

Agenda Item: 4

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the People and Communities Policy Committee of South Norfolk District Council held on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: D Bills (Chairman), J Easter, T Holden, J Hornby and S Nuri-Nixon

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: S Blundell, M Dewsbury, N Legg and J Wilby

Cabinet Member Present: Councillor: Cllr A Thomas (for part of the meeting)

Officers in Attendance: The Assistant Director Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse) and the Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager (K Gallagher).

24 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Cllr A Thomas, the new portfolio holder for Better Lives, to the meeting.

Cllr Thomas explained that she was very pleased to have recently taken on the Better Lives portfolio, and she looked forward to working more closely with the Committee in future.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With regard to minute 28, Skills and Training Project, Cllr D Bills declared an interest as a member of Norfolk County Council's Adult Learning Committee.

26 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the People and Communities Policy Committee held on 11 February 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

27 PREVENTION ADVICE AND SUPPORT

The Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager introduced the item, which provided an update to members regarding prevention, advice and support offered from the Help Hub. The Committee received a presentation (appended to these minutes) which sought to advise members on the reasons behind the Council's need to offer support alongside future aspirations for prevention services. It also examined the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the One Team approach, on the service.

During discussion, members queried whether the savings and costs of the service could be calculated. Officers explained that this was a complicated process, however, officers were working towards producing these figures in the coming months. The Help Hub and Communities Senior Manager explained that the Hub provided huge savings for the NHS and Social Care, and that the Council might need to consider recouping more of its costs in future.

In response to a query, officers explained that community engagement was an important and ongoing role within the team. There was an exceptional network of community groups with the sole purpose of helping others, and these had come to the forefront during the pandemic. However, officers were aware that there were many other groups, such as football clubs or church groups, that could be better equipped in understanding the work of the Hub and could assist in promoting its service and help to build capacity within the local community.

Members noted that 63% of people receiving support through the Hub were not aware of the service before they were referred to it, and discussion followed regarding the best ways to promote the service. Officers explained that in addition to word of mouth, promotion took place through leaflet distribution, face book advertisements and promotions at events such as the South Norfolk On Show. Members suggested that easy access points, for example in libraries, should be implemented, in addition to face-to-face drop-in sessions in various locations. The Committee noted that work was continuing to improve the Hub's branding and members agreed that there was a need to detach it from other Council services, as it was felt that this would create more trust and be less confusing for some residents.

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families added that as part of the Council's Accommodation Review, he had been tasked with looking at how one office to serve both South Norfolk and Broadland Councils, could still meet the needs of local residents, and he referred to a number of opportunities, such as the use of town and parish council meeting rooms and an increase in virtual interaction with residents. In response to queries, officers agreed that face to face meetings were the only appropriate method of communication in some cases, and acknowledged that not everyone had access to online services.

One member raised the importance of interaction with schools and how engagement with children and teachers would also increase the awareness of parents. Officers confirmed that the Hub had previously worked closely with schools and that Children's Services made up a huge element of the Hub's work. Members stressed the importance of early years support.

One member referred to the recent closure of the Citizens Advice office in Wymondham, and queried whether the Hub was able to provide independent advice with regard to council tax debts. Officers explained that residents had been using the Council's debt and welfare advice service for years, alongside other agencies, such as Citizens Advice. They had no concerns regarding conflict, explaining that all officers across all the agencies worked to the same standard when providing advice.

One member queried the age profile of users across the service and officers explained that further work regarding demographics was required. Members noted that 65% of referrals came through GP Surgeries.

The Committee thanked officers for an interesting and informative presentation, and indicated their support for future areas of focus, including accessibility for all, promoting self-serve to those who were able, and prevention. Members looked forward to receiving more information on savings, costs, and more detailed demographics.

28 SKILLS AND TRAINING PROJECT

Members considered the report of the Evaluation and Data Analyst, and the Economic Growth Administrator, which examined the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy, in particular skills and training, and set out proposals to tailor support to specific cohorts of residents and start-up businesses.

The Assistant Director Individuals and Families delivered a brief presentation, outlining the background and proposals of the report. Members noted the aim to focus skills and training on those who needed it most, and that these had been identified as the following cohorts:

School Leavers
Higher Education Leavers
Recently Unemployed (including underemployed)
Individuals wishing to start own business

The Assistant Director drew attention to the proposed actions to target each cohort and he stressed the need to ensure that the Council worked in partnership with other agencies to avoid duplication and ensure an effective and comprehensive response for customers.

In response to queries, the Assistant Director explained that although the market was saturated with training providers/recruitment agencies, businesses were still finding it difficult to recruit. He explained that the Council

had a role to play in facilitating and influencing, and providing the support needed to those individuals who faced barriers when searching for work.

The Committee expressed its support for the proposed approach, and members discussed the impact of being out of work both on individuals and families as a whole. One member referred to the “revolving door” and the need to break the cycle and help develop skills and competencies that would ensure long-term benefits for both individuals and families.

With reference to paragraph 3.1.1 of the report and the statement regarding low aspirations, particularly amongst manual workers, the Assistant Director explained that this was an area where many workers, with no plans or aspirations ended up, as qualifications were not always required. He did however agree that this area of work could provide a good and rewarding career path for some. Members agreed that there was a need to provide better careers advice at an earlier stage and also additional support such as accounting skills training, to assist the self-employed. Members noted that the reason most businesses failed during the first 1-3 years, was issues with cashflow.

Turning to apprenticeships, the Assistant Director stressed the need for both South Norfolk and Broadland Councils to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy Funding, with a target of 19 apprentices in place by March 2022, across the One Team. Members expressed their support for a central apprenticeship fund, funded through recurring underspends of existing budgets. They also supported the recruitment of higher entry level apprentices in areas of growth and where there was a shortage of qualified officers, such as in Environmental Health and Planning. In response to queries, the Assistant Director explained that there would always be a risk of apprentices moving on after their two-year placement, however, the Council was working hard with other local authorities to promote the area as an attractive place to live and work.

It was

RESOLVED

To

1. Note the impacts on skills, training and the wider economy in South Norfolk and Broadland and to note the intended approach to tailor support to specific cohorts of residents and start-up businesses
2. Support the potential establishment of a central apprenticeship fund, funded through the recurring underspend of existing budgets.

(The meeting concluded at 11.26 am)

Chairman

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Appendix 1 (minute 27 refers)

The Help Hub: Prevention, Support and Advice

Now, Next and the Future



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Report Journey

- People and Communities Panel – 22nd June
- Wellbeing Panel - 22nd June
- Construct report – July/August
- CMLT – early September
- Cabinet (SNC) – September onwards
- Cabinet (BDC) – September onwards

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What are we going to cover?

- What are the drivers for having the Help Hub?
 - What does The Help Hub look like from the outside?
 - What does it look like for One Team?
 - Who do we support?
 - How do we support?
-
- Where have we been?
 - What are we doing?
 - What are we going to do?

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What are the drivers?

‘Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’

World Health Organisation

‘Integrated care is about giving people the support they need, joined up across local councils, the NHS, and other partners. It removes traditional divisions between hospitals and family doctors, between physical and mental health, and between NHS and council services.’

NHS England

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What are the drivers?

THE VISION

Working together to create the best place and environment for everyone, now and for future generations



OUR PRIORITIES. OUR PEOPLE, OUR APPROACH



Supporting individuals and empowering communities



Protecting and improving the natural and built environment, whilst maximising quality of life



Growing the economy



Moving with the times, working smartly and collaboratively

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What are the drivers?

Cost savings:

Using the New Economy Manchester Cost Benefit Analysis:

- A homeless prevention case costs min £747
- A homeless application costs £2,909
- A complex eviction costs £7,770

The Help Hub received 432 housing based Request For Support last year (excluding Domestic Abuse) 155 were referred through for housing advice, but 277 were supported through Help Hub services of one type or another.

Therefore, we resolved 277 cases outside of the statutory housing system.

277 x £747 is the minimum saving of **£206,919**

If just one quarter of these (69 people) would have gone on to make a homeless application having not had support then this is further saving of **£201,448**

If 10% of those had been complex evictions that's a further **£53,613**

Very hypothetical but that's a total figure of **£461,980** fiscal saving from the hub's housing cases.

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What are the drivers?

Cost savings:

Whilst the Help Hub is about improving outcomes for individuals and families, by utilising the New Economy Manchester Cost Saving Calculator, we can demonstrate some of the areas where there is potential fiscal benefit to dealing with issues at an early stage.

Health 731 GP referrals to Social Prescribing £95,761 potential fiscal benefit	Children and Families 529 children directly supported by Early Help Family Focus £29.3 mil potential fiscal benefit	Domestic Abuse 120 cases with DA as a presenting need £357,323 potential fiscal benefit
Independent Adults 184 people supported through Disabled Facilities Grant £5.3 mil potential fiscal benefit	Employment 276 cases with unemployment or benefits as presenting need £2.9 mil potential fiscal benefit	Crime 328 fewer incidents of ASB in 2017/18 £231,896 potential fiscal benefit

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What are the drivers?

Improved quality of life:

Chloe is a single mother of two, aged 24. She is suffering from anxiety and depression that does not seem to be responding to medication. She states that her life is full of problems that she cannot resolve. She is worried she may lose her home.



The Help Hub team was able to:

- ✓ Identify that Chloe is a victim of domestic abuse (physical and financial) from a non-resident ex-partner. She was then referred to the Haven Project for support.
- ✓ Arrange, through the Council's Benefits Team, to clear her rent arrears, arising from financial exploitation by the ex-partner.
- ✓ Arrange through the Council's Housing Team for her to be rehoused in a location unknown to the ex-partner.
- ✓ Link her with a local peer support group to increase her confidence and chance for socialisation in her new location.

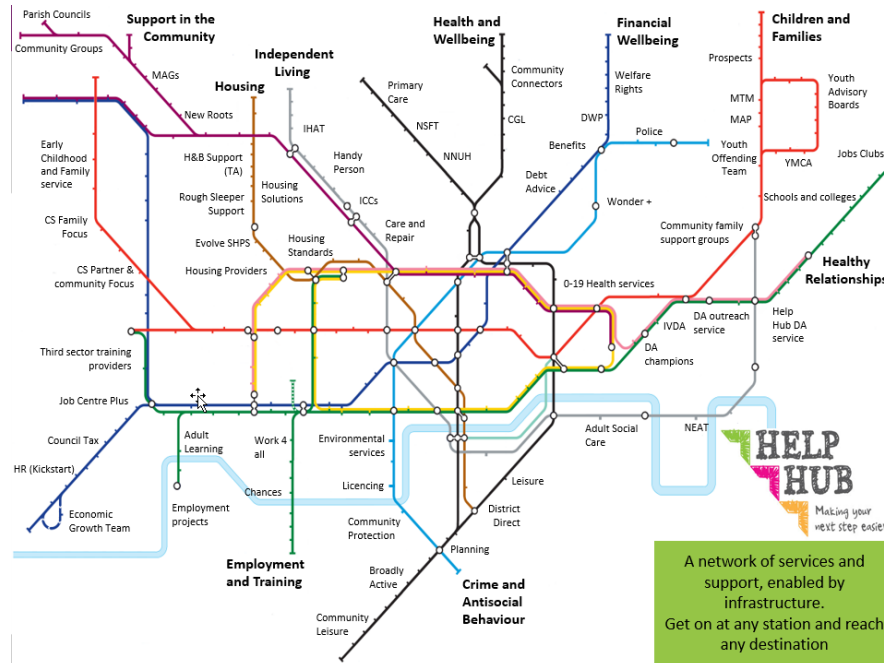
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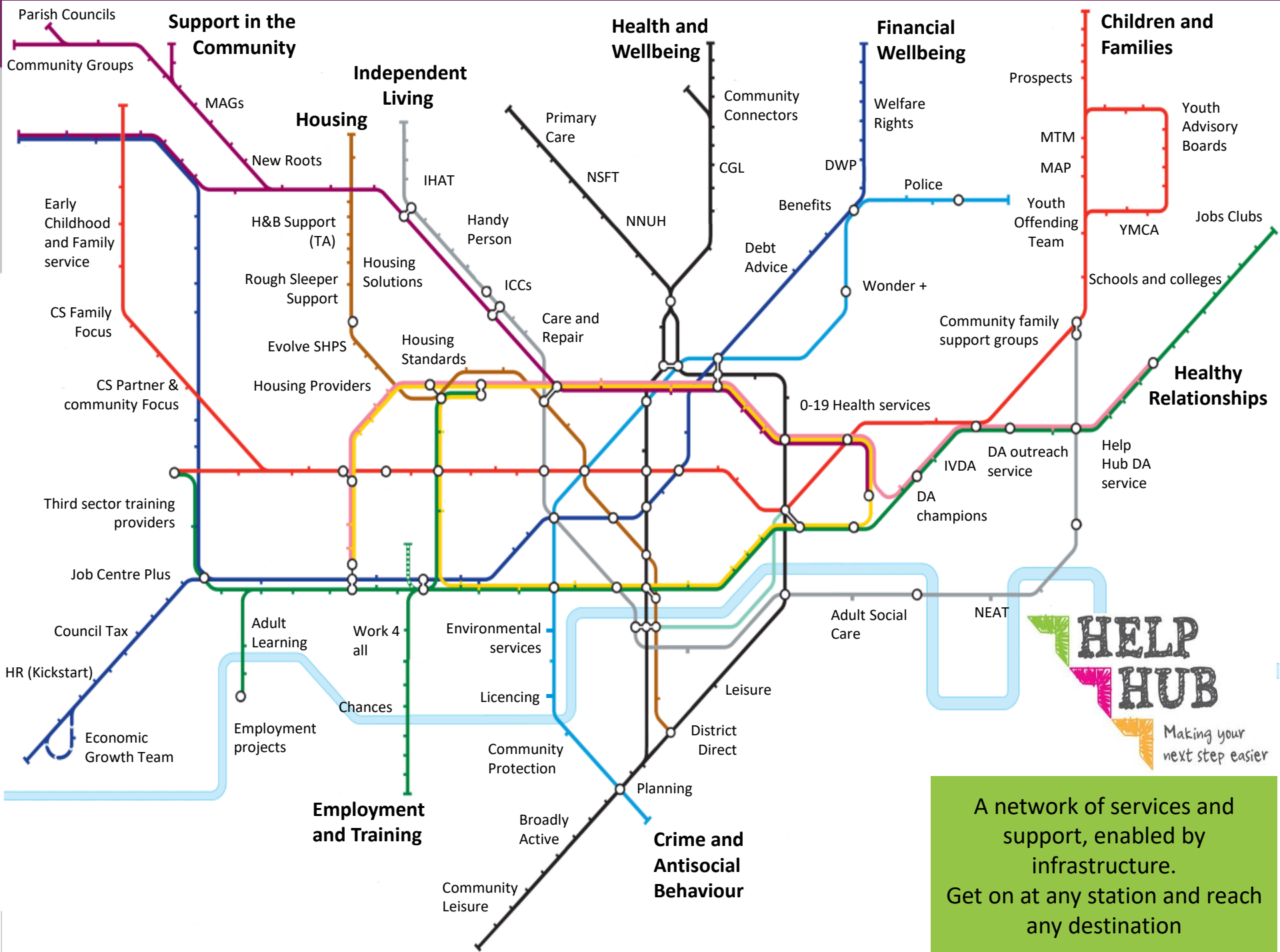
In Short...

The Help Hub is a network of community groups, organisations and services that is underpinned by an infrastructure which allows for easy navigation between them to meet the needs of the individual

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What makes the network?





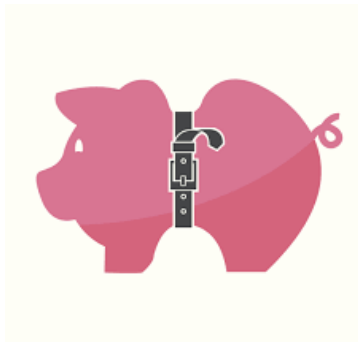
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The importance of community



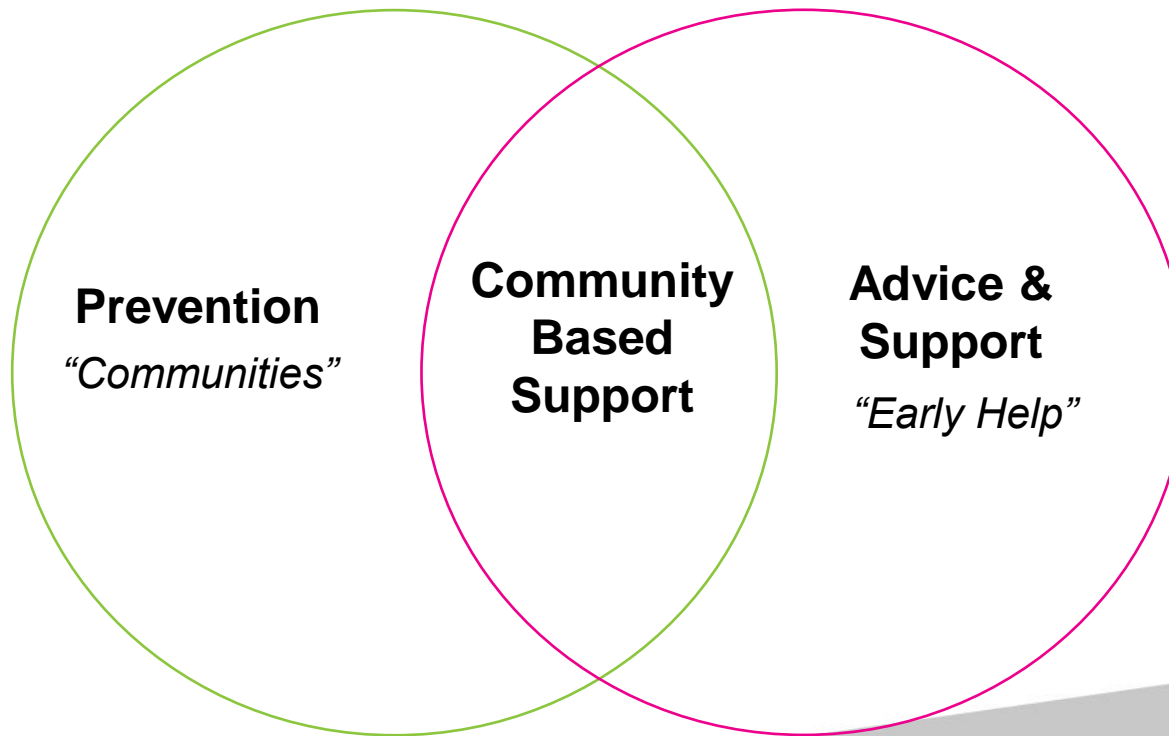
SNAB Community Links

Private group · 55 members



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What is the Help Hub for One Team?



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Prevention – Communities

What we do

- Building capacity within the community to help each other
- Creating opportunities for residents to improve physical, social and mental wellbeing
- Protecting community spaces
- Providing access to funding

Why we do it

- People who support each other are less likely to need access to formalised services – this is better for them, and the public purse

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Advice and Support – Early Help

What we do

- Triage and assessment – identifying peoples full needs and linking into the most appropriate resource to resolve their needs
- Immediate hardship support: providing access to food and fuel, alongside;
- debt advice, welfare rights and money management support
- Jobs and training: providing help, advice and guidance for accessing employment, training and learning
- Handyman service to older/vulnerable residents: helping with handrails, key safes, smoke alarms, and other works to prevent slips, trips and falls
- Practical support and specialist housing advice to enable discharge from hospital
- Provision, through commissioning, of specialist support i.e. Mental Health, Domestic Abuse

Why we do it:

- To enhance the health and life chances of residents
- To safeguard our most vulnerable residents
- To enhance the economic wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

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Community Based Support – taking services to the community

What we do

- Community Connectors – in South Norfolk the team spend half their week in GP surgeries delivering social prescribing sessions. Other referrals come from partner agencies, self-referrals and community groups. In Broadland, the role is exactly the same in terms of meeting need although without the link to NHS Primary Care. Connectors provide assisted, engaged and supported help.
- District Direct – ensuring vulnerable patients have a safe environment to return to upon discharge from hospital

Why we do it

- To take the Help Hub out to the community; getting access to those who need support at all levels to prevent escalation

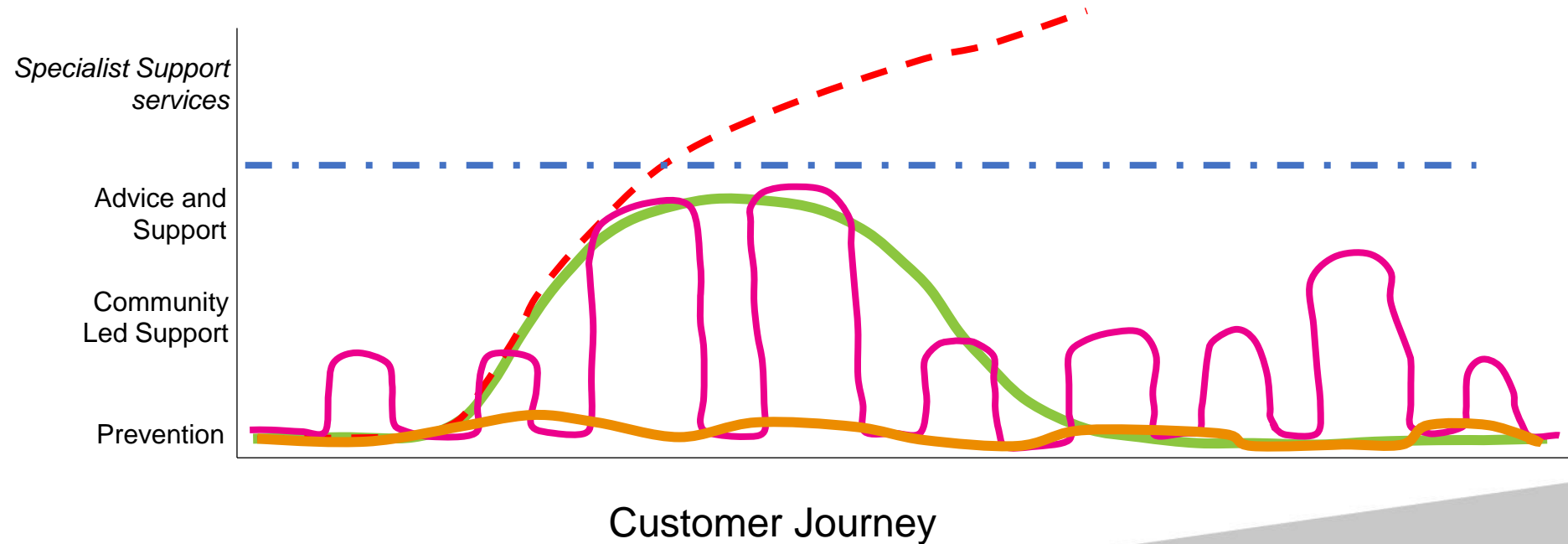
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What do we know about people accessing support



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The spectrum of support



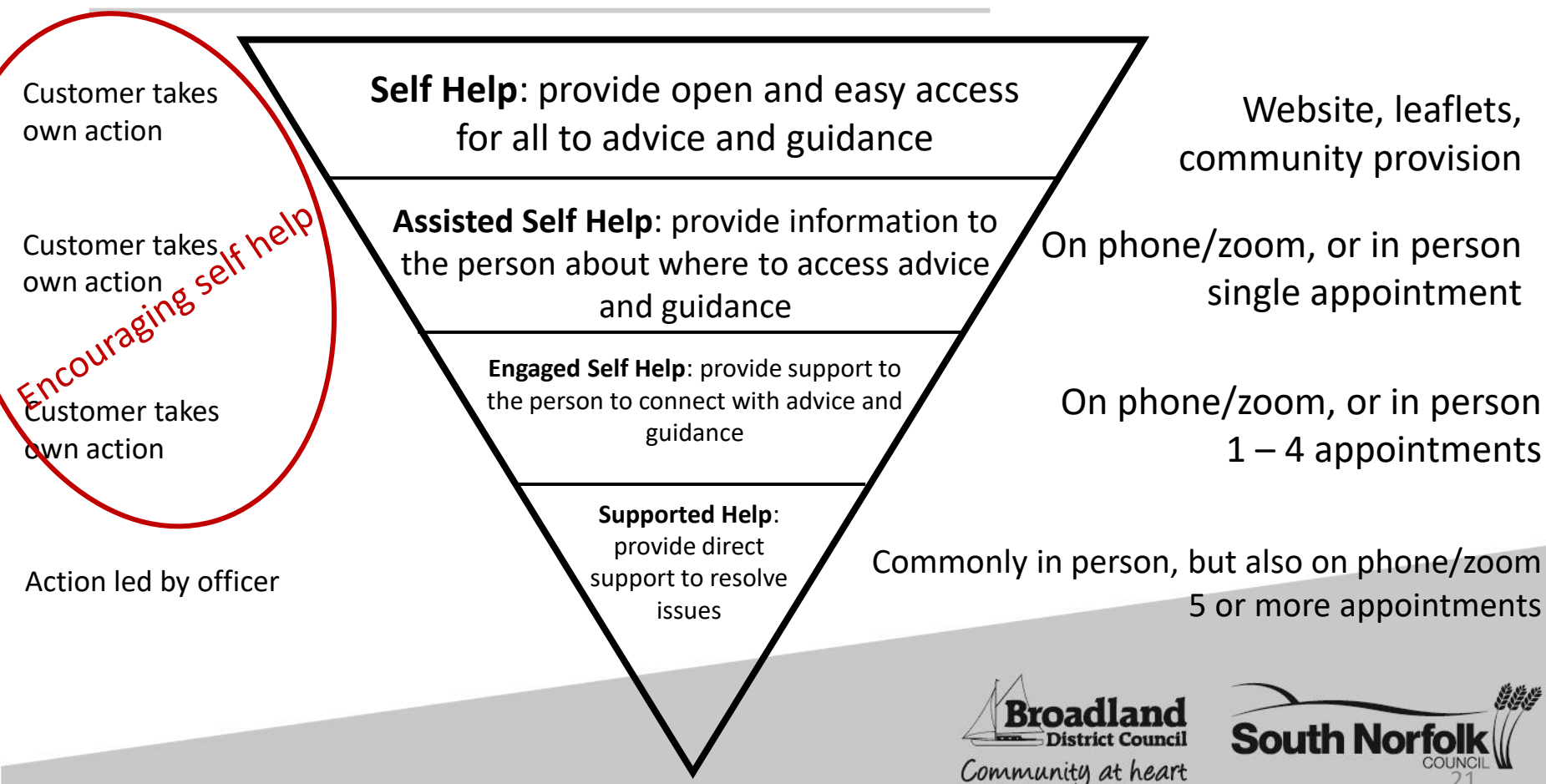
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Prevention: aka, doing ourselves out of a job



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How do we do this? A sliding scale of support



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Before we move on – any questions?

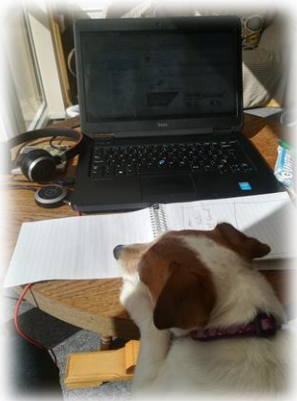


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Where are we now?

In the last 18 months the service has experienced the move to a single paid service, and the very significant impact of the pandemic.

The Help Hub has developed its ways of working and structure to deal with these events whilst maintaining a high level of service and support for residents.



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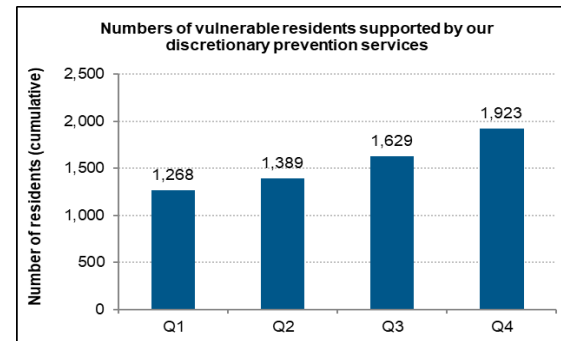
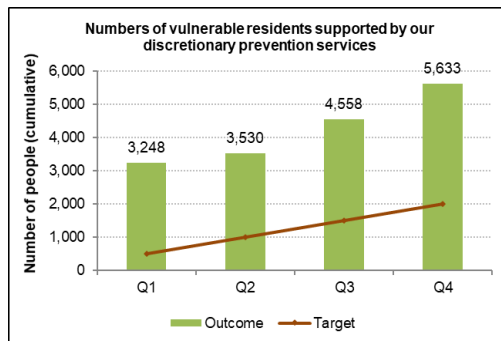
Where are we now?

Help Hub Requests for support

2019-20: 2549

2020 -21: 2544*

*Lower RFS in first part of the year due to covid



- 20,000 Covid related calls taken
- 5,000 calls made to shielding residents
- 4,000 contact tracing visits made
- 4,000 food parcels delivered
- 2,750 prescriptions collected
- 3,150 shopping trips done

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Where are we now?

- We have brought together what was previously two services: Early Help and Communities
- Building on the strengths of each, we have brought together two Help Hubs under a single back office function
- All staff across the wider team have learned how to answer calls to the Help Hub lines and formed an overflow hunt group. They learned new skills, about more services and a greater understanding of the wider team's roles - we are now more resilient as a service
- We have become more flexible to deal with unexpected circumstances
- We have made both Help Hubs customer facing and the opening hours have been extended from 8:15am to 10pm

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Where are we now?

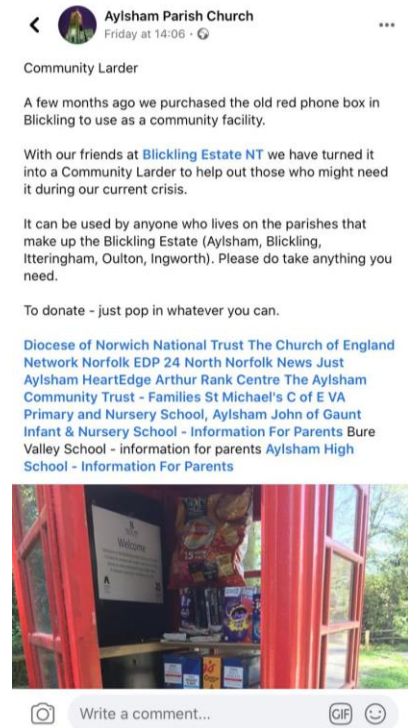
- We have retained and built on the Help Hub brand to ensure residents know where to go for help and support
- We have ensured that the network of support is offered as consistency as possible across both councils, and we continue to build on this
- We have worked with Public Health partners to deliver community testing
- We have delivered Test and Trace since Jan 2021
- We carried out surge testing in Diss
- We set up food distribution centres



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Where are we now?

- Covid-19 enabled the building of better and improved links with community organisations that are there to support and help people
- The legacy of the pandemic will be this network of community organisations who will act as eyes and ears in our communities to identify people who need support, and provide it where possible.
- This is a two-way street, they can direct people to the Hub who need support, whilst the hub can also refer and connect people to them whose needs can be met through a community based offer.



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Where are we now?

- We have adapted the way we work to deliver services virtually:
 - Marriott's Way and EAMA 10km
 - Community at Heart Awards
 - Community Awards
 - Collaboration meetings
 - Broadly Active



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What's next?

The Help Hub of the future is not just about supporting people when they have needs, but also creating and providing offers that prevent the need arising.

In the next 6 months we will focus on the following areas:

- We need to make the Help Hub even more accessible to all, including those who might be digitally excluded and those for whom English is not their first language.
- Promote and enhance the ability for people to self-serve who can through provision of a digital advice, information and self-help offers.
- Realign the “prevention” (communities) element of the Help Hub to ensure we are ready to offer an equitable service across the two districts

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What's next?

- Development of additional services to deal with the impact of the pandemic in the following areas:
 - mental wellbeing,
 - physical health and mobility,
 - domestic abuse,
 - financial resilience
 - Identifying and connecting with those who are currently disengaged.
- Developing our Community Connector (Social Prescribing) offer in Broadland – we currently have temporary connectors already in place via the COMF, and will be working with the Local Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in order to create a similar framework to that which exists in South Norfolk*

*note: PCNs have specific funding provided directly to them to invest in Social Prescribing as part of the NHS Plan

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Next Steps

- Member workshops for further discussion
- Engagement with partners to plan for the recovery phase of the pandemic, and develop a new way of working which reflects life post pandemic
- Scoping and data collection exercise to determine focus areas

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Thank you – any questions?

