

Case Study: Transformation Challenge Award (TCA)

Suffolk received £3.3 million from the Department of Communities and Local Government Transformation Challenge Award fund in April 2015. The purpose of this fund is to reduce costs and improve services for local people through a programme of collaboration and integration across the "Suffolk System", made up of county, district and borough councils, police, health, voluntary and community organisations.

Together these organisations face significant challenges in delivering services and supporting families and communities against a backdrop of increasing demand and reducing budgets. Working across boundaries seeking to deliver improved service outcomes can be challenging and complex but we have a high level of ambition to accelerate collaboration and integration across the "Suffolk System". Some of the early TCA funding has been used to build capacity for change and to unblock barriers to collaborative/integrated approaches. This has been achieved through initiatives such as:

- Investing in workforce development across organisations.
- Creating twelve posts across the 'Suffolk System' on the town planning apprentice programme in response to national and regional skills shortage in planning. This will speed up the planning system across the county and unlock sites for growth.
- Employing a system-wide data and insight coordinator, who provides additional capacity for collaborative working around data and analysis to ensure that, as public money gets ever tighter, decision-making and service improvements are based on relevant information and insight.
- Introducing Local Area Co-ordinators to support people to engage with community resources to build local resilience and connections, and to prevent the need for statutory services.
- The families and communities team in West Suffolk councils hosting a Suffolk County Council staff member, creating a more joined-up service offer.
- Rolling out the 'Connect' programme, an approach for place-based, multi-agency working, to nine sites across east and west Suffolk, following successful pilots in Sudbury and East Ipswich.
- Creating a Joint People Strategy across Suffolk, that aligns processes that will make it quicker and cheaper to move staff between organisations and encourage collaboration, for example, through a 'system-wide secondment model'.

The above initiatives have had a range of impacts to improve joined-up working but also directly on local people and places.

A specific example of joint working has been a comprehensive review of the Suffolk Observatory website focussed on the need to improve evidence-based policy across the public sector and provide easy to use information about Suffolk for residents, businesses and communities. As a result of this review, the Suffolk Observatory will be completely redesigned and

relaunched in 2017. Analysis and insight work has also enabled the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service to prioritise preventative visits to those households with the highest risk of fire.

Another example of collaborative working is Homestart Suffolk, who are commissioned to provide Community Family Support (CFS) service across Suffolk. This service offers early help befriending and practical assistance support to families with children under 12. The service is key in reducing rural and social isolation; improving family relationships; supporting learning and development and supporting school attendance. The service is provided by matching a family with a CFS outreach volunteer, who will visit the family on a weekly basis. Evaluation of Homestart Suffolk found good evidence that it was having a considerable impact and preventing the need for statutory intervention.