Thurrock Coalition

Empowering Equipment Event

Event Report & Recommendations

Introduction

Thurrock Coalition offers advice and support for disabled and older residents of Thurrock and their carers. We are a wide network of individuals and groups aiming to inform people about their rights and entitlements and to improve the quality and choice of services that might assist them.

In partnership with the Thurrock Autism Action Group, Thurrock Coalition ran a launch event of our new Assistive Equipment Hire Service, that showcased accessible technology for people on the Autistic Spectrum in Thurrock.

Summary & Background

In late 2014 the government announced the Autism Innovation (Capital) Funding scheme. This provided £18,500 for local authorities across the country. All local authorities were able to apply for funding to make community areas more autism-friendly. The £18,500 grant could be used to buy electronic equipment such as iPads to improve services for people with autism, or used to refurbish quiet rooms. Local authorities had to set out their plans on how to spend the funds.

Objectives

The Thurrock Autism Action Group (Partnership Board) decided to carry out a survey to determine what types of equipment people would like to have available locally, and then to set up and run an equipment loan service in 2 areas of the borough (Beacon Hill and Thurrock Centre for Independent Living [TCIL]), providing the equipment on loan. A range of equipment has been identified and purchased, with premises and storage agreed at Thurrock Centre for Independent Living.

Where we are now

- We have established an Autism Action Group (AAG) (Partnership Board)
- We have a Thurrock Autism Strategy, last consulted upon in 2014

- Having consulted on and considered how best to utilise the Autism Innovation (Capital) Funding we are establishing an Equipment Hire Service for People with ASD and sought input and feedback on Next Steps at the event.
- We allocated £5,000 for the refurbishment of community space for use as music activity studio for people with ASD.

<u>Where we want to be</u>

It is envisaged that the as a result of the event, the Equipment Hire Service will benefit from:

- Wider input and feedback from individuals, family members and carers as to the desired scope and breadth of available equipment for adults with ASD in Thurrock.
- Individuals will have a wider understanding and awareness of local groups, support organisations and initiatives in Thurrock.
- Increased membership (and therefore influence) of the AAG.

Event Audience

The event audience included individuals on the Autistic Spectrum, parents, carers and family members as well as organisational representatives who support, provide advice or information to carers, disabled people or vulnerable adults in Thurrock. A list of organisations who were represented at the event can be found in the Appendix.

Event Context

The *"Empowering Equipment"* Event was held in February 2017. It was an event for Individuals, family members and carer Third Sector organisations & staff. It provided an opportunity to come and try out and experience a whole range of new equipment, that will soon be available to hire in the borough, through the new Equipment Hire Service including:

- Ipads & tablets
- Assistive apps
- Kindle books
- Time and app management software
- Sensory equipment and devices
- Communication devices

The focus of the event provided a chance for attendees to have a say on what additional types of equipment that the Service could provide.

The Co-Chair of the Autism Action Group attended to discuss the Group with attendees, share ideas for the future and to find out about various activities and support that is available locally.

The Range of Equipment identified

The range of equipment identified from the Survey, included:

- Ipad Air
- Ipad Mini
- Ipod Touch
- GPS and proximity devices
- Specialist books
- Weighted jackets
- Sensory Equipment
- Dorophones
- Ear defenders
- Fidget toys & chewies

Individuals consulted indicated that they would like to see a variety of electronic and assistive equipment, including:
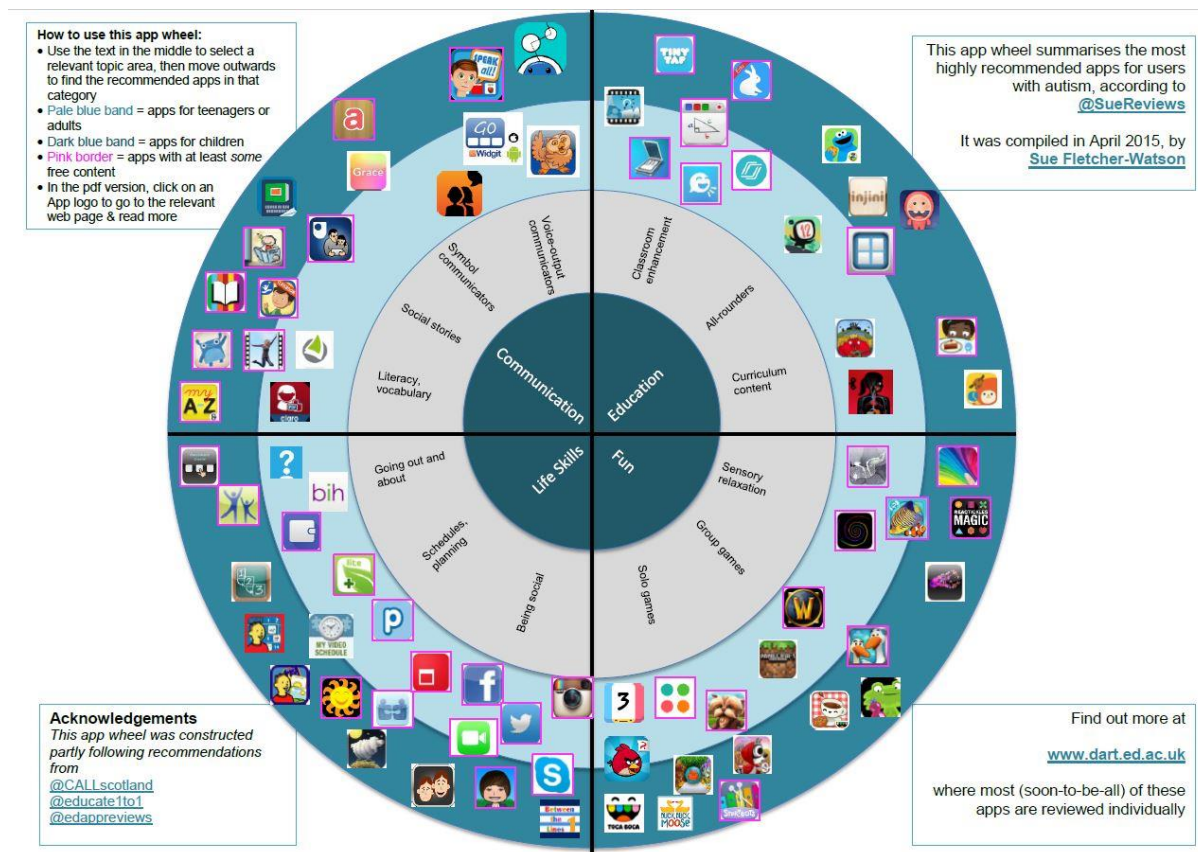
The Apps Wheel

As part of the preparation and research for the event, Thurrock Coalition identified a useful resource that contained the highest user-rated apps for children and young people with ASD.

The Apps Wheel was designed by Dr. Sue Fletcher-Watson.

Dr. Fletcher-Watson is a Psychologist, with a Research background in autism and technology, based at the Patrick Wilde Centre, focussing upon Development, Autism, Research and Technology (DART) at the University of Edinburgh,

Dr. Fletcher-Watson has attended Apple Accessibility Summits in recent years and speaks about how using the iPad could be really valuable for people on the Autistic Spectrum. Sue has also been involved in the development of several apps including FindMe (Autism) – (Installed on the Hire Service Ipads).

Dr. Fletcher-Watson has carried out research into '*exploring the uses of technology, and especially iPad apps, to support, educate and engage children with autism.'* Sue has produced a wheel of apps aimed directly for those on the Autistic spectrum.

This app wheel summarises the most highly recommended apps for users with autism. It was compiled in April 2015.

The wheel separate's apps into four main categories:

- Communication,
- Education,
- Life Skills; and
- Fun.

These are then sub divided into those apps for children and those for teenagers and adults.

Guide to using the Apps Wheel:

➢ Use the text in the middle to select a relevant topic area, then move outwards to find the recommended apps in that category
➢ Pale blue band = apps for teenagers or adults
➢ Dark blue band = apps for children
➢ Pink border = apps with at least *some* free content
➢ In the pdf version, click on an App logo to go to the relevant web page & read more

Find out more at: **www.dart.ed.ac.uk** where all of these apps are reviewed individually.
You can download the high resolution PDF image, with clickable links here.
Sue is on Twitter: **@SueReviews**

Keynote Presentation from Code4Health

The Keynote Presentation was delivered by Peter Coates, Code4Health & OpenSource Programme Head at Code4Health (https://code4health.org).

Peter provided an outline of the work of Code4Health as:
"…an initiative supported by NHS England and NHS Digital to enable the best use of digital tools and technology to deliver safe, high quality, efficient and compassionate care.

Code4Health aims to educate and inform all participants in the health and care community: citizens, patients, carers, health, care and digital professionals about the possibilities digital technologies provide and equip them with the tools, knowledge and skills to collaborate to develop and implement high quality digital solutions."

The initiative is supported by IBM and Microsoft. Code4Health provides support for everything from I.T. systems to Apps through training, learning, advice and technology and have created a platform for individuals to design their own apps through a "drag and drop" interface to be demand driven, rather than needs led.

Code4Health can support communities and run app building creation days. Once the app is built, it can be made available instantly, the initiative doesn't require NHS Digital, Google or Apple to approve it before it goes "live".

Organisations such as Thurrock Coalition and the Autism Action Group could enter into a partnership or franchise to enable them to provide training etc on how to build apps.

Code4Health also provides a scheme whereby groups and organisations can apply to "form a new community"

These Code4Health communities bring together people with shared interests in digital health and care. Communities can either be people with a share interest in some specific aspect of digital health and care or geographically based.

Innovative digital solutions begin with understanding people's needs and ensuring everyone can participate in their creation. Code4Health hosts a range of communities who bring together anyone with a shared interest across all aspects of digital care. Communities start small and continuously improve using real experiences to inform decisions, building upon its membership, adding like-minded people who understand and can help make informed technology decisions.

Communities can be created around a specific topic, solution or a locality, Code4Health encourages and supports communities to run a range of physical and virtual events and activities.

Specialist communities can relate to a particular area of care, a specific project or any other topic where there is a demand from the broader Code4Health community.

Local communities can be established at whatever geographical scope their members think is helpful, but will typically be aligned with local health and care communities or city/regions.

The Code4Health platform provides a place where communities can provide information about their work, recruit members and share updates and other resources.

Questions, Issues and Opportunities Raised

The event stimulated much discussion and debate amongst attendees and increased awareness of the new Equipment Hire Service and the Code4Health initiative. Several Questions were raised and answered over the course of the morning.

- Thurrock Coalition would be interested in co-ordinating and being a point of focus for Communities of interest locally for a group of individuals with a common need or interest.
- There followed a discussion around the need for any apps that are built to have a user-friendly and straightforward interface.
- Peter provided for details of various Specialist/Functional Community groups that have focused on several areas, including:
- A group in the north East of England that has created an app for G.Ps to use to assess for early signs of dementia:

> *Led by the Yorkshire and Humber Strategic Clinical Network (SCN) the Code4Health Dementia Community are very keen to develop a diagnosis protocol for advanced dementia in the form of an app to support health care professionals in care home settings. The team have undertaken 'App in a Day' training and have produced a prototype app for the Detection and diagnosis of people with dementia living in care homes*

It is possible to apply online as a specific community.

For example, an app could be developed for childhood ailments, detailing common themes/conditions that parents may be concerned or worried about

Further information is available here: https://code4health.org/communities

Feedback from Breakout Groups

Views and Feedback on Equipment & Technology already purchased for the Hire Service

- Personalisation of the apps, prompt cards etc. Attendees were directed to the IASKU app, which allows individuals to take photos of objects and personalise the cards for their own vocabulary.
- GPS very good for everyday life
- A varied variety of different equipment
- We like the clock, great idea
- Doro phone ideal for using on the bus, independence
- Lots of useful equipment
- I-pad very good although aimed more at children, very cartoon based
- Our table was mainly professionals
- Forest school reps will give some thought and email Ian any ideas and suggestions.
- Advertising the service to the community – creating awareness
- Developing an App to enable people to travel more independently – simplified version of google maps.
- Developing an App for employers to gain a better understanding of how to support employees who have special needs.
- Very useful, try before you buy. Allows to use household money more effectively
- Concerns over waiting lists – lead to frustration
- Lending time of 4 weeks perhaps better
- Renewal of equipment rules
- Group purchasing of equipment
- What about engaging with companies to obtain refurbished equipment?

Ideas, views and input on what additional assistive equipment and/or technology could be purchased and made available to hire

- Could consider group buying to keep costs down
- Purchase refurbished Apple technology to keep costs down
- A kindle app
- 'My safe cutter' from pampered chef or other safe knives that cut vegetables but not people!
- Full cup indicators/ alarms (as used by people with sensory impairments)
- Non tying shoelaces e.g. quick shoelace
- Liquid Level indicator
- Some apps seem very much aimed more at children rather than adults and older people with Autism
- An app teaching self-help skills
- An app with instructions and QR (Barcodes) for household appliances, that links to an online video. For example how to load and unload the dishwasher. Allowing for familiarity with kitchen or bathroom – customising for the individual
- Headphones – not ear defenders for use on I-pads etc

- More I-pad apps for adults with additional needs
- More apps aimed at adults rather than for children or young people – books etc.

Ideas, views and input on the Code4Health Initiative supporting a group in Thurrock

- Fantastic – really sparked an idea
- Great idea to train people to build own apps
- Maybe training for children to build own apps
- Linking to education will be great
- Fantastic – let's get Peter back to run a training session, could be opened up to all the partnership boards/forums.
- Get in the LACs and Key community connectors and micro enterprises.
- Personalisation of apps i.e. food/picture uploads
- Lap tray; very good multiple applications
- Possible funding from TBC to assist
- Access through Thurrock Coalition.
- Booking app
- Voting facility to determine new pieces of equipment.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The event resulted in input and feedback from individuals, family members and carers as to the desired scope and breadth of available equipment for adults with ASD in Thurrock. This input appears in the Appendix to this Report. It is hoped that individuals who attended now have a wider understanding and awareness of local groups, support organisations and initiatives in Thurrock. Several attendees have expressed an interested in joining the Autism Action Group.

Thurrock Coalition and Thurrock Centre for Independent Living will continue to oversee the co-ordination and administration of the Equipment Hire Service in conjunction with Beacon Hill. Any questions about the new Service, please contact: Thurrock Centre for Independent Living (TCIL) on 01375 389 864 between 9am – 5pm – Monday to Friday.

Thurrock Coalition – February 2017

Appendix

1. Introduction to the Equipment Hire Service for People with ASD.

Thurrock Coalition
& Thurrock Autism A

2. List of Attendees, Organisations and Representatives at the LPA Information & Awareness Day

- CaPa
- Parents
- Carers
- Family members
- Thurrock Council Social work & Transitions Team
- Thurrock Council Adult Social Care Commissioners
- Code4Health - NHS Digital
- Grays Convent
- TACT
- Palmers College
- PATT
- Treetops
- Forest School
- Beacon Hill
- South Essex College
- TLS

3. Collated Event Feedback Results

Evaluation Form – 9 people responded

Did the event meet its objectives?	Yes	No	Don't know
Gave you a greater awareness of the range of Assistive technology, equipment and support that is available	9		
Provided information that was relevant to you			

	7	1	
Provided an opportunity for you to have your say on what else the Equipment Hire Service could provide	9		
Provided information on the Code4Health Initiative	9 1 x found difficult to understand		
Provided a forum for questions, queries and concerns to be raised and answered	9		

How satisfied were you with the:

	Very satisfied		Very dissatisfied		
	☺5	4	☺3	2	☹1
Pace of the event:	6	1	1		
Length of the event:	7	2			
Information and advice provided at the event:	8				
Content covered at the event	7	1			
Presentations that were delivered at the event:	7	1			

Access at the venue (technical, physical or other):	7	1			
Event location:	7	2			
Room set up:	6	2			
Room temperature:	5	3			
Room acoustics:	4	3	1		
Appropriate use of technology:	8				

If you were not satisfied with any aspect (for example, if you rated 2 or 1 in the grid above), please indicate the reason:

What is your overall opinion of the event?

Please circle appropriately

           (8)

Very good   **5**   **4**   **3**   **2**   **1**   **Very Poor**

What went well for you during this event? What should we keep doing next time?

- All very good and of course networking always very important for me
- All OK
- The group discussion and points raised was useful to identify new things needed and share information.
- Nice involving peoples' opinions and discussion space for questions
- Equipment hire service
- The Code4Health
- Any questions were answered straight away and info was also given regarding apps.
- I got plenty of information about the different apps icon download on my son's i-pad at home.

What didn't go so well for you? What would you like to see done differently next time?

- OK

Do you have any further comments or suggestions?

- Thank you
- No
- Lovely food