

**Thurrock Diversity Network Limited Recommendations & Questions
re: The Thurrock Local Account:**

Recommendations for Future Local Accounts:

Next (and future years) Local Account to better evidence – Co-production of the document, third sector involvement, examples of individual and group experiences (both positive and negative), integration and expansion.

Please provide examples of Third sector involvement and examples of interactions and input with people, detailing individual experiences.

Use survey results from the year to which the Local Account pertains, e.g. 2016/17 – not 2015/16.

Provide information and links under each initiative to enable people to find out more and get involved locally.

There is no up to date Direct Payment guide. This should be made available be clear and detailed and provided by Thurrock Council to all individuals in receipt of, or considering Direct Payments. This would increase understanding awareness and adherence to the relevant rules.

The Customer Pathway - We would like the customer pathway/journey for assessments to appear in the Local Account. The pathway currently isn't clear - we want to make the process easier and a self-service, wholly internet based service can't be the only way to offer this - not everyone, especially disabled people and older people, are "digital by default" – See Digital Britain 2: Putting users at the heart of government's digital services: <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/digital-britain-2-putting-users-at-the-heart-of-governments-digital-services/>

We would like to see a wider range of examples in the Local Account of Micro-enterprises. Some examples including Hardie Park, The Lighthouse Cafe and the Community house are all local enterprises and not a result of Adult Social Care involvement. How do these help reflect peoples' strength and independence?

Process:

- **Undertake thorough engagement with local interested parties - users and carers, partners, the public, etc** - in developing the approach to be taken locally to the Local Account.
- Be clear about the purpose, audience and appropriate style for the Local Account – and tailoring it accordingly
- Assess how best to undertake a co-production approach to future Accounts

Content:

- Use an **outcomes framework which makes sense locally** and interpret data in the

local context

- Use a balanced approach to benchmarking data to include the positive and the negative
- **Employ peer challenge approaches to test and validate** what is being said to the public
- Use **case examples** to bring the report to life
- **Quote the public's views, combined with an indication of how this was responded to**

Substance:

- **User and public engagement was widely accepted as an area for more work** and could be highlighted in any report back to councils, as could equalities and diversity issues
- Similarly, the need **for robust self-assessment and external/peer challenge** was generally accepted in order to boost public confidence in services and in the Local Accounts themselves
- Councils could consider how far related council services, for example, housing and employment, and partner services, especially the NHS, should be included in order to give a fuller picture
- Undertake **active member engagement and scrutiny and equality and diversity issues.**

Questions relating to each of the 10 Priorities

Priority 1 - Join up health & social care services to support people better

In terms of individual initiatives:

- i) Regarding out of hospital community integration: How exactly will the Third Sector be involved?
- ii) Details of increasing the JRT Staff – by when and by how much (capacity)?
- iii) How will the Health funded re-ablement beds be expanded exactly?
- iv) Virtual Integrated Community Teams – by when, and based where?
- v) How many delayed discharges occur throughout the year as a proportion of the total number of discharges?
- vi) Social Prescribing – Who delivers this? Where is it based? How can people Access it?

- vii) What is the average duration of occupation of the Interim beds at Collins House?

Priority 2- Develop the services the Council provides to improve quality & reduce cost

- i) Please detail how success under this priority is measured and sustained
- ii) Please summarise the improvements, changes and outcomes following the review and provide a breakdown of the £400,000 savings that were made following re-design and improvements
- iii) Concerns were raised around externalising Adult Social Care Services in the future. What safeguards are in place regarding contingency planning and Provider failure.

Priority 3 - Support small community based services in Thurrock to give people more choice

In relation to Time banking, it would be useful to have an indication in the Local Account of:

- i) Details of how successes are measured e.g. number of people involved in Time Banking, numbers of people who provided positive feedback, with attributable direct quotes and lived experience examples to bring the Local Account to life.
- ii) Please provide other examples of community Asset Transfer? –What plans for future land have been identified in the local area?
- iii) Some Members had never heard of Animate or Micro –Enterprise Project. How are these promoted? How can people identify projects local to them?
- iv) How can local leaders & communities be supported to keep community initiatives going & grow into new ideas including encouraging community spaces?

Priority 4 - investigate opportunities for buying services with other partners if this improves choice & cost

Please clarify:

- i) Re: Specialist Autism Services - Will the owner of the building premises be providing care also? – as this could give rise to a conflict of interest and is specifically rejected as an approach in the Thurrock Market Position Statement 2015?
- ii) Will there be a mix of accommodation types? And will the home be suitable for live-in carers? Will there be plans for future homes.
- iii) When is the Council going to provide an Autism Lead Commissioner?
- iv) What is the outcome/support provided for carers regarding respite? Does this meet their needs/ wishes? As the current Local Account only mentions “service user”?

- v) Please clarify “*Buying services with services providers*” what does that mean? Is this third sector or private or statutory service partners? Is this new? Does it involve out sourcing?

Priority 5- Make more use of Direct Payments to allow people to manage their own care

- i) What % and number of individuals receive Direct Payments?
- ii) Why have numbers of Direct Payment recipients not increased? What is being done to raise awareness and publicity in the borough? What are Purple doing to address this?
- iii) How many carers receive support- Is this how many carers receive a DP?
- iv) The Local Account states that 94% of carers received D.P. but can't receive if live in same household. What is D.P being spent on? If being used for respite –this has been in the individual service users name in the past, not the carer.

Priority 6 - Allow more Self-Service using the internet

- i) **How can you self-assess if you don't know what you need?** E.g. Shuffle boards and equipment you don't know is available or that it even exists? Is the process overseen by a human "Caseworker"? People may still need some guidance and support available or offered.
- ii) Regarding the **Resource Allocation System (RAS)** Are paper forms provided? How is the initial set of results analysed and checked for suitability alongside and in consultation and co-production with the individual? Is it overseen by an Occupational Therapist/Social Worker?
- iii) We suggest that actual interaction in the process and digital systems should complement each other and not be mutually exclusive.
- iv) We suggest that the Council should provide an alternative channel for assessments for Disabled people - to be given the option and to "opt in" to digital services with support offered throughout.

Priority 7 – Change our care home services to improve choice and quality

Regarding the changes to Home Care Services:

- i) Concerns and queries raised by TDN Members - An individual "carer" would not be CQC registered - a big concern and there would be an element of personal care for most people. How would it work? Who manages the "carers"?
- ii) When is the pilot due to start and where?
- iii) How would using carers work?

Priority 8 – Change the support the Council provides to its frontline services to improve cost effectiveness

- i) How has bringing SERCO and call centre at Harty Close in house been cost-effective? Please provide examples. (When SERCO staff have been given more annual leave, sick pay and pension enrolment?)
- ii) **The Reorganisation of the Admin Team** How has this been cost effective? Please provide details.
- iii) **Integrated Data Set** – The intention is that it "Will enable us (the Council)" - but we would need details and specifics on when and how this will be implemented.

Priority 9 – Change our services to reflect peoples' strengths and independence, not just their needs; services should be more local and more personal

Local Area Co-ordinators (LACs)

- i) Is it the default position for people to be directed to the LACs, whatever the need? Taking Mental Health for example - in practice, from experience signposting with LACs in the first instance has not been as effective as it could be. People are referred to the LACS then the LACS refer to mental health services- why not refer direct to mental health services if that is the need?
- ii) How much are LACs paid? Are they paid more than Social Workers?
- iii) How much does the Council spend on Agency based social worker staff? (As a proportion of the overall budget?)
- iv) We thought the intention was for LACs to join/link up the community members to groups and organisations - has the model changed? What is their remit? Has it widened? Who monitors and supervises them? Could be useful to include this in the Local Account itself for clarity for individuals who want to access the initiative and how to go about it.
- v) 11 x LACs currently – is there an intention to expand? If so, include it in the Local Account.
- vi) **Making Safeguarding Personal** – How was this implemented in Adult Social Care in 2016?

Priority 10 – Improve Access to our information and advice so people have confidence in planning their own support

Regarding information & Advice:

- i) We suggest it would be useful and helpful to include examples of the network of community groups and networks that exist in Thurrock, with links and details contained in the Local Account document itself. Hyperlinks should be included as default.

Community Asset Map

- ii) TCVS produced a hard copy booklet/directory of voluntary organisations and groups with very limited contact details in it. The Asset Map needs to be better publicised. If the Council's Information and Advice Portal is going to be maintained through Stronger Together, how is this resourced and how is the accuracy of the information checked periodically, is it a Key Performance Indicator? TDN found the following site itself using Google: (http://www.strongertogether.org.uk/StrongerTogether/asset_map-18319.aspx). We suggest that there needs to be a guide on how to use the Map. There needs to be better understanding of information accessibility needs (hard copy and digital) in terms of font size, type, colour, EasyRead and read aloud as default across all digital platforms.
- iii) It would be good to include the number of hits the Community Map has received in the Local Account.

Website

- iv) Regarding referrals from the council's website to Thurrock Mind - When someone contacts Thurrock Mind, Thurrock Mind always asks how the person contacting them heard of the organisation and the support they provide, this method has shown no referrals from the Council's website. We are interested to see what could be done to increase this.
- v) Are you able to determine the amount of traffic directed from thurrock.gov.uk to the Thurrock Mind website? thurrockmind.org.uk

Review of content

- vi) Who is responsible for reviewing content on the portal? Regarding "increased signposting to other useful sources of information" it would be useful to have some illustrative examples of the "other useful sources of information"

Community Hubs

- vii) Where will this be based in Aveley? Who are "the range" of organisations who are working in partnership with the local community?
- viii) What has happened to the Community Forums?

Thurrock Diversity Network Limited – June 2017