

MEDIA RELEASE

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Working together for health

Thurrock Council and local health leaders are working together to commission and provide better and more integrated services for patients and service users.

As part of the government's Better Care Fund plan, the council with Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are developing ways they can reorganise existing funding to offer a more holistic approach for patients.

Cllr Barbara Rice, the council's health portfolio lead, said: "In many ways, we're ahead of the game here in Thurrock. We have been talking about this for some time and already have the basis of a plan in place jointly developed by the CCG and the Adult Social Care team.

"One of our aims is to use the combined budgets and teams so one visit to patients should be able to provide a variety of services and support – at the moment, for example, a district nurse visit to an older person may reveal a need for a walking frame, but the nurse can't organise it, she can only refer and another team will have to visit and assess; wasting time and money for the services and time and patience for the older person."

She added: "We already work together in the re-ablement and rapid response teams, but we want to take things further.

Mandy Ansell, Chief Operating Officer NHS Thurrock CCG, said: "We have a duty to the people of Thurrock to ensure they have the best care and that's what the Better Care Fund project is all about.

"Quality must be central to everything we do. We want to maximise the finite resources that we have and give patients quality care and more joined up solutions to their health and wellbeing needs."

Cllr Rice added: "There's no extra money, although the government is providing some help for setting things up.

"At the same time we're looking to develop more community-based solutions. We will be working with communities and individuals to build local capacity and in doing so enable greater personal responsibility for health and wellbeing."

Work will continue over the next year in preparation for the official launch in April 2016. A key factor in these plans is increased development of primary care provision in Thurrock, including encouraging more GPs to the borough to offer local people greater and improved access.

Mandy Ansell added: “We very much want the public to be involved in these development plans and we will be rolling out a public engagement programme to ensure the finished plans truly reflect the needs of the people of Thurrock.”

The Thurrock Health and Well-being Board agreed the draft plan at its meeting on Monday, 10 February, and the final plan has to be delivered to NHS England in early April.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Thurrock has 34 GP practices; there are 21 dental practices, 18 opticians and 32 pharmacies.

For further information, please contact joy.joses@swessex.nhs.uk