



## **Thurrock Coalition**

### **The Care Act Unpacked Workshop Report April 2015**

#### **Introduction**

Thurrock Coalition offers advice and support for disabled and older residents of Thurrock and their carers. We are a wide network of individuals and groups aiming to inform people about their rights and entitlements and to improve the quality and choice of services that might assist them.

#### **Context**

The “*Care Act Unpacked*” Workshops were held in March and April 2015. These were a series of information workshops held across Thurrock, in Tilbury, South Ockendon and Grays to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the Care Act 2014..

The new Care Act 2014 is the biggest reform to the social care system in the UK since the NHS was created 66 years ago. The Care Act simplifies all the other laws and tries to make it clear exactly what care people can expect.

#### **Recommendations and Next Steps**

- The workshop engaged 40+ people, of a varied demographic each of whom provided a valuable insight into feelings of safety in their lived experiences (see below).
- It is hoped that the discussions, questions and issues raised throughout the workshop will be used to inform, develop and implement the Key Duties and Responsibilities contained in the Care Act 2014 in a positive and meaningful way, informed person-centred principles alongside the people who use Council Services.
- Thurrock Coalition will liaise with Thurrock Council later in 2015, with a view to holding “Care Act: The Journey So Far” workshops, looking at implementation

progress and lived experiences since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, to further inform good practice.

- **“The Care Act Unpacked”- Background, Format and Aims of the day**

Between October 2014 and January 2015, the Thurrock Council Care Act 2014 Working Group, agreed, in co-production with Thurrock Coalition, to develop a Communications Plan to engage with people who use services, their families and carers, to emphasise and publicise the new legislation, the main changes, differences and it's practical implications for everyone.

Council Officers were then assigned specific topic areas, based upon interest and specialism. The topics covered the key elements and changes under the new legislation, including:

- Information and Advice
- Promoting Wellbeing, Prevention, Delay, Reducing the need for care and support
- Assessment and Eligibility
- Advocacy
- Carers' rights
- Funding and Finance

In order to implement the Communications Plan, Thurrock Council engaged Thurrock Coalition to facilitate a series of workshops aimed at People who use Services, of all impairment types, Older people, Carers, parents, family members, relatives and, people not yet disabled.

The workshop started with a video entitled: “The Care Act: A Short Introduction” by Skills For Care. The video focused on the duties to Prevent, Delay and Reduce and also looked briefly a the key new Duties and Responsibilities of Local Authorities and what people can expect. The video is available online here:

<https://vimeo.com/108552705>



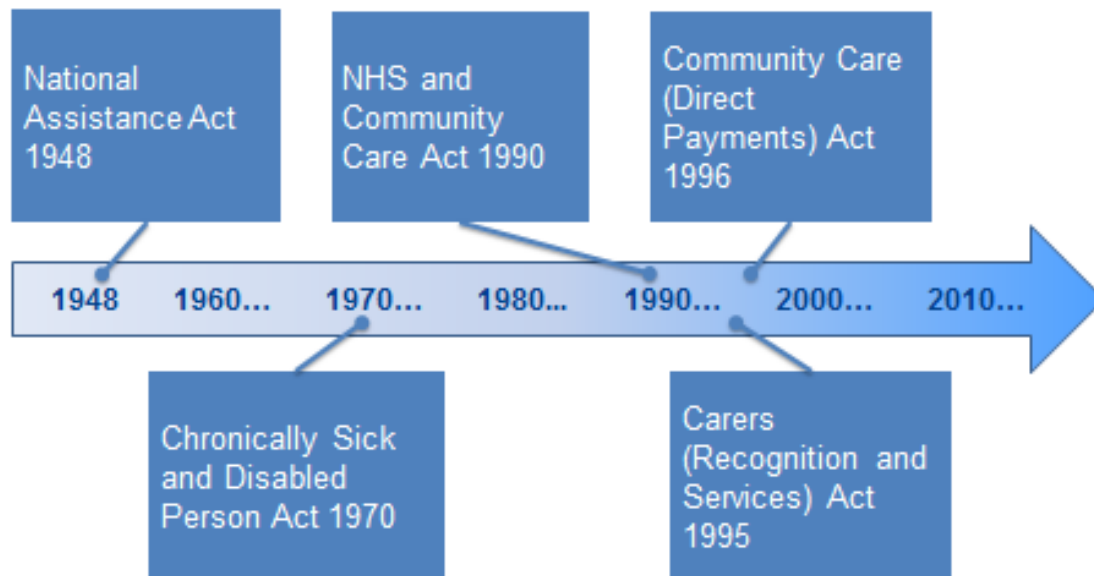
## Care Act 2014

A short introduction

There then followed a background introduction and overview of the Care Act 2014 from Roger Harris, the Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning at Thurrock Council:

### The Care Act 2014 replaces many previous laws

Care Act learning and development materials



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The Care Act 2014 has several main aims:

- That care and support:
  - is **clearer** and **fairer**
  - promotes people's **wellbeing**
  - enables people to **prevent and delay** the need for care and support, and carers to maintain their caring role
  - puts **people in control** of their lives so they can pursue opportunities to realise their potential

The Act focusses upon a more integrated approach to Care and Support:

- Different sections of the Act are designed to work together
- Local authority wide
- Overlap with Children and Families, including transitions
- Partnerships and integration (especially with Health)
- Leadership

### **The Wellbeing Principle:**

The Act created something called “The Wellbeing Principle”:

***“The general duty of a local authority, ... in the case of an individual, is to promote that individual’s wellbeing”.***

Wellbeing is broadly defined, in 9 areas in particular

The Act says that Local authorities should also have regard to other key principles when carrying out their activities, such as beginning with the assumption that the individual is best-placed to judge their well-being

### **New Responsibilities**

The Act details new responsibilities of local authorities towards **all** local people, these include:

Arranging services or taking other steps to prevent, reduce or delay peoples’ needs for care and support

Provision of information and advice, including independent financial advice  
Promoting diversity and quality in the market of care providers so that there are services/supports for people to choose from

A statutory requirement to collaborate and cooperate with other public authorities, including duty to promote integration with NHS and other services

A Duty for local authorities to step in to ensure that no one is left without the care they need if their service closes because of business failure

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) will have oversight of the financial health of providers most difficult to replace were they to fail and to provide assistance to local authorities if providers do fail

## **New duties**

### **Advocacy, safeguarding and transitions**

A duty to arrange independent advocacy if a person would otherwise be unable to participate in or understand the care and support system.

There is a new statutory framework for protecting adults from neglect and abuse. There is a new duty on local authorities to investigate suspected abuse or neglect, past or present, experienced by adults still living and deceased.

There is also a duty to assess young people and their carers in advance of transition from children's to adult services, where likely to need care and support as an adult.

### **What will the Care Act mean...?**

#### **For people needing Care and Support:**

- Better access to information and advice, preventative services, and assessment of need.
- An entitlement to care and support
- A cap on care expenditure which an individual is liable for comes into effect from April 2016
- A common system across the country:
- Continuity of care
- Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) replaced by a national eligibility threshold

#### **For Carers:**

The Care Act strengthens the rights and recognition of carers:

- Improved access to information and advocacy should make it easier for carers to access support and plan for their future needs
- The emphasis on prevention will mean that carers should receive support early on and before reaching crisis point
- Adults and carers have the same rights to an assessment on the appearance of needs
- A local authority must meet eligible needs of carers and prepare a support plan

- A carer should be kept informed of the care and support plan of the person they care for

### **For Local Authorities:**

- New duties and responsibilities
- Changes to local systems and processes
- More assessments and support plans
- Responsibilities towards all local people
- Better understanding of self funders and the care market needed
- Training and development of the workforce
- Costs of reforms
- Preparation for reforms needed

After the Background introduction and overview there then followed a series of small topic-specific “Breakout groups” each of which was introduced by a Council Officer, this included an opportunity for “Question & Answer” discussions between each of the assigned Council Officers and community members, individuals, older people and carers to talk through and explain specific topics, and to address issues and any queries that arose.

### **Breakout Groups – Key Points and topics raised during the Q & As**

#### **Information and Advice**

In a move towards greater personalisation, and person-centred support, the Care Act places an increased requirement upon local authorities (LAs) to provide information, advice and guidance to enable people to choose their own route or pathway to receive care and support.

Many Local Authorities (including Thurrock Council) are working together with community groups (such as Thurrock Diversity Network and its individual and organisational members) and other social care and health providers to provide comprehensive information both written and web based. This will give local information about a range of services, both community based and traditional service-based support, from nursing homes to garden maintenance, local social groups to education opportunities.

The Care Act also requires LAs to give out information about the process they will go through, copies of their financial assessments, their eligibility and their care/support plan.

Not only do the IT systems need to be able to deliver these but Local Authorities

need to ensure they are presented in a meaningful way. Citizens must be empowered to make real choices about their care and support.

The information and Advice Service must be provided to everyone in the area not just people who are entitled to funding or support from the council.

The service should cover the new rights and entitlements that people have under the Act and how they can access them in their local area, this should include financial advice.

Information should be provided in accessible ways not just on a website, or leaflets in a GPs office, but tailored to the needs of local people

### **Focus on Thurrock**



Issues were raised around the online advice and information portal, particularly in relation to visual aids, accessibility for various impairment types, the content of the Portal, the image suite and how to provide feedback and updates so as to ensure the information is kept contemporary and pro-actively up to date.

It was confirmed that methods of feedback are being developed and will be integral to the new system. There is currently a “Tell Us What You Think” section for people to provide changes and/or updates, but this is administered and moderated centrally at present. It is envisaged that individuals and groups will be able to provide feedback and also login to provide real-time updates with new, additional changes or updated information.

### **Promoting Wellbeing, Prevention, Delay, Reducing the need for care and support**

The core purpose of adult care and support is to help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life.

Underpinning all individual care and support functions (that is, any process, activity or broader responsibility that the local authority performs) is the need to ensure that doing so focuses on the needs and goals of the person concerned.

Local authorities must promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. This may sometimes be referred to as “the wellbeing principle” because it is a guiding principle that puts wellbeing at the heart of care and support.

The wellbeing principle applies in all cases where a local authority is carrying out a care and support function, or making a decision, in relation to a person. It applies equally to adults with care and support needs and their carers. In some specific circumstances, it also applies to children, their carers and to young carers when they are subject to transition assessments.

### Focus on Thurrock



Questions were raised about the importance of linking all the statutory and key voluntary support networks and partners together to increase community engagement and to publicise the Local Area Co-ordinators. This would then in turn improve inclusion, involvement, participation, health, well-being and a more meaningful and holistic assessment.

### Advocacy

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities must arrange an independent advocate to facilitate the involvement of a person in their assessment, in the preparation of their care and support plan and in the review of their care plan, if two conditions are met:

- the person has **substantial difficulty** in being fully involved in these processes
- there is **no one appropriate available** to support and represent the person’s wishes.



## Focus on Thurrock



Discussions focussed upon initial contact issues and referral routes and were service specific. Boundaries and provision of “firm advocacy” were also discussed. As well as issues around advocates contactability and provision of Advocate’s contact numbers. Mobile numbers are only given out to professionals as a matter of provider policy.

## Carers

Carers (who are people who provide unpaid Care and support, often a family member or friend) are given significant new entitlements under the Act. It’s hoped that they will be supported to maintain their caring role for longer.

Needs or carers assessments should be appropriate, proportionate, person-centred and ensure a focus on the duty to promote wellbeing.

## Focus on Thurrock



The various attendees talked through several key issues including maintaining choice and control for carers with advice and support from community based organisations such as CARIADS for help to maintain independence and relevant signposting to departments such as housing, transport and benefits. Group members took the view that effective and person-centred Carers assessments would lead to better quality of life and greater social inclusion and would finally put Carers on an equal footing in terms of rights, responsibilities and entitlements as traditional “Service Users.”

A specific question was raised regarding what the Care Act 2014 offers in terms of respite for carers. However, there is nothing specific relating to respite provision for

carers but the Local Authority will still support the independence, choice and control of carers. The Council wants to move towards offering more choice and moving away from single “places of respite provision”.

The support provided by CARIADS received repeated positive feedback on the group tables.

## **Funding & Finance**

Note: The Funding and Finance topic will be dealt with at similar future events, nearer April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016, when the legislation concerning the Dilnot Commission Proposals on funding and care caps etc. come into effect.

## **Conclusion**

The “*Care Act Unpacked*” Workshops were held in March and April 2015. These were a series of information workshops held across Thurrock, in Tilbury, South Ockendon and Grays to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the Care Act 2014.

It is hoped that the discussions, questions and issues raised throughout the workshop will be used to inform, develop and implement the Key Duties and Responsibilities contained in the Care Act 2014 in a positive and meaningful way, informed by person-centred principles alongside the people who use Council Services. Thurrock Coalition will liaise with Thurrock Council later in 2015, with a view to holding “Care Act: The Journey So Far” workshops, looking at implementation progress and lived experiences since April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015, to further inform good practice.

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## **Thurrock Coalition – May 2015**

## Appendix 1

### Analysis from Evaluation Forms:

16 people completed the evaluation forms, with 16 people agreeing that the event gave a greater awareness of the range of areas and topics covered in the Care Act and provided a forum for questions, queries and concerns to be raised and answered. 15 people agreed that the event provided advice and information that was relevant and helpful to them and raised awareness of how parts of the Care Act may affect individuals and their families, with 2 people disagreeing.

The majority of people who completed the evaluation form were positive about the event, stating that they were “very impressed”, that it was a “good pace” and “well organised. People liked the “table experts” that were interested in their specialist topics and able to follow up with information and to take on board ideas and concerns. The event provided an opportunity to ask questions and gain information.

Attendees found it interesting to hear questions from different people in different situations. Attendees asked to be kept up to date with more information for future events, with similar group work to be repeated often and to be continuously advertised to the public. Attendees said they were able to find out about services that they didn't know existed.

Attendees provided some useful suggestions for future events, particularly around allocating more time to find out more information and ask questions and to visit all tables

One attendee suggested that as the Care Act affects so many different types of people, of all ages with different needs, that perhaps future events/workshops could specialise on certain impairment types and/or age groups with specific requirements e.g. autism and older people etc.

The feedback from people who indicated that certain aspects of the event didn't go so well was as follows: sound was a difficulty – especially if hard of hearing. (The venue is fitted with a hearing loop).

One person wanted to find out more about funding levels and what cuts are coming in that will likely make a difference to the implementation of the Care Act.

Another person wanted to learn more about and to discuss the various sections/parts of the new Act. The high number of attendees meant that the room was difficult to navigate for wheelchair-users.

## Appendix 2

### Collated Feedback from the Evaluation Forms

#### Thurrock Coalition

#### The Care Act Unpacked Event – 17/4/15

#### Evaluation Form – 16 responses

<b>Did the event meet its objectives?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
Gave you a greater awareness of the range of areas and topics covered in the Care Act.	16		
Provided advice and information that was relevant and helpful to you	15	1	
Raised awareness of how parts of the Care Act may affect you and/or your family	15 N/A	1	
Provided a forum for questions, queries and concerns to be raised and answered	16		

**If you were not satisfied with any aspect of the event, please indicate the reason:**

- Sound was a difficulty – especially if hard of hearing.
- More information about funding and what cuts are coming in to make a difference to Care Act, not accessible for person with visual impairment.

**What went well for you during this event? What should we keep doing next time?**

- I liked the way everyone was interested who was providing the training to follow up with information, take on board ideas and concerns.
- Being able to speak with members of the Council on specific topics of the Care Act.
- Good pace.
- Communicating changes and simplifying the Care Act as it can be very daunting.
- Asking questions, gaining information.
- All was good.
- Keep providing information, reiterate old highlight new, talk about successes, possibly allow a bit more time.
- Interesting to hear questions from different people in different situations.
- Information forth coming, more information for future events.
- Opportunity to meet other people and hear other opinions.
- The pace was good and the group work was a good idea.
- Repeat often – keep advertising for the public.
- Going around the stations/tables with the different people explaining what they do.
- People available to ask questions.
- Discovering services I didn't know existed!

**What didn't go so well for you? What would you like to see done differently next time?**

- Perhaps a little more time to find out more information and ask questions but overall a good introduction.
- Because the Care Act affects so many different types of people young middle and old with different needs perhaps specialization e.g. disability autism and older people etc.

- Room set up – not so easy to get around with visual impairments and people who are wheelchair users.
- More time needed.
- I didn't get to all tables of discussion – so maybe a little less time at each in order to visit all 4 instead of just 3.
- Very impressed.
- More talking about the parts of the new Act.

**Do you have any further comments or suggestions?**

- It has given me lots to think about and areas I would to follow upon. Many thanks.
- Thank you!
- More information better judgements and choices can be made.
- Well organised and informative, length was ideal.