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Social Value of Local Area Coordination

Learning Outcomes from Thurrock
Council and Derby City Council SROI
Analyses

March 2016



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What is Local Area Coordination?

Local Area Coordination is a community based service to support residents in the community—building community resilience and social capital. Local Area Coordinators ‘walk alongside’ and empower individuals providing personalised advice and support as needed to enable them to ‘get a life, not a service’. The service provides two levels of support: Level 1 for low level one off support and advice and Level 2 for longer term support for individuals with more complex needs.

Executive Summary

The aim of Local Area Coordination is to support residents in the local community to ‘get a life, not a service’, empowering individuals to find community based solutions instead of relying on traditional services.

Thurrock Council and Derby City Council both implemented Local Area Coordination as part of a driver for wider change to deliver community based person focussed services. The service has proved successful in both of the unitary authorities and has since expanded to nine wards in Thurrock and ten wards in Derby over the past few years.

A forecast Social Return on Investment Analysis was commissioned by each Council independently to better understand and start to quantify the impact of the service together with demonstrating how Local Area Coordination is effecting real change in the community.

The analyses completed for Thurrock and Derby demonstrate that Local Area Coordination is delivering significant benefit to the local community and other stakeholders with up to £4 forecast for every £1 invested. Furthermore, the service has the potential to influence wider cultural change and a shift to community based services longer term; decreasing the reliance on traditional services.

Although the specific calculations are not directly comparable due to the differing quantities, recording methods and assumptions made in each, the overall recommendations and approaches of each Council to delivering Local Area Coordination – both at a strategic and operational level – can inform learning to further enhance the service in both authorities. This report summarises the two analyses and recommendations from both to share best practice and optimise the social value delivered in Thurrock and Derby, ultimately to the benefit of the individuals receiving the service.

The key outcomes are comparable between Thurrock and Derby demonstrating how Local Area Coordination across two differing authorities is having a similar impact. This highlights how the principles of Local Area Coordination can effectively be applied across areas. The understanding and upholding of the principles driven by strong leadership is critical to enabling this and is being achieved in both Thurrock and Derby.

Introduction

What is a Social Return on Investment Analysis?

Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a framework for measuring and accounting for all value encompassing social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. There are seven principles that underpin any SROI analysis.

An SROI Analysis as published by Social Value UK (formerly the SROI Network) comprises 6 key stages. This enables a theory of change to be developed which demonstrates what changes for each stakeholder involved. Financial proxies are then attributed to each outcome and the social impact calculated with consideration for what would have happened anyway, who else contributed to the change and how long the impact is felt for. By establishing the costs to deliver an intervention (financial, time and in kind donations) and determining the social impact of each outcome, a Social Ratio can be calculated.

- 1 Involve stakeholders
- 2 Understand what changes
- 3 Value the things that matter
- 4 Only include what is material
- 5 Do not over claim
- 6 Be transparent
- 7 Verify the result

What was the purpose of the study?

Thurrock Council and Derby City Council commissioned a Social Return on Investment Analysis with the purpose of starting to quantify the social impact of Local Area Coordination to a range of stakeholders and identify opportunities to optimise this value further. The analyses were also to assist the authorities in securing more funding longer term to support the continuation and expansion of Local Area Coordination. Initially, an analysis was completed for Thurrock Council based on the current nine Local Area Coordinators in July 2015. This was then followed by an analysis for Derby City Council based on ten Local Area Coordinators in November 2015.

The Derby evaluation has been funded by Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) as part of their Developing the Power of Strong Inclusive Communities to Boost Health and Well Being programme and the Thurrock evaluation by Adult Social Care.

A forecast Social Return on Analysis was completed for both authorities which estimated the social impact that would be generated over the three years from April 2016 to March 2019 should further funding be secured and the service continue at the current level. The analyses reviewed all activity under Local Area Coordination including the low level support provided to Level 1 individuals and community engagement through to longer term Level 2 relationships.

Both reports were submitted for external assurance to Social Value UK to test the robustness of the assumptions made and ensure verification of the result. Each report was externally assured and deemed to meet all the criteria under each principle of SROI.

It should be noted that the recording of data differs in Derby and Thurrock and therefore although the analyses are comparable, they cannot be viewed without consideration of the limitations and assumptions made in each.

Involving Stakeholders

The first stage of any SROI analysis is to engage stakeholders that either have an impact on or are impacted by the project being analysed. Stakeholders were engaged through one to one interviews and focus groups to establish what difference Local Area Coordination made to each interviewee. Stakeholders were then re-engaged throughout the process to test the outcomes and assumptions used in the analysis. Adult Social Care are responsible for Local Area Coordination in both authorities and led each analysis.

Common Stakeholders

Many stakeholders were common for Derby City Council and Thurrock Council. The Level 1 and Level 2 individuals introduced to Local Area Coordinators are key stakeholders and therefore were central to both analyses. In addition, each Local Area Coordinator was interviewed in both Derby and Thurrock to review the outcomes for the individuals and establish if they too experienced any change themselves.

Family members were also identified by individuals in both authorities as having been affected by the positive change in the individuals, although it was not possible to directly engage with this stakeholder.

Local Communities, together with Local Councillors, were engaged to understand any change in the wider community as a result of the community resilience building. Both analyses also recognised the role of the voluntary sector, with Thurrock identifying Thurrock CVS as a potential stakeholder.

Both services receive funding through the Better Care Fund – a pooled budget to integrate health and social care across the NHS and Local Government. Clinical Commissioning Groups were therefore engaged in both analyses together with other health organisations, including Public Health and Community Teams, impacted by Local Area Coordination as a result of joint working and increased health and wellbeing of individuals. Thurrock also engaged with Healthwatch through their Steering Group and as such was identified as another stakeholder.

Key Stakeholders identified by both Councils included:

- Level 1 and Level 2 individuals
- Family Members
- Local Area Coordinators
- CCG (Thurrock CCG and Southern Derbyshire CCG)
- Adult Social Care
- NHS Foundation Trusts
- Public Health
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Police
- Councillors
- Local Community Groups

Both services support a similar demographic with the average age of those recorded at 60 and 61 for Derby and Thurrock respectively. Those with Mental Health Needs was the most significant primary category recorded at 30% for Thurrock and 38% for Derby. This was followed by older people at 28% and 25%. This highlights the specific needs of these groups across two different authorities and their demand for Local Area Coordination.

- Both Councils work with the Fire and Police Services and were identified as stakeholders for the analysis. In Thurrock, Fire and Police Services are represented on the Steering Group and the Fire Service part fund one of the Local Area Coordinator posts through secondment of one of their Fire Officers. In Derby, the relationships were still being developed at a strategic and operational level with the analysis providing the opportunity to explore how this can be improved further.

Different Stakeholders

- Thurrock and Derby differ in the management of their Social Housing as Derby use an arm's length management organisation (ALMO) compared with Thurrock who manage in house. The ALMO, Derby Homes, was therefore engaged as a separate stakeholder in Derby whereas specific housing departments in Thurrock were consulted, in particular Sheltered Housing who work closely with the service.
- The analyses engaged with other departments within the Council – neighbourhood services being common to both. Derby City Council also included Children Services to establish opportunities to support younger residents and Adult Learning as Coordinators were starting to refer into adult learning programmes. Transition 2, a college for young people with learning difficulties, work closely with Local Area Coordination both at a strategic and operational level and were interviewed to understand any impact on the college.
- Thurrock had a greater focus on supporting individuals back into employment and although not directly engaged, the Department for Work and Pensions were noted as a stakeholder that would benefit from individuals that were previously unemployed returning to work.
- The analysis in Derby also included organisations with which the Council wanted to work more closely. This included Derby Direct, a central call centre for individuals to contact the Council and be referred into Adult, Health and Housing as required and First Contact, a signposting service for vulnerable adults.
- Derby City Council had supported Derbyshire County Council in the implementation of their own Local Area Coordination service and were also included as a stakeholder.

Understanding What Changes

Key Outcomes for Individuals

Person Centred Approach

- » Individual builds trust with the Coordinator with a sense of someone to rely on leading to increased self-confidence and outlook on life.
- » Individuals are supported to overcome crisis and manage their mental health issues better providing relief from depression.

Making Local Connections

- » Individuals connect with local people reducing their social isolation.
- » Individuals attend local community groups leading to increased sense of feeling part of the community.
- » Individuals are able to undertake tasks outside of the home leading to increased sense of independence.

Informed and Empowered

- » Individuals are empowered to make their own decisions and feel more in control of life.
- » Individuals receive housing advice leading to increased sense of stability and security.
- » Individuals receive financial advice leading to increased sense of financial stability.
- » Individuals are supported to overcome hoarding with a reduced risk of fire.

The key outcomes for individuals interviewed were comparable in both Thurrock and Derby demonstrating that the principles of Local Area Coordination are being applied successfully in two separate areas enhancing the health and wellbeing of those supported. Level 2 individuals cited having a 'sense of hope for the future' and 'sunshine in my window' as a result of the support received viewing Coordinators as 'friendly' and 'knowledgeable'. The sense of someone to rely on together with decreased social isolation and increased sense of belonging to their local community were the most significant outcomes. This was as a result of Coordinators knowledge of the local area – connecting individuals with local people and groups.

The information and advice Coordinators are able to provide resulted in the key outcomes for Level 1 individuals from support with housing and finances through to connecting them with local activities and groups. In Thurrock, Level 1 individuals spoke of their frustration when accessing Council services with Coordinators supporting them to navigate this and relieving stress. In Derby, this was expressed as a relief from anxiety as a result of having the issue resolved with the support from the Coordinator.

A significant proportion of individuals had mental health needs and the 'relief from depression' was expressed by this group in Thurrock and Derby. Individuals recognised that it was the start of a journey and that they were still learning to manage their mental health issues longer term but this would not have been possible without the support of the Coordinator.

Supporting individuals to overcome issues with hoarding was a common theme for Thurrock and Derby. Coordinators spoke of supporting the individual more broadly to enable them to address their hoarding. In Thurrock this appeared to be with the support of the fire service providing practical advice to reduce the risk of fire from clutter. In Derby, whilst there were some cases in conjunction with fire service, the use of volunteer and community organisations to clear the property was also cited.

- and a key partnership had been established with one community group in particular.
- Supporting individuals to learn new skills was seen to some extent in both areas but Thurrock had a particular focus on enabling individuals to return to work and gain employment. This included those that had physical and learning disabilities, which had limited their ability to secure employment in the past.
- An unintended negative outcome that was acknowledged for both analyses was the potential for individuals to become dependent on the Coordinator as a result of the unique and personalised relationship they develop. This was in a minority of cases and Local Area Coordinators supported one another to recognise potential cases where this could occur.

Key Outcomes for Other Stakeholders

CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Early intervention without the need for crisis intervention → Reduced visits to GP
Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reduced demand on care and support services
Local Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reduced administration time → Increase in volunteers for local groups → Increased 'peace of mind'
Fire and Rescue Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reduced call outs
Police Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Reduced call outs and officer time
Local Area Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased engagement in their own community → Increased time spent with more dependent individuals

Together with the outcomes for individuals, other stakeholders also experienced a change as a result of the service. There was evidence that through the support of the Coordinators, individuals felt more in control of their health leading to reduced demand on health and social care services. In Thurrock, the decrease in inappropriate GP visits were evidenced through the decreased sense of social isolation with individuals not visiting the doctor unnecessarily. There were cases in Thurrock of individuals calling out emergency services on a regular basis too as a result of their social isolation prior to being supported by Local Area Coordination.

In Derby, this was evidenced through individuals reporting increased control of their health and therefore not needing to visit the doctor as frequently. Derby worked closely with Care Coordinators to support complex cases where individuals were using health services inappropriately.

As a result of supporting individuals with mental health needs, there was viewed to be less demand on crisis intervention. This was reported by individuals who felt that they were likely to have been admitted to hospital or 'not even be here' had they not have had the support of the Coordinator.

The reduction in GP visits for both authorities was expressed in terms of resource reallocation as the intervention is not at a sufficient level to have any significant impact on the resources of local GP surgeries or mental health teams but rather the time can be used for other patients. Therefore,

• in terms of overall visits to the GP a reduction would not be evident but health professionals in
• both Thurrock and Derby could demonstrate specific cases where there was a clear and significant
• reduction for that individual as a result of Local Area Coordination. This was supported by individuals
• stating that they were seeing the GP less as a result of the support received.

• Both Councils themselves also experienced positive outcomes with Adult Social Care Teams citing
• reduced demand on care and support services as a result of the increased health and wellbeing of
• individuals. For Thurrock, there was also a small reduction in Sheltered Housing Officer time through
• Coordinators supporting older people. In Derby, the Coordinators were starting to work more closely
• with Adult Learning to promote courses and increase the reach of programmes. Neighbourhood
• Officers in both Councils recognised there could be an impact to officer time but the scale of Local
• Area Coordination compared with Neighbourhoods was not at a level that this impact could be seen
• as yet.

• An unintended positive outcome experienced by Local Area Coordinators across both areas was
• their own increased engagement in the local community. Coordinators were applying the principles
• of Local Area Coordination in their own community, from helping neighbours to being involved in
• more local events and activities.

• Dependency was an unintended negative for both Councils. This was acknowledged in a minority
• of cases where the unique and personal relationship developed by individuals with the Coordinator
• could result in them becoming dependent rather than empowered. Local Area Coordinators
• identified with this potential outcome for Level 2 individuals. The nature of the service is such
• that there will always be a risk of this occurring – evident in the fact that this was raised by both
• authorities. Coordinators in Thurrock and Derby cited that this can in part be mitigated through peer
• and management support to identify cases where dependency could occur.

• On engaging with the Fire and Police Service, it was evident that on a small scale, Local Area
• Coordination reduced call outs as a result of supporting individuals and increasing preventative
• action. This impact was more significant in Thurrock in part due to the recording of specific cases
• which worked with and prevented intervention from the fire and police and the strategic relationships
• built through the Steering Group.

• The impact on Local Community Groups was seen in both analyses from reducing administration
• time and providing advice and information through to members of the community being able to
• introduce individuals to the service that they were concerned about. In Derby, there was greater
• evidence of engagement with a range of other local organisation including libraries and schools. In
• addition, these provided fixed locations for some of the Local Area Coordinators to base themselves
• from. In Thurrock, the number of individuals volunteering in community groups appeared to be
• more extensive with a greater number of community members engaged.

Establishing Impact

The diagram on the following page demonstrates the social value distribution and ratio for each analysis with the social impact estimated to be forecast over the three-year period.

What does this mean?

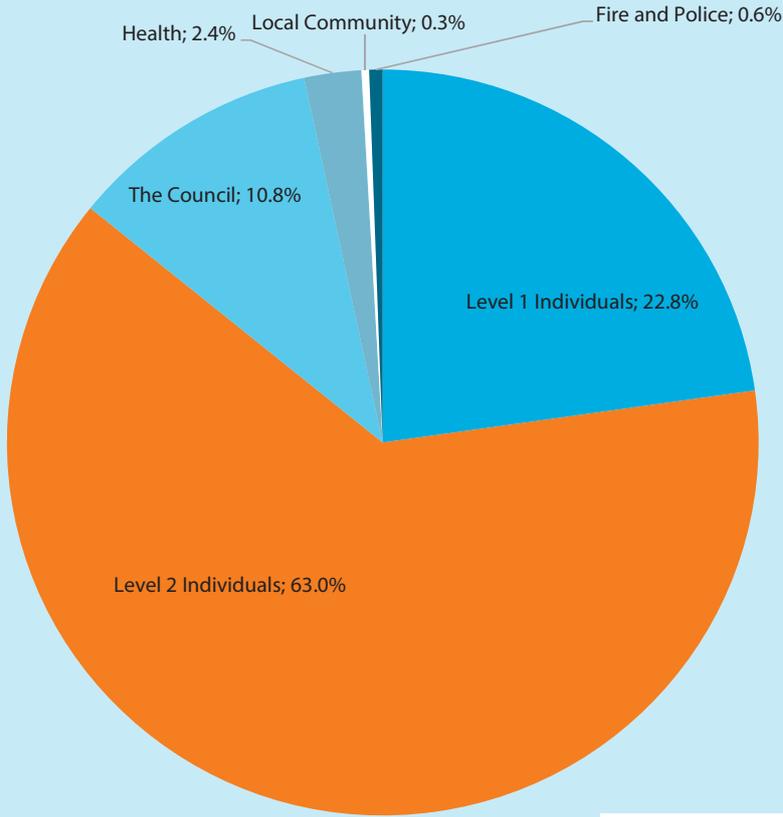
This demonstrates that in both authorities for every £1 invested in Local Area Coordination, up to £4 of social value is created with significant benefits to the Local Community. There is potential for this to increase further with additional coordinators and other outcomes that could be realised. This is primarily for the individuals receiving the service through their enhanced health and wellbeing.

The social value created in Thurrock and Derby is not directly comparable due to the different quantities and assumptions made in each but gives an overall indication as to the approximate value of the service. Derby City Council has increased expenditure to deliver the service as a result of the additional Local Area Coordinator and use of community bases when compared to Thurrock. Equally, the social value created in Derby is higher than Thurrock with the additional Coordinator increasing the number of individuals forecast to be supported. The split between Level 1 and Level 2 individuals for Derby and Thurrock differed slightly based on the recording to date with Derby, on average, supporting a slightly greater number of Level 2 individuals. However, nearly half of the Level 1 individuals recorded in Derby were community members accessing information only and are not considered in the impact for Level 1 individuals when experiencing decreased social isolation and increased sense of feeling part of the community.

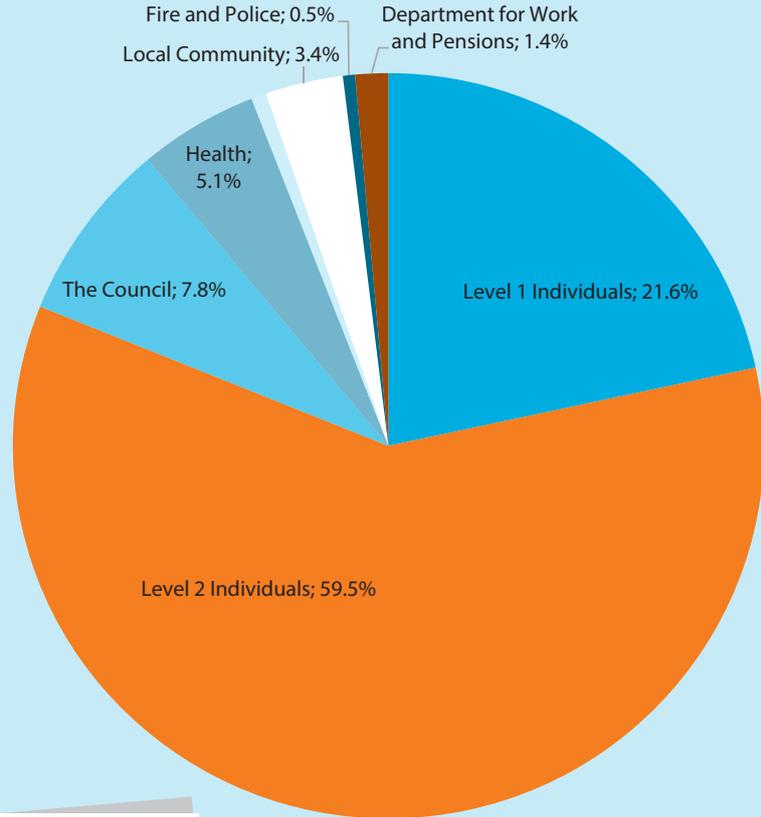
To establish what would have happened anyway (deadweight) and who else contributed to the change (attribution), individuals and other stakeholders were asked how much they felt Local Area Coordination was responsible. This was supported by reviewing case studies and recording data from Coordinators as to the involvement of other parties.

Although not directly comparable, the deadweight was of a similar scale in Derby and Thurrock, showing that the majority of outcomes would not have been achieved without the support of Local Area Coordination. However, the attribution and impact directly attributable to the Local Area Coordinators involvement was higher in Derby. This is subject to the individual's perception and reliant on the partnership working recording but potentially highlights a difference between the involvement of partner organisations between Thurrock and Derby. There was greater evidence in Thurrock as to the involvement of other agencies which resulted in a lower attribution to the Coordinators themselves but greater impact for other stakeholders including Health, Fire and Police Services as demonstrated in the Social Value Distribution. For Derby, this resulted in greater social impact for the Level 1 and Level 2 individuals themselves with less impact for other stakeholders. In each case, the overall impact has delivered similar benefits and positive outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Derby



Thurrock



Social Value Distribution

INPUTS
£1.76m

10 Local Area Coordinators supporting individuals to 'get a life, not a service' between April 2016 and March 2019

IMPACT
£6.47m

Social Value Calculation



INPUTS
£1.34m

9 Local Area Coordinators supporting individuals to achieve a 'good life' between April 2016 and March 2019

IMPACT
£4.88m

Recommendations

learning from each other

Recommendations for Thurrock

- Record the extent of change experienced by individuals through the use of a 'Derby Flower' tool
- Establish ways to increase working with young people and those with learning disabilities to aid their transition into adulthood
- Explore potential for the service to be supported through HRA funding
- Increase the use of volunteer organisations to support individuals to maintain their home and garden
- Identify opportunities to work more closely with other signposting services to enhance reach of Local Area Coordination

Recommendations for Derby

- Establish opportunities for a LAC specific Steering Group or workshops to support the building of strategic relationships with partners
- Explore potential for the service to be supported through the Fire Service;
- Increase recording of outcomes experienced for each individual through the monitoring spreadsheet
- Increase recording of working with and referring to other statutory organisations in case studies and monitoring spreadsheet
- Assess ways to support individuals looking to return to work

Engaging with Partners

Thurrock and Derby City Council both established working groups and conducted seminars to promote Local Area Coordination to key internal and external stakeholders prior to launch. Thurrock Council then continued with a steering group specifically for Local Area Coordination whilst Derby City Council amalgamated the working group into their wider workstreams on Joined Up Care where workstream 1 had a clear directive on Local Area Coordination. Although both Councils had mechanisms for engaging with stakeholders and promoting Local Area Coordination, the analysis in Derby highlighted that certain stakeholders were not as clear as to the role of the Coordinator and how they could work with them. This was in contrast to Thurrock Council where comparable stakeholders including other Council departments, did not raise this as a specific issue.

It is viewed that the ongoing steering group specifically designed for Local Area Coordination in Thurrock has assisted with ensuring stakeholders remain clear on the role and scope of the Coordinators. Steering Group members included internal departments, Public Health, Healthwatch, Essex Fire and Rescue and Essex Police. This is further supported by case studies reported to members of the Steering Group that demonstrate partnership working and provide examples of how Local Area Coordinators are supporting individuals.

Although Derby City Council had a Steering Group at the onset and held sessions with partners, Local Area Coordination is reviewed as part of the wider workstreams for the Joined Up Care Programme.

- This highlights the importance of ongoing communication. Stakeholders engaged requested further information and case studies to enable them to better understand the impact of and potential to work with Local Area Coordination.
- Therefore, it is recommended that Derby explore opportunities to engage with stakeholders and promote Local Area Coordination through workshops and case studies; building strategic relationships further and presenting examples of partnership working.
- In Derby, certain community groups had developed unique and specific partnerships with Local Area Coordinators. One such example was a local faith group that worked exclusively with the service to assist in garden and house clearances. This was being utilised to support in cases of hoarding and where older people were struggling to maintain their garden whilst providing opportunities for local volunteers to be involved. Coordinators in Thurrock had also developed relationships with local community groups but there was less use groups to support individuals in this practical way and demonstrates a potential opportunity, in conjunction with continuing to work with the Fire Service.
- Derby City Council benefit from two referral and signposting services – Derby Direct to manage referrals into Adult, Health and Housing and First Contact a signposting service delivered through Age UK. It was recognised that although the outcomes were not realised as yet, the social value could be optimised by working with such organisations to increase the reach of the service and reduce referrals into traditional Council services. It is recommended that Thurrock also assess as to whether there are opportunities to build links with organisations internally or externally that provide signposting and referrals to Council services. This may help to identify frustrations cited by individuals when navigating Council services.

Recording and Measuring Impact

- Both Derby City Council and Thurrock Council have developed methods to record interactions with Level 1 and Level 2 individuals in the form of a spreadsheet. This is supported with qualitative reporting using case studies and monthly reports.
- Derby City Council use the 'Derby Flower' to record the extent of change which gives a better indication as to the progression of the individual as a result of the support from Local Area Coordination. This is not recorded for all individuals but where it is used gives a greater sense as to the direct impact of Local Area Coordination as reported by the individual themselves.
- In contrast, Thurrock does not record the extent of change but does report if an outcome has been achieved. This is determined by the Local Area Coordinator in most cases and provides a greater sample size when measuring impact.
- For both there were inconsistencies in recording between different Local Area Coordinators. Thurrock used a central spreadsheet which helped to mitigate this in part although fields could be entered manually. The unification of one central spreadsheet and recording mechanism to assist with evaluation is currently being explored more broadly through the Local Area Coordination Evaluation Network. This has included implementing a standard template for all authorities to use based on the Thurrock template. It is recommended that both Thurrock and Derby utilise this template, with consideration for capturing the outcomes identified from the analyses, to enable effective and comparable recording.

Supporting Young People

In both Councils, the majority of individuals being supported represented older people in terms of age. Derby City Council were already exploring the potential to work with young people. The support provided to Transition 2, an educational college for young people with learning disabilities, demonstrated how Local Area Coordination could help young adults prepare for adulthood by accessing volunteering opportunities locally. Derby City Council planned to build on this further and work with Children Services to assess how they can better support younger people.

In addition, Derby City Council were starting to work with a local school to provide support for troubled families. This was an emerging relationship which was currently on a small scale but provides a platform for engaging with families and understanding the unique challenges faced by younger people that could benefit from Local Area Coordination.

It is recommended that Thurrock also explore the potential to focus on supporting more young people preparing for adulthood, working in partnership with Derby to establish opportunities to engage with this group.

Funding Streams

Both Councils had the support of the CCGs who were part funding Local Area Coordination through the Better Care Fund.

As a result of working with Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Thurrock Council also received part funding for a post through secondment of a fire officer. This had helped to increase joint working and awareness of fire safety among Local Area Coordinators. In Derby, the relationship with the Fire Service was less consistent across the different wards with fewer introductions and examples of joint working. It is recommended that Derby build their strategic relationship with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue further and subsequently assess the impact this has to explore the potential to receive funding through the Fire Service in the future.

Derby City Council were establishing the opportunity to fund a post through the Housing Revenue Account as a result of the large number of individuals supported that were Derby Homes Tenants. It is recommended that Thurrock Council also explore the feasibility of the HRA acting as another funding stream for Local Area Coordination by assessing the number of social housing tenants supported.

Supporting Individuals to Return to Work

Thurrock had a greater focus on supporting individuals back into employment. This could be due to an increased demand in Thurrock for this type of support when compared with Derby as both authorities were supporting individuals to improve and learn new skills. Enabling individuals to return to work has a positive social and economic impact on both the employee and the State. It is recommended Derby explore if there is the opportunity to increase the provision of this type of support.

Shared Recommendations

The wider LAC Network provides opportunities for different authorities to explore ways of improving the evaluation, promotion and development of Local Area Coordination across England. The SROI analyses completed compliment other evaluative research being undertaken by Councils to understand the impact and identify opportunities for improvement. Together with the learning for Thurrock and Derby specifically, there are also common themes that emerge from both which can assist in improving the evaluation and enhancing the social impact achieved further.

Leadership and Cultural Change

In both Thurrock and Derby, Local Area Coordination was viewed as part of a much wider shift within the Councils delivering person centred support out in the community. This was recognised by stakeholders both internal and external to the Council where Local Area Coordination was being used as an example of the model working in practice.

It was acknowledged the cultural change was longer term but that Local Area Coordination was helping to evidence this. In Thurrock, there was some evidence that members on the Steering Group were seeing some impact whereas in Derby it was felt that Local Area Coordination would contribute along with other examples of community based services as it developed.

Leadership was a critical element to this – both in ensuring ongoing relationships with stakeholders to embed the cultural change and that the service is not stretched beyond capacity thereby becoming ‘just another service’. Both the analyses demonstrated that additional social value would be realised if Local Area Coordination was expanded to cover the full geographic area of both authorities. Any expansion in the service must have consideration for the potential for service stretch to ensure this increased social value is realised.

- Maintaining strong leadership and the principles of Local Area Coordination to embed cultural change and prevent service stretch
- Enhancing engagement with and accountability to the community through community forums and working with Councillors
- Understanding the wider impact to the local community and residents to demonstrate the building of community resilience
- Engaging with voluntary organisations to demonstrate how Local Area Coordination can support and enhance this sector
- Increasing opportunities for recording impact of Level 1 individuals and post engagement of Level 2 individuals to better understand impact
- Increasing the recording of quantifiable impact for other stakeholders, particularly health colleagues

Community Engagement

Building community resilience and social capital is a core part of Local Area Coordination and the joint working with the local community was evident in Thurrock and Derby. However, there are opportunities to enhance this further to both increase accountability and better quantify the wider impact in the local community.

During the recruitment process, local residents and community leaders are involved in interviewing and selecting the Coordinator for their area. It is recommended that this relationship is built on with the development of more strategic community engagement through quarterly or bi-annual meetings to enhance accountability in the community to councillors, community groups, and the voluntary

sector as well as increased promotion of the service. This would support further embedment of community resilience and ensure the principles of Local Area Coordination complement and are being led by the community. Through Asset Based Community Development, Thurrock have Community Builders and these forums would also enable increase joined up working and engagement with the wider community.

There is also the opportunity to better quantify the impact in the local community from the creation of new community groups to increasing the local offer to residents. The community forums would provide a platform to understand some of this impact and could also be supported by wider Council resident satisfaction and community surveys. This would enable recording over time to compare year on year as to whether Local Area Coordination is positively impacting residents indirectly, in the communities in which they are based.

Working with the Voluntary Sector

The impact to voluntary organisations was viewed as having both a potential positive and unintended negative impact as a result of wider diminishing funding. Thurrock Council cited the decrease in funding for Thurrock CVS and in Derby, voluntary organisations raised concern over a lack of funding with less clarity over the value of Local Area Coordination and how it supported this sector.

Working with the voluntary sector also presents opportunities through complementing the work of agencies, linking individuals with the sector and providing introductions to Local Area Coordination. At a more strategic level, Local Area Coordination can help to enhance relationships with this sector drawing on their strengths to the benefit of the Councils and the voluntary organisations.

It is recommended that both authorities explore establishing more strategic relationships with this sector and increase communication to demonstrate how Local Area Coordination can complement voluntary organisations. Community engagement forums could provide a way for engaging with this sector and working with key representatives to increase joined up working.

Engagement of Level 1 and Level 2 individuals

Level 1 individuals proved difficult to engage in both Thurrock and Derby as the support received is light touch. This is a strength of the service, providing ad hoc advice and information in the community as needed to individuals without the need for substantial data recording, but does result in greater difficulties re-engaging individuals to understand material changes. Focus groups held in both authorities were poorly attended and there was greater reliance on data captured by Coordinators and external research. In Derby, a survey was used to capture outcomes as there was less recording for Level 1 individuals in the monitoring spreadsheet.

It is recommended that both authorities explore opportunities to increase ongoing engagement with past Level 1 and Level 2 individuals to better quantify the difference the service has made longer term. This could be through informal gatherings and 'share your story' forums which would reinforce the principles of Local Area Coordination. The analysis in Derby demonstrated the value of such forums whereby a focus group to review assumptions made enabled Level 2 individuals to share their experiences resulting in two agreeing to meet up again.

Acknowledgements

Derby City Council would like to thank Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) for their support in producing this report.

Derby CC has worked closely with TLAP on community capacity policy initiatives since 2012 and their health and wellbeing board was one of several that elected to evaluate TLAP's Developing the Power of Strong and Inclusive Communities: a framework to support health and wellbeing boards embed community capacity building within their local plans and strategies.

Building an evidence base for why we should invest in people and communities is critical and TLAP's continued support has enabled the SROI evaluation of local area coordination in Derby and the learning outcomes from both Thurrock Council and Derby City Council to be added to the growing body of evidence for investing in community capacity building.

Thank you to our staff, partner organisations and most of all to local people who agreed to take part in the evaluation.



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