments.

Practical tips

Collect all materials afterwards and put them somewhere safe, so you can have a look them later when you are writing up the results.

Digital workshop

Digital workshops are great if you are planning to meet with lots of people that might be difficult to get together in one place. Meeting online can be more inclusive and accessible, because you are not bound to a physical location or time.

Things to consider

Not everyone has access to a device or internet connection and not everyone is confident using digital tools. Make sure to keep things simple and offer support where need. Online discussions can also feel less personal. Think about ways to keep people engaged during the conversation.

What you will need

- An online platform that allows for collaboration (e.g. [Miro](#)).
- A digital map for participants to add their assets to.
- Clear instructions and a schedule that allows for flexible participation.

Practical tips

You could start with a live introduction meeting, but participants could then add to the map in their own time. All data is collected digitally so it is easy to organise and use later.



Walks

Going on a walk around the neighbourhood is a fun and engaging way of exploring what assets a community has. It can encourage participants to notice things they have not noticed before and start conversations with other people living in the community, sharing their experiences along the way.

Things to consider

This method might not be as accessible as the other two methods, as people who have limited mobility or other accessibility needs might not be able to join. It is therefore important that you plan the route. Think about places you could stop with the group so that participants can take a break and use the toilet.

What you will need

- A planned route that you can share with participants beforehand.
- Printed maps of the area and clipboards (enough so that everyone can have one each).
- Post-its, pens, labels - anything to be able to get creative.
- Refreshments.

Practical tips

Make sure to brief participants before the walk and debrief afterwards. Collect all materials afterwards and put them somewhere safe, so you can have a look them later when you are writing up the results.



2. Asset mapping and ALISS

What is ALISS?

ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland) is a national digital programme helping people and professionals to find and share information on health and wellbeing resources, services, groups, and support in their local communities and online.

ALISS can help you find information about resources that can:

- provide support to help you manage your long term conditions.
- enable social and community connection.
- support creative, cultural or physical activity.
- link to a range of practical, legal and financial support.
- involve digital technology.

ALISS aims to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the right information, at the right time, about resources that are available to help them live well and stay connected to and involved in their community. Resources you can find on ALISS are added and edited by people living and working in the community. This means that if you know about a resource but cannot find it in the system, you can add it yourself.

ALISS is funded by the Scottish Government and is part of the wider **Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE)**.

ALISS is co-produced with people and professionals in Scotland's communities and values local and national resources as the key to living well.



Information on ALISS can also be found on other sites and systems, like:

- [**NHS Inform - Scotland Service Directory \(SSD\)**](#)
- [**North Ayrshire Community Directory**](#)
- [**Glasgow Community Food Network**](#)
- [**Shetland Community Directory**](#)

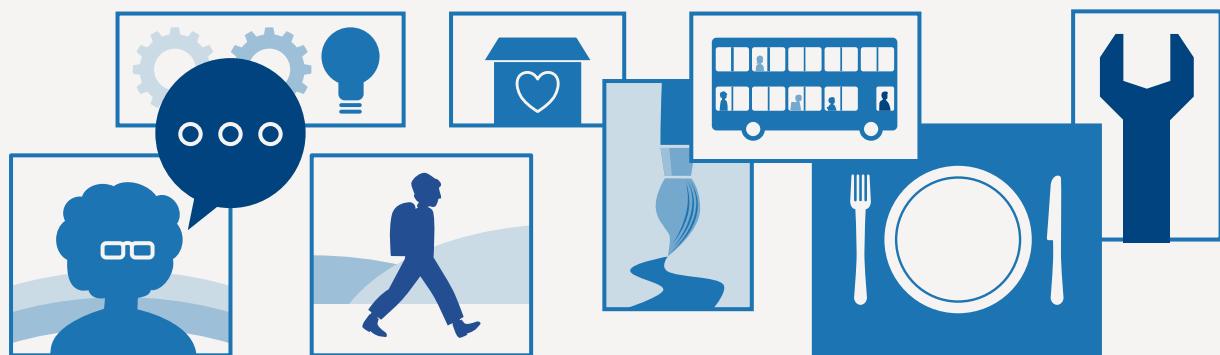
You can learn more about ALISS by visiting the [**ALISS website**](#) or the [**ALISS section**](#) on the ALLIANCE website. If you wish to speak to a member of the team or would like for us to tell you a bit more about ALISS in person, please get in touch at hello@aliss.org.

How can ALISS support asset mapping?

You can use ALISS at different stages of your asset mapping activity. Before you begin, you can use ALISS to have a look at what is already out there. While ALISS does not list personal assets (e.g. individual knowledge or skills), it will allow you to explore resources, services, groups, support, and activities in your local area. You might identify certain gaps or opportunities, which can help shape your conversation.

Once your mapping activity is complete, ALISS provides you with a place to store and share what you have collected. If the assets that participants have shared are not yet on ALISS, you can add them yourself. This way, participants and others in the community can benefit from what you have learned. By adding this information to ALISS, you also contribute to a bigger picture of community wellbeing across Scotland.

Because anyone can update or add information to ALISS, your asset map doesn't have to be a one-off snapshot. It can become something living, something that grows and evolves over time like a community does.



3. Mapping made easy: four simple steps

Step 1: Plan your workshop

Now that you know a bit more about asset mapping and ALISS, it is time to plan your workshop. The type of workshop you want to run, is usually based on the amount of time you are likely to have for the project.

Below we have set out two workshop suggestions for different time frames. If you have about an hour, we recommend focusing on getting the conversation started and gathering as much information as possible. If you have a bit more time, you could encourage participants to add information to ALISS themselves during the workshop.



If you have +/- 60 minutes

1	Introductions to each other Break the ice and say hello!	10 minutes
2	Introduction to ALISS and asset mapping Introduce the idea that we all use local resources to keep well. Some of these might be labelled as health-related, others might not. Give examples!	10 minutes
3	Share experiences around a map In groups of 5-8 people, invite participants to add their examples of things that keep them well to a map. If time permits, invite groups to move around the other tables to compare examples.	30 minutes
4	Reflect How did participants find this activity? Did they learn anything new? What are they going to do with this new information?	10 minutes

Make sure to collect all the maps. In case the resources are not yet on ALISS, you can add them yourself and let participants know that they can now find this information and share it with others.

If you have more than 60 minutes

1	Introductions to each other Break the ice and say hello!	10 minutes
2	Introduction to ALISS and asset mapping Introduce the idea that we all use local resources to keep well. Some of these might be labelled as health-related, others might not. Give examples!	10 minutes
3	Share experiences around a map In groups of 5-8 people, invite participants to add their examples of things that keep them well. If time permits, invite groups to move around the other tables to compare examples.	30 minutes
4	Reflect How did participants find this activity? Did they learn anything new? What are they going to do with this new information?	10 minutes
5	Break Provide participants with some refreshments!	20 minutes
6	Add to ALISS Invite participants to go to the ALISS website and see what local resources are already listed. If the resource they identified during the mapping exercise is not listed, encourage them to add it themselves. They can use the guidance materials in the Help Centre for this, or we can come along to your event and show people how to add information to ALISS!	45 minutes
7	Wrap up Have some time at the end of the session for a general group discussion, sharing ideas, and networking. Invite people to share a bit about the services they provide or know about.	10 minutes

Step 2: Identify community assets

We like to get the conversation started by asking people “what keeps you well?” Everyone will have their own answer – an activity, group, place, or source of support that keeps them well. What emerges from this conversation is a rich picture of what a local community has to offer.

To help guide the process of identifying community assets, it might be useful to think about the different types of community assets, such as:

People

(carers, volunteers, local business owners, spiritual leaders)



Places

(community centres, allotments, libraries, mosques, cafes)



Groups and organisations

(local scouts, charities, sport clubs)



Services and support

(health and social care services, pharmacies)



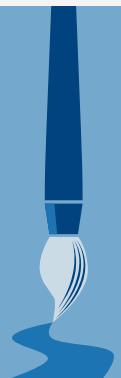
Cultural and natural resources

(festivals, green and blue spaces)



Knowledge and skills

(local history, language expertise, creativity)



Sometimes, it can be helpful to ask different questions such as “where do you go when things are difficult?” or “what in the area makes you proud?” to uncover assets that might be less obvious.

Step 3: Add your data to ALISS

Most importantly, participants should benefit from the mapping exercise. Whichever way you decide to disseminate the information – it should be accessible to participants. One way to do this, is by adding your data to ALISS.

To make sure you collect the right information during the mapping exercise, we have created a [**shortened version of the Add to ALISS form**](#) which you can hand out to participants. It includes some essential details (who, what, where) that you would need to successfully add an asset to the system. We would like to remind you to not add any personal knowledge or skills to the system, unless you are providing a service that people can access.

We also have [**guidance materials on the ALISS website**](#), and we also host workshops to help people add their information to ALISS. If you need more help with this, please get in touch with us at hello@aliss.org.



Step 4: Share the data

Now that the data is on ALISS, you can share it with participants and the wider community. There are a variety of ways to do this:

Let others know

If you have added a service on behalf of an organisation, why not tell them about their information being on ALISS? You can share a listing via email with a short message to encourage the organisation to [claim their information](#). You can use the [template](#) provided in the appendix for this.

Use collections

If you wish to share all the services you identified during the mapping exercise with others, you can create a collection of them. Collections are not open to the public and can only be viewed in your personal account. However, you can share your collections with others via email or print. To learn more about collections, please visit the [**ALISS Help Centre**](#).

Develop your own directory

If you are looking to develop your own directory of services with the findings from your mapping exercise, you don't have to start from scratch! It is possible to use ALISS data for your own website or system through our open [API \(Application Programming Interface\)](#).

Another way of using ALISS data is through our [JavaScript plugin](#). This can be embedded on third party websites, without the need for much specialist technical knowledge. Additionally, the code for the ALISS system is available on [GitHub](#). The code can be reused, subject to a [Creative Commons license](#).

We have also developed a [customisable map](#). This digital tool allows you to create a tailored map with services which you can embed on your website. For example, Aberdeen HSCP have developed a [**Green Health**](#) Map to help people find parks, gardens, and green spaces in their local area.

Want to learn more about using ALISS data? Please contact us at hello@aliss.org.

Appendix 1: Data input form

Organisation name

What is the name of the organisation that delivers the service, activity, club, group, or resource? It doesn't have to be a large organisation; it can be a small group or informal club that is run independently.

Organisation contact details

You must provide at least one way of contacting the organisation (e.g. phone number, email address, website or social media page).

Phone number	
Email address	
Website	
Other	

Service name

What is the name of the service, activity, club, group, or resource? If it is a small group or informal club that is run independently, the service name will likely be the same as the organisation name.

Service contact details

You must provide at least one way of contacting the service (e.g. phone number, email address, website, or social media page). If they are the same as the organisation, please tick the box below.

All contact details are the same as the organisation.

Phone number	
Email address	
Website	
Other	

Service description

Give a short description of what the service provides (e.g. "local knitting group that meets once a week, open to all abilities").

Location

Where does the service take place? Maybe in different places? You can add more than one address once you are adding to ALISS.

In person

Virtual (online, telephone, app)

Both

Name	
Address	
City/town	
Postcode	

Audience

Who is the service for?

(e.g. children, carers, disabled people, etc, or is it open to all.)

Any other information

Share anything else you think is important for people to know!

Appendix 2: Claim your information message

You can use the template below to let an organisation know that you have added their information to ALISS and encourage them to [claim their information](#). Please feel free to edit the text below so that it better reflects the message you wish to send out to people.

Hello,

We hope this message finds you well.

We would just like to let you know that your organisation and service have been added to ALISS as part of... [explain a bit about your project and/or asset mapping activity and why you are doing it].

ALISS is a Scottish Government funded programme that helps people find and share information about health and wellbeing resources, services, groups, support, and activities in their local community and online.

To ensure that people can find the right information about your organisation and service, we encourage you to claim it. Claiming will allow you to keep your information up to date and accurate. All you need to do for this is create an account.

If you need more help with this, please visit the Help Centre on the ALISS website or get in touch with the ALISS team at hello@aliss.org.

If you would like your information to be removed from ALISS, please get in touch with the ALISS team at hello@aliss.org.

Kind regards,

[Your name]

[Your organisation]

[Your contact details]

Appendix 3: List of website links

Aberdeen HSCP

<https://www.aberdeencityhscp.scot/>

ALISS

www.aliss.org

ALISS Map Tool

<https://map.aliss.org/dist/>

ALLIANCE

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/>

Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH)

<https://www.gcph.co.uk/>

Glasgow Community Food Network

<https://glasgowfood.net/>

Iriss

<https://www.iriss.org.uk>

Miro

<https://miro.com>

NHS Inform Scotland's Service Directory

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/scotlands-service-directory>

North Ayrshire Community Directory

<https://northayrshire.community/>

Shetland Community Directory

<https://www.shetlandcommunitydirectory.co.uk/>

About the ALLIANCE

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector membership organisation for the health and social care sector. We bring together over 3,700 people and organisations dedicated to achieving our vision of a Scotland where everyone has a strong voice and enjoys the right to live well, with dignity and respect. Our members are essential in creating a society in which we all can thrive, and we believe that by working together, our voice is stronger.

We work to improve the wellbeing of people and communities across Scotland by supporting change in health, social care and other public services so they better meet the needs of everyone in Scotland. We do this by bringing together the expertise of people with lived experience, the third sector, and organisations across health and social care to shape better services and support positive change.

The ALLIANCE has three core aims.

We seek to:

- **Empower people with lived experience:** we ensure disabled people, people with long term conditions, and unpaid carers are heard and that their needs remain at the heart of the services and communities.
- **Support positive change:** we work within communities to promote co-production, self management, human rights, and independent living.
- **Champion the third sector:** we work with, support and encourage co-operation between the third sector and health and social care organisations.



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The ALLIANCE is committed to upholding human rights. We embed lived experience in our work and aim to ensure people are meaningfully involved at every level of decision-making.

Working together creates positive, long-lasting impact. We work in partnership with the Scottish Government, NHS Boards, universities, and other key organisations within health, social care, housing, and digital technology to manage funding and develop successful projects. Together, our voice is stronger, and we can create meaningful change.



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Contact:

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𝕏 [@ALLIANCEScot](https://twitter.com/ALLIANCEScot)

ି [ALLIANCEScot](https://www.facebook.com/ALLIANCEScot)

ୟ [alliancescotland](https://www.youtube.com/alliancescotland)

ସ [ALLIANC Live](https://open.spotify.com/show/4300000000000000)

ି [ALLIANCEScot](https://www.mastodon.social/@ALLIANCEScot)

ି [@alliancescot.bsky.social](https://bsky.social/@alliancescot)

www.alliance-scotland.org.uk

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