

Supporting the whole person through an integrated locality approach. What does locality working mean for adult social care - Community Led Support

Croydon council is adopting a strengths and asset based model of social care and social work across the borough over the next 12 months. The council is working with a partner, the National Development Team for Inclusion, NDTi, to embed the approach which is called Community Led Support.

Community Led Support focuses on ensuring people receive support quickly, before crises occur. The support people receive is different, based on good strengths based conversations rather than lengthy bureaucratic assessment and eligibility processes. It is based on a set of principles and approaches that help people to achieve what matters most to them. The approach supports people to build on their own skills, assets and abilities and those of their friends and family; connecting people with people and with local communities. It is a place based approach that recognises every community is different and there is no “one size fits all” response.

Community Led Support is working in 25 local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales and, where it has been established, is having positive effects including reducing waiting lists, improving staff and resident experience and satisfaction, reducing bureaucracy and costs.

What we are trying to change

Practice - The current approach is traditional, not proportionate, and does not focus on prevention. People are often in crisis by the time we see them.

System - Inefficient and bureaucratic processes and systems lead to duplication and delays so we have long waiting lists and high levels of overdue reviews. Staff are spending a disproportionate amount of their time on paperwork and not on seeing people who need support.

Culture – A focus on assessment and eligibility criteria leads to a “care package mentality” that is risk averse and not creative so, whilst we often provide statutory and paid support, this does not always address what matters most to people, does not connect people to communities and is often costly.

What we want to achieve

- People receive support easily and quickly
- People receive a different kind of support, drawing on resources in their local community
- Empowered, trusted staff make better use of their time
- Resources are used well and commissioning decisions contribute to this

We aim to significantly reduce waiting lists, waiting times, the amount of time spent on bureaucracy and internal referrals and additional waits which usually mean that the persons’ situation deteriorates whilst they wait and their situation may become a crisis.

Supporting the whole person through an integrated locality approach

We intend to resolve 85% of requests at the first point of contact with social care through trained staff having the time to hold good strength based conversations, intervening early to prevent crises occurring, connecting people to communities, agreeing immediate plans that are outcome focused and keep people safe and checking back with people to see if the plan is working and if not what needs to change to prevent deterioration.

We also intend to reduce the number of overdue reviews, changing our approach to ensure we follow up with people in a timescale that makes sense in each individual situation.

Community Led Support is the approach we are taking to achieve these intentions. The approach is based on a set of key principles:

- Co-production brings people and organisations together around a shared vision
- There is a focus on communities and each will be different
- People can get support and advice when they need it so that crises are prevented
- The culture becomes based on trust and empowerment
- People are treated as equals, their strengths and gifts built on
- Bureaucracy is the absolute minimum it has to be
- The system is responsive, proportionate and delivers good outcomes

Progress to date

We have restructured and reorganised initial point of contact with the council- the councils' "front door."

We have reorganised our over 65s social care teams into 6 localities based on GP networks.

We have identified an innovation team to start to embed the Community Led Support approach by designing, testing and learning what works, what doesn't and what needs to change. The team is the Thornton Heath older peoples' locality team and the whole of the social care front door.

80 staff have been trained in good strength based conversations

We have mapped the customer journey and agreed an evaluation framework to ensure we measure effectiveness and change.

We have set up our first Talking point based in the Thornton Heath locality where people can be seen quickly in an environment that is comfortable and where they can be easily connected to people, activities and groups in their own community, This will be developed further when the emarket place is active and available to staff and the people of Croydon.

We are establishing a "Making it happen" group of local people and voluntary and community sector organisations and groups to co design the approach and to ensure the work is truly community led and co-produced.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT 1 –
Supporting the whole person through an integrated locality approach

We have significantly reduced our current assessment paperwork from 126 questions to an outcomes focused conversation record which we will trial and develop in the innovation site.

We are currently establishing baselines including waiting lists and times, length of time staff spend on bureaucracy, staff and resident satisfaction to include in a performance framework.

Much of our thinking is being supported by evaluation and learning from NDTi and other areas embedding Community Led Support so we are benefitting from the experience of people who have been taking this approach for some time.

We are making sure the work is aligned with the design of integrated teams and working closely with the Croydon One Alliance.

Author:
Anne Flanagan
Consultant
Health, Wellbeing and Adults
Croydon Council