



**Co-operative Councils**  
Innovation Network

**4OC**

## HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE 4OC working with Harrow Council

### Setting up a successful COVID-19 Community Hub

#### **The Challenge:**

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak, the government [advised Local Authorities](#) to set up 'Community Hubs' in each borough to support the 1.5m people considered to be 'most at risk' of severe illness should they contract the virus.

Initial guidance of how to set up and run the hubs, from Central Government, was understandably limited. With resources already stretched, Harrow Council asked for 4OC's assistance.

Because of the scale and speed of response, normal governance, decision making, and prioritisation of activity would not be fit for purpose and so a new framework was required to ensure that there was clarity of about the purpose of the hub and how it would operate, in the short, medium and long term.

#### **The Response:**

The main challenge was the co-ordination and management of a very willing, enthusiastic and complex supply chain involving all Council services, multiple voluntary organisations and Distribution Hubs.

The Council had already identified a supply chain and quickly instigated some support services, mainly the distribution of food to those individuals that were assessed as vulnerable and most in need. They recognised that the scale of the response required them to have robust processes in place so that the collective efforts of the many stakeholders involved are as effective as possible and no effort was wasted.

On the first day, we recognised that this hub may need to be in place for some time and that service user need would change and become more complex, so there needed to be mechanisms set up to track and monitor how the hub operated and the impact to the Council and services users.

Our team worked side by side with the Council staff and within 6 days the team developed:



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- A common understanding, across all stakeholders of the purpose of the hub and what services it was, initially, offering
- How the hub would operate and where the hand-offs occurred across providers and council departments. This includes defining the outbound processes and how the hub responded to requests for support. We identified and mapped core business processes, and roles and responsibilities of individuals across the supply chain
- A framework for capturing information and requirement specification so that systems can be refined for capturing this systematically on an ongoing basis
- A continuous improvement process that captures real time lessons learned
- Profiled resource across the supply chain
- Developed daily, weekly and Cabinet reporting
- Set up a risk management process

We were able to get a plan in place within one day of starting work. This provided reassurance to the team that there was a clear way forward.

### **The outcome:**

Harrow Council now have:

- An operating model so everyone is clear what the outcomes will be, roles and responsibilities and how to communicate effectively
- New Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to avoid confusion and double handling of work
- A Resource Model and an understanding of how to deal with the impact of a self-isolating workforce
- Consistent, useful reporting to the exec teams
- A Continuous Improvement framework to allow the teams to be constantly tuning and improving how they deliver this service

With new information being generated every day, the structure of the service we designed and implemented allows decisions to be made quickly and the implications of them understood.

And finally, the impact assessment and continual improvement capability now allows the council to be responsive to the rapidly changing needs of their most vulnerable residents.

**Jonathan Milbourn**, Head of Customer Services and Business Services, added:

*'The 4OC team brought order and structure when we were at our most turbulent. They didn't get in the way, they listened and then produced, taking pressure off our teams. They did this with no fuss, good humour and an empathetic ear. Their outputs and approach have given us all an increased level of control and confidence when we need it most'.*

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### **For further information contact:**

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