



Centre for Local  
Economic Strategies

**September 2015**

***SUPPORT WELLINGBOROUGH EVALUATION***

Final report prepared by

**Centre for Local Economic Strategies**

Presented to

**Support Wellingborough**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) was commissioned by Support Wellingborough to undertake an evaluation of its service model and activities. This summary draws together the key messages from the research.

### Background and context

Health and social care is in crisis – a combination of increased demand and a significant drop in public spending is leading to an unsustainable situation and increasing pressures on agencies across the country. It is clear that new and innovative models of delivery are required in response. This means working towards collaborative approaches which provide a step change in combining the resources of organisations who are delivering services. This evaluation shows Support Wellingborough as a locally driven best practice model, which provides a highly integrated response to meeting identified need, and importantly is able to track outcomes and beneficiary progression in a highly robust way.

Support Wellingborough was launched in 2013 as a partnership consortium with over 30 VCSE members, committed to working together for the benefit of Wellingborough's communities. The consortium includes housing, care and support providers, plus general and specialist agencies, which work closely with voluntary sector organisations and local communities. The partnership is a ground breaking initiative designed to deliver a preventative model of support services providing early intervention and support for vulnerable residents, to prevent an escalation in individual needs and to reduce over reliance and pressure on statutory services.

### How Support Wellingborough operates

Support Wellingborough delivers direct services through the Single Point of Access and the Community Action (CATCH) Team. These are managed through the "Supporting You" IT system which creates a platform for cooperation between members, to provide the best possible response to users. This ground-breaking system includes a common assessment, support planning and outcomes framework; and tracks the progress of each user's journey, providing detailed management information including costs, time taken and measured outcomes on a case by case basis. This enables the consortium to develop a bespoke person centred approach to its service delivery, and robustly evidence its impact in providing better, quicker and cheaper outcomes.

### A localised model in touch with local needs

Support Wellingborough operates in an area which currently faces a number of social and economic challenges. Detailed research has been commissioned by Support Wellingborough from a professional research agency and from the University of Northampton, conducted in collaboration with local community groups. The research has enabled Support Wellingborough to accurately assess the level of support needs in these communities and to promote action to address those needs.

Within the wider national crisis in health and social care therefore, this is a localised model that has a fine grained understanding of local needs, and acts upon this to prevent problems from escalating. A holistic and highly collaborative approach such as this has wider lessons for national policy and how the severe challenges facing health and social care can be addressed.

### Strong performance which evidences better, cheaper and quicker outcomes

Evidence of impact is provided by the integrated IT system employed by Support Wellingborough. The 'Supporting You' system records a range of data, including the number and proportion of cases falling within different levels of need, average duration of each case, the professional time per case, average cost per case by level of need, the referral agency, lead support agency, and outcomes by level of need in terms of distance travelled (measured on a 6 point scale and across an outcomes framework). Key messages related to performance include:

- ❑ Between April 2013 and the end of July 2015 there had been 517 cases in total; however, this only represents a small proportion of the need as SW has, as yet, not widely publicised the service
- ❑ 45% of cases fall within Level 1 and 2 (lower to moderate need), and half are classed at substantial (3a or 3b) or severe (Level 4). This serves to illustrate that Support Wellingborough is evolving significant

capacity, capability, and adaptability to identify and address health and wellbeing issues at a very wide range of levels.

- ❑ On average, cases are open for around 1 to 3 months which reflects the outcome focused nature of the interventions; duration has reduced though between April 2013 and July 2015. The average professional time taken per case is between 4.5 to 5 hours. Customers are therefore moving through the outcomes network over just a few months, as opposed to several months or years as can be the case with other services, and relatively few professional hours are being expended. This strongly illustrates how people's needs are identified quickly before being referred and their problems are addressed.
- ❑ The median distance travelled by beneficiaries is between 2 and 3 points, along a six point outcome scale. This evidences a particularly positive trend of clients making real and sustained progress, and it clearly has implications for the level of dependency upon other services.
- ❑ This data shows that SW has succeeded in improving support services: Quicker, Better Cheaper outcomes. This is particularly noticeable at levels 3a and 3b. The average cost of interventions was £130 and £150 respectively, and the median distance travelled by customers on the 6 point scale was 2 and 3 respectively

### Critical success factors for the model

- ❑ **Bespoke delivery of services:** delivery is very person focused. It is the result of a strongly collaborative approach that means that clients are provided with the support they need, at the right time for them. As a result clients are therefore dealt with quickly and efficiently; often at a time when they are in a crisis situation. This simply is not happening at scale across other services.
- ❑ **Unique IT system is central to Support Wellingborough's success:** it is a significant USP for the service model and in driving the collaborative approach, reflecting considerable expertise and professionalism. The system is fully tested and unique in its concept, and could indeed have wider significance should further resource be put into it and if rolled out elsewhere. It allows for a full cost/benefit analysis and outcomes tracking that is increasingly required by commissioners and funding bodies.
- ❑ **Creation of a culture of collaboration that was not there before:** the development of Support Wellingborough has provided a catalyst for a step change towards collaboration at a significantly advanced and more systematic level than was previously the case.
- ❑ **Single point of access:** the CATCH team is a key driver of the collaboration within Support Wellingborough. Just one single point of access links to the whole CATCH team making the whole process seamless within one holistic approach. It has meant that all the interrelated issues that individuals may be facing have been able to be identified at first contact so that what they are offered fits the specific pattern of support they require.
- ❑ **The wide ranging outcome framework:** the 15 point outcome scale is wide ranging and accounts for not just standard health and wellbeing measures, but wider housing and economic, employment and skills elements. This shows strong appreciation of how health and wellbeing outcomes inter-relate with other outcomes.
- ❑ **Remaining connected to the community and meaningful co-production:** as Support Wellingborough has developed, it has still retained its grassroots focus, amongst all partner organisations. In particular, its Customer Forum (made up of beneficiaries) has helped ensure that this is the case. Support Wellingborough is also a strong example of real co-production and co-design. The model depends upon the contributions of residents and service users in order to maintain its innovative approach and success. The Customer Forum is the main vehicle for this, with the feedback from users actively shaping services.

### Highly valued by partners and stakeholders

Support Wellingborough has transformed the way in which partners have operated. Partners reported how they had become more efficient and effective in their approaches, and this has been important in progressing the internal conversations within organisations away from competition and towards collaboration. Organisations have become further professionalised, and internal processes and ways of working have become more joined up than before. The changes that partner organisations have experienced has improved their coverage, offer and service.

Feedback from statutory sector respondents suggests that the model is valued highly and viewed as an important resource. For instance, from a health perspective, it is viewed as a model that will be essential in future, particularly given the pressures on the health service. It is viewed by statutory level respondents as being flexible, inclusive for people of all needs, and providing a unique preventative service that is not available elsewhere in the county.

### Scaling up the model: challenges and opportunities

Support Wellingborough's innovative and holistic approach has proven to be highly effective at the local level. As a result partners have recognised the need to expand its model to the county level (Support Northamptonshire). Scaling up will also see collaboration between organisations with a variety of expertise from across the county, and individuals will benefit from access to a greater range of services provided by this enlarged network. There are challenges (although partners are in the process of addressing these), such as integration with other areas, how to manage scale when the results may be expected fairly quickly and the need to plan a transitional period so that a sustainable model emerges against which it can lever in other support.

Despite these challenges though scaling up the model is something that needs to be strongly supported at all levels. If scaled up, the potential of the model could have a major positive impact across the county, and importantly for the statutory sector, it will save money whilst delivering a quality service. Further, it is also a mechanism of building both capacity and capability within the voluntary and community sector, and can help in shifting attitudes within the sector towards collaboration as opposed to competition.

Given the pressures in public services, it is hard to foresee how the statutory sector can afford not to invest in this type of model in order to meet demand.