

Brandon Connected Care

A model for community led commissioning

Summary

Connected Care is a model for community led commissioning, bringing the voice of the community to the design and delivery of public sector service delivery.

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Connected Care is:

- An example of effective partnership working, it begins with the community and puts them at the centre of the commissioning process
- It engages hard to reach groups who are rarely consulted and often marginalised
- It works with the community to transform local services to meet local needs
- It builds on the JSNA to develop a deeper understanding of local needs
- It integrates health, housing and social care services
- It fits with current and emerging government and commissioner agenda.

The Joint Improvement Partnership (JIP) for adult social care co-funded Connected Care in Brandon (in Suffolk), together with Suffolk County Council, NHS Suffolk and the Department of Health Social Care and Partnerships Team in the East of England. The JIP has also made a film about Connected Care in Brandon – see it [here](#).

Connected Care in Brandon

Connected Care is an evidence-based approach to community consultation and local service planning and delivery. It has been developed by Turning Point who is a national social care organisation. They have used their experience to lead the process in Brandon in Suffolk on behalf of the local and regional partners.

The JIP co-funded the Connected Care project as it was considered to be of great value for regional learning to help plan services with and for local communities. As a process, it builds on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) as it allows us to 'drill down' to the community level to help them to identify their needs and priorities.

Brandon was chosen for the study as it has features that are common in many market towns in the East of England. For example, people in Brandon experience rural isolation, with poor access to employment opportunities and as a consequence many people live on low incomes. The town has an increasingly aging population, as well as a high number of migrant workers and seasonal workers and people in the town have limited access to amenities and services.

Connected Care is an evidence based process. The project was managed by a Senior Research Advisor from Turning Point who used an established step approach to community engagement and service planning.

Step one: Establish a steering group

In Brandon we had representation from:

- Forest Heath District Council
- JIP
- NHS Suffolk
- Social Care and partnerships Team, Department of Health in the East of England
- Suffolk ACRE
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk LINKs (Local Involvement Network)
- Turning Point
- Community researchers (who took it in turns to attend the steering group meetings)

Step Two: A comprehensive profile of Brandon

This was compiled using data from:

- The Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2001 Census
- Indexes of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007 Eastern Region Public Health Observatory: Forest Heath Health Profile (2008) to gain estimates of substance misuse and alcohol misuse.
- Suffolk Police Records of recorded offences from 2007 – 2009
- JSNA

Step three: Training and community research

Members of the community were recruited and trained as researchers. The community researchers all lived in Brandon and often had links with, or need for, local health and

social care services. This gave them unique access to the people we wanted to talk to. Turning Point trained them and helped them – often giving them a new direction and confidence in starting something new. They also trained the researchers how to access and give a voice to the hardest to reach members of the community.

Step Four: Consulting with the community

The community researchers interviewed 10 per cent of the local community and many of them had complex needs. The research methods include questionnaires, face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Step five: Analysis of data

The results from the audit research activity were analysed by Turning Point, with the help of the community. The findings were reported to the Steering Group and local commissioners who used it to understand the changes needed in health and social care provision. Services developed from the findings will ensure that new services are community led and meet the aspirations and needs of the people they are designed to serve.

Early outcomes of Brandon study indicate that

- There is a lack of social capital in Brandon which is associated with the limited number of activities, a feeling of powerlessness to influence decision making, and an underdeveloped voluntary sector.
- People in Brandon face difficulties accessing services due to the town's rural location and poor public transport provision.
- People in Brandon want to have clearer information about the services available in the local area as well as information on healthy living made easily available. There is also some confusion over social care provision in the area due to a lack of clear information.
- The community would like to see services and staff work more closely with one another. There is great support for bringing more services to Brandon and for them to be conveniently located under one roof.

Step six: Service transformation

The Brandon study is now at this point – working alongside commissioners using a whole systems approach to design bespoke integrated health, housing and social care services. There are common principles for service delivery that include services that are easy to access, that integrate health and social care, with a workforce prepared to work across service boundaries and provide support to enable people to access services.

Next steps

Connected Care aims to implement system change so that housing, health and social care services are easier to use for people in the most deprived communities. We also

aim to improve individual support so that individuals and communities improve their ability to engage with services and increase the support available to people with complex needs.

The community engagement and service design programme will be evaluated.

Turning Point has developed a cost benefit analysis so that the specification for integrated health and social care services will be developed in an affordable manner, on a year by year basis.

The benefits of Connected Care for commissioners include:

- Understanding of health / social care needs of the local population
- Delivering greater trust and accountability
- Delivering 'more for less' through a cost benefit model of service integration and transformation that improve the experience of local residents whilst prioritising available investment.
- Meeting the expectations of comprehensive area assessments.
- Prioritising investment according to local needs.
- Introducing new areas for service development

Benefits for individuals and communities:

- The process gives a voice to the community in service design and delivery and helps to identify the needs of some of the most marginalised people within the community
- Greater local ownership and commitment to local services
- It helps to build community capacity and development
- Increase in skills and confidence for individuals and communities

Thanks to the Connected Care activity, local people in Brandon will now have more influence and power to participate in the design and delivery of public sector services. The Connected Care approach to service planning and delivery is now going to be rolled out into other areas across the East of England.

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