# Connected Southend



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# 1. An Introduction to Connected Southend

#### 1.1. Overview

Connected Southend is Southend's whole service approach to community practice, personalised enablement, new models of commissioning and social care support across the city. In essence it is our new approach to providing the very best information, advice, prevention, support and social care. Alongside this Connected Southend has the heart of the city embedded within, through our use and support of voluntary and community groups, our arts, culture, leisure and our heritage.

Living in Southend is so much more than local identity; it is how we relate to everything around us; our history as much as our future, and our desire to remain within the communities we call home with the people that are important to us.

Bringing together practitioners, commissioners and providers, as well as our wider culture, arts and leisure services, we aim to change the way we support and enable people to live the lives they choose to live.

Connected Southend is underpinned by the core concepts of the Care Act, ensuring community opportunities, citizenship and personalised outcomes and is now core to Southend's Social Services plans for the future.

The model itself sets out standards, principles and approaches for staff delivering services. It places more emphasis on prevention and enablement, and supporting people to live the life they want.

It can be applied to every area of work in adult social care – from frontline social work to the systems we develop, our leadership and commissioning to our library staff, our care providers to the way in which we support our neighbourhoods and work alongside communities.

This systemic approach will be underpinned by a culture change and a learning and development programme to ensure sustainability, action and real change for the better.

Connected Southend will be overseen and monitored by a board of senior leaders to ensure there is no ambiguity and no compromise in our aspirations for Southend residents via the service we offer.

We have explored the and embedded the learning from other community practice and citizenship initiatives, developed both in Southend and from national evidence-based models and initiatives.

#### 1.2. Professional values

Connected Southend is built on a foundation of values and ethics set out in the professional standards of social workers and occupational therapists. By reducing form filling, slimming down our processes and reducing the need for management sign-off, we are allowing our professional staff autonomy and freedom to practice value-based, personcentred social work and occupational therapy – unhindered by directive policies and processes.

Our ambition for people in Southend hasn't changed, but the expectations on our staff have shifted to ensure they are free from system transactional practice and able to embed relationship based and strength-based practice, taking responsibility to deliver outcomes and help adults live the life they want.

It is skilled and difficult work, with the focus on staff using their professional skills to help adults live their lives, rather than just narrowly prescribing packages of care, which can often be costly and not outcome focused. It's also about recognising that care can be as disabling as it is enabling if done incorrectly or in a risk-averse way

#### 1.3. The Connected Southend Model

The overarching Connected Southend principles:



The Connected Southend model fully embeds our Caring Well, Live Well and Aging Well Strategies. Building on these aspirations to ensure that the way we all work in the City Council across care and support services in Southend, and with Neighbourhoods and partners such as the NHS, is consistent and makes a difference.

Prevent Enable Care A new assessment framework and approach for everyone that places more emphasis on prevention and enablement.

A proportionate, outcome focused approach that ensures everyone, regardless of eligibility and care and support needs can benefit from having a strength-based conversation based on professional analysis and skilled advice.

Everything we should do should enable citizenship and the rights and responsibilities that go with this.

By making a commitment to citizenship for everyone, we are putting in place the building blocks for stronger communities and neighbourhoods.

Connect People Sustain Relationships The foremost principle of connecting people to people, services, technology, networks, communities, aspiration and real lives.

Some people need a little support to live independent and fulfilling lives.

Connecting people is not just about connecting people to others nearby. Social care staff and providers should be motivated to think beyond just 'good care'; and look wider than their own care regime to initiate and support people to sustain relationships.

Generally, people who are socially isolated experience poorer wellbeing outcomes.

Strength and Risk Positive Being strengths and risk positive ensures we work alongside people, supporting them rather than directing care. Enabling individuals to be able to use the strengths and resilience they already have will delay the need for care and support, ensuring they retain as much control over their lives as possible.

So, what should we do to help people manage their own lives?

 Focus on people's own strengths and capacity for independence.

- Taking risks is something we all do to make our lives better and achieve our personal goals; this should be reflected in the care and support we offer too.
- Support people to be more in control.
- Ensure providers support people to choose how and what they want to achieve.

Care should make lives better, not restrict and disable.

Culture, Heritage, Arts, Learning & Leisure The heart of the people, families and communities of Southend is reflected in its rich history, creativity, and culture identity. The 'who we are' is often shaped by the identity of the place we live. This is vital to understand in social care. It underpins strength and community practice and allows us to jointly develop the best care and support possible, that reflects people's own desire to continue to engage and explore our local offer.

Our cultural, learning and leisure offer is also key to our approach for prevention information and advice. Harnessing these assets to connect and engage with people will allow us tackle health and social inequalities at an early point in people's lives and improve outcomes.

Independence and Citizenship Independence for people gives them the means and motivation to have choice and control over their life and over their care and support. Independence doesn't just mean not having a service. Very often a service may give people independence.

Many people have lived lives, raised families, had experiences both good and bad, and worked and contributed to our city and society for many years before they may require our support. It is important that we recognise and value this, as this is what makes them who they are and will help define how they continue to want to live their lives even where they require care and support.

# 2. Connected Southend Assessment Framework

The Connected Southend assessment is a new approach to assessments and reviews in adult social care, to continue our strength based and person-centred approach. It is fully aligned with community and outcome focused practice.

The approach gives a renewed emphasis on professional practice and accountability and will deliver a preventative and outcome focused approach to care planning. At the core of Connected Southend is a steadfast belief in social workers' and occupational therapists' professional judgment, values and practice. Prescriptive assessments have been replaced with citizen and professionally led assessments that don't require management sign off.

Every social worker now controls a budget they can use in whatever way they believe will deliver outcomes for the adults they support, and social work policies are slimmed down to give practitioners more freedom in their practice.

This work is by no means complete and will form part of our wider transformation projects. Therefore, some elements of the ambitions set out in this document will be developed over the coming 18 months as we embed thinking, new systems and the thoughts of the people who use our service and wider partners.

#### The new model has:

- An emphasis on exploring personal, family, network and community assets
- A greater emphasis on enablement
- A focused and short-term response to crisis
- Streamlined assessment processes
- A check back built in to prevent escalation of need
- A risk positive approach reliant on professional responsibility and accountability

# 3. Connected Southend and Commissioning

We recognise that the Connected Southend approach can't end with our professional Care Act involvement; in fact it shouldn't start there either. We want all care in Southend to embed the Connected Southend principles. With this in mind, the model is applicable to all who work in this area and as such commissioners will be key to this.

Commissioning, procurement, quality, contracting and monitoring will all start with the development of strategies and the design of services to ensure they are aligned with the Connected Southend principles. Strategic commissioning, procurement, service specifications etc will all reflect the approach and embed how we will support wider systems and care providers to truly use Connected Southend as the core framework for how we support people.

We will support providers to incorporate Connected Southend into their business models and develop clearer pathways for people to enter and exit care, especially where they have fluctuating needs. Keeping the principles of Connected Southend at the heart, we want to shape a market that offers more prevention options, that may not be a funded service, and services that offer time limited enablement support.

We will incentivise providers to enable outcomes for people and make it a requirement in future contract and business arrangements with us. In turn, we will contract monitor against outcomes for people.

Our Community Commissioning teams have embraced the Connected Southend principles, recognising that the impact is on all parts of the commissioning cycle as outlined in the diagram below.



Our strategic commissioning role will ensure we work closely with the people who use our services, and their families, to fully shape care and support. Using nationally co-produced statements as core to that work will allow us to ensure personalised opportunities.

Our quality and monitoring service will lead on supporting providers to understand and fully embed Connected Southend into their approach and the support they provide every day.

## 4. Practice Principles

#### 4.1. Introduction

In Southend we want to empower and support our staff to deliver excellent professional practice, leading to positive outcomes for people.

Our Connected Southend model puts choice, independence, enablement and citizenship at the heart of everything we do. It gives us an opportunity to look at real and innovative solutions that enable people to live their lives to the fullest.

Based on evidence of what works for people, we respond to the challenges we face in a changing society by offering help and support that is enabling and cost effective and ensures fair distribution of resources according to need, so we can meet our responsibilities to all.

These **Practice Principles** seek to make excellent practice consistent and let staff know they have support in implementing difficult decisions.

They apply directly to all staff who carry out assessments and case work on behalf of Adults and Communities (A&C); and as such all A&C staff need to be aware of these principles and to work to them where applicable.

The **Connected Southend Practice Principles** are in line with our Care Act duties, SWE Professional Standards, the BASW Code of Ethics and the Royal College of Occupational Therapy Code of Ethics.

#### 4.2. The Connected Southend Practice Principles

#### 1. Independence and citizenship

Independence and the ability to maintain/develop roles as citizens are our ultimate aim, but this means different things for different people. For some, this may be learning new skills to build upon independence whilst for others, this may mean exploring the potential for further recovery and rehabilitation. With the right support, everyone can achieve some independence. We want to support people to maximize their own potential for control over their lives.

#### 2. Every contact is strength based and risk positive.

Strengths-based practice emphasises people's self-determination, skills and assets and should underpin every conversation and contact.

Risk-taking is a part of life and a part of social care too. It's something we all do every day to make our lives life better and achieve our goals. Risk involves the potential for benefit as well as harm, so we would never want to remove it completely. By taking a proportionate approach to reducing and mitigating the potential for harm, we can reach a balance between independence and personal autonomy against the risk of harm.

#### 3. Alternatives to traditional care services

We should work creatively with people to source alternatives to traditional care services and should explore options and choices of services to meet assessed eligible needs in collaboration with the individual, so a joint decision can be reached about their most appropriate option. Wherever possible the person's choices will be supported.

Awareness of 'value for money' is essential. Where Personal Budgets are offered, this must be based on the most cost-effective way of meeting needs.

Telecare and technology can also enable people to remain at home longer and can help in managing risks.

#### Non-traditional services should:

- Meet assessed needs and outcomes.
- Be safe, lawful and appropriate.
- Either cost no more than the Personal Budget offered, or the person is willing to fund the difference themselves.

#### 4. Safeguarding

Safeguarding people at risk of abuse or neglect is one of our most important tasks and we should adhere to the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Safeguarding Adults Guidelines. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, so we all have a role to celebrate good practice and take immediate action where practice falls short of our own standards.

#### 5. Clear Understanding of the legal framework for adult social care

This includes The Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Human Rights act and the Mental Health Act 1983

Where key decisions such as in eligibility, care assessments, care and support planning, best interests and safeguarding are made, professional case notes must evidence how appropriate social care law has been applied and how required legal and professional processes have been followed.

The wellbeing principle means we should actively seek improvements for people and their carers and this should be central to our involvement. The Council's duty is to *promote* people's wellbeing not provide resources for everyone to be well or achieve their wishes. We do this by giving preventative messages and signposting to sources/places of potential interest or help.

The person should be at the centre and fully involved in their assessment and care planning process. Advocacy services should be used where needed. The person must be provided with a copy of the assessment or review, eligibility determination and a copy of the Care and Support Plan.

#### 6. Timely and Defensible Decision making and recording

Recording must evidence robust decision-making - with an analysis of why a particular decision has been reached and why other options were not appropriate.

The level of recording is to be proportionate to the complexity of the case and must always be written in plain English to be easily understood by the person and their family.

Recording on LAS must be completed within two working days of contact with the person, including provisional care packages where these are available.

#### 7. Value for money, effectiveness and efficiency

Where resources are offered, this must be defensible and based on your professional judgement, but people should be enabled and encouraged to make their own choices about how their available resources are used. Direct Payments should be considered but must be within people's personal budgets.

All other options to promote people's wellbeing, enablement and meet their needs should be explored before long term support is considered.

Similarly, eligibility for Funded Nursing Care (FNC) or Continuing Healthcare (CHC) should be checked before consideration for a permanent placement.

Within a multi-professional setting such as a hospital, the opinion of other professionals should be taken into account, but our social care practitioners have the ultimate professional responsibility for the assessment of a person's social care needs and would be expected to challenge other professionals where their opinion differs.

#### 8. Working with partners and providers to deliver good outcomes

Our work doesn't finish with commissioning good care. We have a responsibility to make sure providers and partners understand their role in achieving outcomes and enabling people to live independent lives in line with Connected Southend

Services, care and pathways should always be designed to prevent needs from escalating.

#### 9. Support for our staff

Working directly with people and their families is highly skilled and complex work. It can create emotional as well as practical and intellectual challenges. Practitioners can expect clear leadership from managers, regular reflective supervision, direct observation and good, varied opportunities for development to support us in our roles.

The Practice Principles provide support for staff in their practice. Staff and managers can advise, challenge and support any decision made within this framework. When complaints or representations are received – adherence to these principles is what will be tested.

## 5. Community Principles

We recognise that for the Connected Southend model to work, there must be a strong community and voluntary offer available to ensure people have the choice and control that they desire.

The Communities team will work to support and diversify the offer in the voluntary and community sector, by working with partners in the sector to build strong partnerships and sustainability, developing services residents need where gaps exist and ensuring services have capacity and are accessible to areas where the greatest health inequalities exist.

We will work with residents to listen to and understand their needs, ensuring that there is full coproduction of the Living Well, Caring Well and Ageing Well action plans.

The model requires the offer within the community and voluntary sector to be clearly understood by all residents and professionals such as Social Workers and Occupational Therapists. Therefore, there will be a need for a clear, up to date and accessible platform/database of information, as well as regular networking opportunities for professionals to exchange information and work in partnership.

#### 6. Our Vision

Work together with people to enable them to live safe, well, and independently across our communities, connected to the people and things they love and to live the life that's important to them.