

Chief Executive's Six Month Progress Report

July - December 2014

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Dexter James helps people with disabilities have every chance in life



Dexter James (pictured left) of Surrey Choices, the Council's adult social care trading company, tells us how they're responding to the needs and issues of people with disabilities in Surrey

Since Surrey Choices was launched in August, can you tell me what the main challenge has been for the company? At Surrey Choices it's all about the customer. Our challenge was to help people supported by Surrey Choices to see and believe this. I had to tell my colleagues what they should think about when starting the business, from the perspective of someone who used to be a service user...and the challenge is this is my first proper job!

How did you convince people of this? I spent a long time listening to the Surrey Choices team to learn about what we needed to do as a business. I turned some of that into questions to ask people with disabilities how we should do it. I have been running roadshows talking to anybody that wanted to come along. I explained to them how important they are to the business and what we can achieve together. It's a conversation; I had to listen and be heard. Everything is about customers, knowing what's wrong and being honest about what needs to be fixed. That's how people will trust us and customers will come back to us.

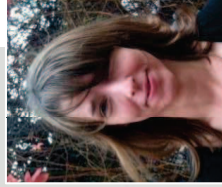
What impact did this have? I went to the management team and told them what I'd found out. Some of it was really tough. They have asked me to coach managers across the business and help them to better understand the people we support. This is a key part of our business plan.

What did you take from this experience? I've learnt you can't fix everything. That can be frustrating. But I focus on what matters to the customer. I'm learning how to do my job. Just stuff that people take for granted, which if you haven't had a job before and you go straight in at the deep end is quite tough. It helps that here I'm just Dex and part of a close team, and we trust each other. Believe in something better and that you can achieve anything, that's what I try to do each day.

How can people find out more? Please visit www.surreychoices.com or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

Jane Bremner tackles mental health stigma and discrimination in Surrey

Jane Bremner from Adult Social Care Commissioning (pictured left) has been working with colleagues in the Public Health team to use a proven approach to raising mental health awareness and address prejudice. She shares her story here.



What is the issue you were trying to address? One in four people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime, yet mental health is still misunderstood. When we conducted the Adult Mental Health Services Public Value Review, people with mental health problems and their families told us they continue to experience stigma and discrimination and that we must try and tackle the myths around mental health.

What did you decide to do? We decided to use learning from the national 'Time to Change' campaign, a tried and tested approach to raise awareness of mental health, leading to a reduction in stigma and discrimination. We launched a local programme of work in Merstham and Redhill to see if the approach worked in Surrey. There were many aspects to the work: supporting people with lived experience of mental health problems to become mental health ambassadors; delivering lots of mental health awareness training; developing two short plays (one for young people and one for adults) which show the impact of mental health problems for individuals and their families; and supported community mental health events.

What has the impact of this work been? The mental health awareness training demonstrated that there was a statistically significant increase in participants' confidence to best support others with a mental health problem after the training, and their knowledge about mental health and positive shifts in attitudes around mental health. After watching the play 'Breaking Point', analysis of students' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs around mental health showed positive shifts. The mental health ambassadors engaged over 400 members of the public in conversations around mental health and reported increased confidence and sense of purpose of attendees.

What did you learn from your experience? We learnt that our approach worked in Surrey. Having robust evaluation of the initial project helped us to secure funding from the County Council and from the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Surrey, to roll out the programme of work across the county. Evaluation also helped us identify improvements that could be made to the roll out.

How can we find out more? Contact jane.bremner@surreycc.gov.uk or have a look at our [time to change Surrey](#) web pages.

“One in four people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime, yet mental health is still misunderstood.”

Jane Bremner talks about the scale of the challenge for mental health issues in Surrey



Giving young people leaving care the skills to support themselves



Jo Lang and Sophie Harris from Children, Schools and Families (pictured left) talk about the Council's work to help young people leaving care become independent

What are the issues young people leaving care are facing? Young people have told us that leaving care is a daunting experience and often they don't feel prepared for independent living. One young person said it felt like "care was leaving me not me leaving care." The challenge was to find a way to help young people learn useful independent living skills with a format they found useful.

How did you help them to become more independent? With the help of Care Council (a group of young people in our care who meet every month to discuss what's affecting them), volunteers, partners and the support of the Corporate Parenting Board, 'Skills Fest- your life, your choice' was born. The event centred on workshops designed to promote independence. For example, cookery, car maintenance, a flat pack furniture challenge and CV writing. We also had a market place of information stalls including from health and higher education.

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“It felt like care was leaving me, not me leaving care.”

A care leaver shares their view on leaving care

What did the young people think of Skills Fest? The feedback from young people was fantastic. They loved being able to learn important skills in an informal environment. They appreciated that it was a social occasion as well as an educational one. The providers that attended also told us how valuable and useful they thought the event was.

For you, what was the learning that came out of this? To encourage the young people to come along to the event we needed to make it relevant. Using a festival theme we made it look and feel current for young people – different from other council events. For example, the day was paperless - all information from workshops and stalls was put on memory sticks and included with the young person's entrance ticket.

How can people find out more? Skills Fest will be returning on Saturday 4 July 2015. Information will be available soon. For more information on Care Council and our looked after children you can visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/carezone

Using innovative new technology to strengthen the voice of young people



Mona Saad from the Children's Rights Service (pictured left) shares how Surrey is using an innovative app to help young people to communicate more effectively with the professionals they work with

What was the issue you were trying to resolve? Children and young people that we work with have been telling us that communication with the professionals involved in their life is not as simple, quick and reliable as they would hope for. This is particularly important for young people who are either in care or leaving care as they do not always have adults they can turn to for support when they need to make their opinions and wishes heard.

What have you done to enable young people to be heard? We joined a team working with social enterprise 'Sixteen25' to develop an online self advocacy app called Mind of My Own (MOMO). We were the only local authority to be part of the team collaborating to develop **MOMO**. In April 2013, six Surrey young people contributed to developing, testing and shaping the app. They felt very positive about having an app that was easy and engaging to use and would help them express their views more clearly.

How has MOMO been used more widely? The Children's Rights Service has started to see examples of young people using MOMO to either ask for a problem to be sorted or to let their social worker know what they want to discuss in a meeting. When it comes through to a worker, the MOMO communication is clear and easy to understand. We are hugely pleased to have played an important part in making a new tool available for our young people but we won't stop trying to improve how we communicate with them.

What lessons have been learned from this project? The main lesson I have learnt is that it takes time, determination and patience to develop something new and that we should always remember what we are trying to achieve. It also helps to have a good dose of optimism!

How can people find out more? For more information contact mona.saad@surreycc.gov.uk or even better, give the app a go yourself by visiting the **MOMO website**

“We are hugely pleased to have played an important part in making a new tool available for young people”

Mona Saad on the introduction of MOMO.



“Our staff are now encouraged to consider their colleagues as internal customers.”

Mike Dawson on the main benefit for Highways on taking the Customer Service Excellence process

Highways Service puts customers first to deliver great value for residents

Mike Dawson from the Highways Service (pictured left) explains how a national standard has helped drive improvements in their customer service for residents

What was the challenge? The Highways Service receives the highest level of enquiries from residents. We wanted to take steps to embed the customer at the heart of all service delivery.

So what did you do? Customer Service Excellence (CSE) is a national standard with 57 areas of best practice to drive customer-focused change across the public, private and third sector. We used this framework to improve our customer service within Highways to ensure we consider all aspects of customer service and to encourage us to think widely about how to improve our customers’ overall experience.

How has this helped improve Surrey’s roads? One of the most important changes delivered by CSE is that our staff are now encouraged to consider their colleagues as internal customers. This simple change means that everyone is aware of the impact that dealings with internal customers will ultimately have on the external customer. We have also increased the number of ways that customers can leave us feedback, for example everyone in the Highways Service now has a link to a feedback survey in their email signature. Furthermore, keeping customers informed of the progress of their enquiry and proactively providing roadwork information is a huge challenge. The CSE standard has been used to help understand and improve these issues.

What did you learn from your experience? CSE is a journey of continuous improvement and does not finish now we have achieved the standard. While the majority of people in Highways already considered the customer’s perspective on a day-to-day basis before we began the CSE project, the standard provides a useful framework to reinforce this point and to get people to think about how this could be applied wider throughout the Service to ensure continual improvement.

How can people find out more? Contact miker.dawson@surreycc.gov.uk



“By sharing expertise and resources, we are able to do more for residents and businesses”

Steve Ruddy explains the benefits of sharing services with Buckinghamshire

Sharing Trading Standards services to strengthen the South-East economy

Steve Ruddy of Trading Standards (pictured left) reflects on an innovative partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council that shows sharing services can grow the economies of both counties.

What was the challenge you faced? How, after making big savings already, and with continuing budget pressures, could we continue to enhance and improve services, protecting vulnerable residents from scams and rogue traders, whilst supporting local businesses?

How did you respond? We decided that the way forward was to combine forces with another local authority Trading Standards Service so that we could reduce duplication and support costs, share expertise and resources, and build on our combined strengths to increase our income. We worked with Buckinghamshire to develop a model for a new joint service for both local authorities. All Trading Standards staff will now be employed by Surrey with a single management team. Service delivery will continue to be based locally, ensuring that the service doesn't become remote from local needs and local partners.

How will this work help strengthen Surrey and Buckinghamshire's economies? We are able to achieve our savings targets every year for the next four years, without any damage to front line services. In fact by sharing expertise and resources we are able to do more for residents and businesses. We will retain local presence, local partnerships and local impact.

By the fourth year of the new shared service, we will be saving almost £400,000 per annum, or 12% of the joint service budget. We will have a more resilient and flexible service, and one that can generate more income and will be more influential regionally and nationally. The shared service will have a bigger impact and make more of a difference than we could independently.

What did you learn from your experience? Creating new partnerships is hard work but extremely rewarding. It was vital to build understanding and trust, to develop and articulate a shared vision and priorities, and to communicate effectively and frequently with everyone involved. It was vital to build awareness and support for the initiative throughout both local authorities. In particular the engagement and political support from Members was crucial in ensuring success. Geography need not be a barrier to sharing services – don't limit your thinking to your next door neighbours.

How can people find out more? Contact steve.ruddy@surreycc.gov.uk. You can also read the business case which is included as part of the Cabinet papers for 21 October 2014.



Bronwen Chinien explains how energy efficient homes help prevent health problems

One in three households in Surrey currently live in homes that are below the recommended energy efficiency level for a healthy home, putting many people more at risk of health problems including respiratory disease, heart attack and falls. Bronwen Chinien from the Environment Policy Team (pictured left) explains what is being done to help residents keep warm while lowering their carbon footprint.

What was the challenge you faced? Various measures can be taken by householders to improve energy efficiency and grant funding is sometimes available, but it can be complex and subject to change. We needed a co-ordinated advice service and approach to identifying and reaching those most in need.

How did you respond? We developed a partnership with Districts and Boroughs, Adult Social Care and Trading Standards. We now have a single point of contact for energy efficiency advice, providing staff with a place to refer at risk people to. We have also shared data on Surrey’s housing stock, enabling us to highlight funding available to those who most need it.

How did this contribute towards caring for Surrey’s environment? Over 50 households per month are being helped to make home improvements. One example is Mrs Gregory from Maybury, who recently recovered from a stroke and has mobility problems. By replacing her 15 year old boiler with a more efficient one, using grant funding assistance, she is looking forward to lower bills this winter. However, there is still much more work to be done. We need to share more data to identify those people most at risk and we need to make the case for further, sustainable funding for this area.

What did you learn from your experience? People’s health and the condition of our environment are closely linked. By understanding where there are common priorities and working together, we can make more progress than trying to tackle problems from our separate perspectives.

How can people find out more? Please contact Bronwen.Chinien@surreycc.gov.uk or see www.actionsurrey.org

“One in three households in Surrey live in homes below recommended energy efficiency levels.”

Bronwen Fisher outlines the scale of the challenge for helping more people stay warm this winter



‘Surrey Live!’ opens doors for young people

Jim Pinchen of Surrey Arts (pictured left) demonstrates how important it is to have the right partners in place to support improved outcomes. He reflects on the work of ‘Surrey Live!’ and the difference it is making for young people in challenging circumstances

What was the challenge you faced? ‘Surrey Live!’ is a programme run by Surrey Arts, in partnership with a range of cultural organisations and services. It provides free contemporary music workshops, rehearsal and performance opportunities for young people living in challenging circumstances aged 13-18. The aim is to help these young people with music-making skills, increase their confidence and improve their life opportunities. We had a challenge to deliver the programme as the Youth Support Service, one of the key partners in the project, was undergoing significant changes.

How did you ensure that you could deliver the programme in spite of this issue? We responded by developing partnerships with new local services and companies from outside the existing network. This meant that the programme was able to reach out to a number of young people that weren’t previously identified and to give them an opportunity to join. We formed partnerships with organisations such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Halo, a project creating opportunities for young adults with mild learning disabilities.

What has the impact of this programme been for Surrey’s young people? The first year of ‘Surrey Live!’ has been very successful. Work has been delivered across the county with young people from a wide range of challenging circumstances including young offenders and youngsters from the Gypsy and Traveller communities. We have had 522 young people take part in the programme, including 186 young people in challenging circumstances, such as Looked After Children and young offenders. One young person said about the project, “Showed that if I believe in myself, I can achieve...Agreed it shouldn’t end – LOVE IT HERE!”

What did you learn from your experience? The key learning from this project for me was when a partner is experiencing changes within their organisation, it is extremely important to ensure that those relationships are maintained and strengthened to ensure the project has every chance of success. Music and the arts play a crucial role in providing creative education and positive expression for our young people. It’s therefore vital that arts providers and local authority services connect to reach more young people through sharing costs and resources.

How can people find out more? Contact jim.pinchen@surreycc.gov.uk or visit www.surreymusicclub.com.



“**Showed that if I believe in myself, I can achieve...Agreed it shouldn’t end – LOVE IT HERE!**”

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A young person reflects on their ‘Surrey Live!’ experience



Janet Lomax ensures all primary school children in Surrey can have a nutritious school meal

Janet Lomax of the Schools and Learning Service (pictured left) explains the pressures that she faced when the Government announced increased availability of free school meals for primary school children.

What was the challenge you faced? In July 2013, the Government announced that free school meals should be available for all primary school children from 1 September 2014. Our school kitchens were, in many cases, quite old and it was clear that we didn't have enough capacity to deliver the increased number of school meals in every school. We were looking at an extra 12,500 meals every day in schools across the county.

School food gets a lot of media coverage. Successfully delivered, it can be the focus of tackling the obesity epidemic. There is also substantial evidence that well nourished children achieve improved attainment levels.

How did you respond? Time was against us as building work, procurement, planning and contract delivery all have their own timescales. We set up four work streams, one of which, the 'premises stream', I worked on. We surveyed all kitchens for their ability to cope with delivering the extra meals for their pupils. We then set about any necessary building work and improvements to the kitchens that we could manage in the timescale.

How have the pupils benefited from this? We managed to deliver hot meals to every infant school this September - 48,000 primary meals a day and 85% of infants joined us for lunch. We have the most amazing front line and management teams and everyone pulled out all the stops to ensure we were ready. The work isn't finished though and we will continue to improve the service we are offering.

What did you learn from this experience? People are this council's greatest asset and together we can achieve the impossible! It was very rewarding to see the children in the dining halls eating nutritious meals and knowing the positive impact it will have on their education.

How can they find out more? Contact janet.lomax@surreycc.gov.uk or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/schoolmeals.

“We have managed to deliver over 48,000 primary school meals a day”

Janet Lomax revealed the work required to ensure Surrey children receive nutritious meals at school

Annex B: Awards & Recognition

- The Council's website has been named the **best in the local government** across the UK. It won the Best Website Award from the Society of Information Technology Management (Socitm). Socitm said it was a "joy to use" and praised the Council for embracing growing public demand to access information on mobile devices.
- The Walton Bridge project secured the **Best Practice Award** at the British Construction Industry Awards in October. This comes after the project was already given two awards by the Institution of Civil Engineers earlier in the year.
- The Council's Operation Horizon project has been praised at the Highways Magazine Excellence Awards. The Council, Aggregate Industries UK Ltd and Kier jointly received the **Highway Partnership Award** for its ongoing multi-million pound scheme to improve roads in Surrey.
- The Guardian newspaper published an article in September on the Council's **restorative youth justice** work. Since the introduction of Youth Restorative Interventions, more than 3,000 cases – 70-80% of crimes committed by young people – have been dealt with through this method than through the courts, and 88% of victims reported that they were satisfied with the scheme.
- The Local Assistance Scheme within MyHelpdesk has been given the **2014 Peer Award for Excellence** in the category for 'Corporate Responsibility – Giving to the Community'. The team was voted for by peers across the world of business and were up against stiff competition, such as SAP.
- Former Surrey County Council apprentice, Bjorn Svard, has been nominated for an **adult learner award**. Bjorn, who now works for Surrey Choices in their Employability team, was nominated by an assessor from Guildford College for the Surrey adult learner of the year awards. In spite of his autism, he showed commitment and determination to achieve this award.
- The Council's HR & Organisational Development Team have won the '**most effective reward strategy**' at the 2014 HR Excellence Awards and was highly commended as '**Employee Benefits team of the year**' at the 2014 Workplace Savings & Benefits Awards in September.

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