

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

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MEDWAY TIME CREDITS

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Summary

Medway Time Credits is designed to tackle social isolation through encouraging volunteering and participation. Medway NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is piloting this approach as part of *Involving Medway* – a project to improve community engagement in health.

Medway Time Credits was launched in May 2017. This report sets out the CCG approach to the project, the activities undertaken so far and explores lessons and evaluation results from other parts of the country as well as some initial findings from Medway.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to agree that Medway Time Credits should be further explored as a joint opportunity between the council and the CCG to support the key joint objective of improving mental and physical health and wellbeing of Medway residents. This will include:

- To agree shared priorities.
- To actively support development of the 'spend' network, including with Council facilities.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 Medway Time Credits is one element of Involving Medway, a pilot supported by Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to explore effective ways of engaging local community-based groups and residents and ways of tackling social isolation through involvement.

1.2 The pilot was conceived as part of the thinking around the Medway Model - a joint approach by Medway Council and NHS providers and commissioners to transform local care to make it more sustainable and focused on people's

needs. Key to this approach is ensuring that local residents become more involved in maintaining their own health and social care, that local communities are resilient partners in decision making about care services.

- 1.3 As part of the Involving Medway pilot, Spice Credits was commissioned to set up Medway Time Credits over a one year initial pilot period until January 2018. There is an option to extend the pilot for a further year. The CCG Board will consider the evidence from the current pilot and make a decision about taking forward the work.
- 1.4 An important element of progressing Medway Time Credits will be to increase the 'spend' opportunities, working with partners such as Medway Leisure services. This will help ensure that Time Credits can be rolled out across Medway.

2. Background

- 2.1 The *Five Year Forward View* (See background papers) recognised an urgent need for radical innovation in the health and social care system to avoid failure – calling for the NHS to get serious about prevention, to empower patients, to engage communities and to build a social movement for health and care.
- 2.2 Involving Medway, and Medway Time Credits is informed by a growing evidence base that:
 - Most forms of chronic illness – the physical and mental conditions that lead to high and rising demand for costly services - are avoidable;
 - There are strong links between community engagement, social connectedness and health;
 - People are not just problems to be fixed by professionals, but have abundant strengths and resources – both as individuals and together in groups – that can help to transform the way that health is managed in the local population.
- 2.3 Building on this evidence base and on the *Five Year Forward View*, Involving Medway aims to do four things:
 - To make a step-change in the quality and scope of engagement between health and social care service professionals and local communities, so that dialogue leads to active collaboration and enduring partnerships.
 - To demonstrate that it is possible for local people to be agents of change to improve health and health and social care services for their communities.
 - To draw on the wisdom and experience of local people to help transform local services so that they focus on preventing illness rather than coping with it, and on meeting local needs in ways that empower and support people to take care of themselves and each other.
 - To inspire and inform a process of change in the local health and social care system that will reduce levels of demand and constrain costs over time.

- 2.4 We know that volunteering is one way of reducing social isolation. We also know that a great deal of volunteering already takes place within Medway and is encouraged and supported by the health and social care system. The Better Medway scheme is an example of using the assets within the community to support people to take charge of their long term health and wellbeing.
- 2.5 The Time Credits model – as set out below- is aimed primarily at reducing social isolation – at encouraging new volunteering and improving social connections across Medway. Evidence from similar schemes in other parts of the country demonstrates how.

3. Activity to date

3.1 How Time Credits work

Medway Time Credits model works on an hourly basis. People earn Time Credits by giving their time to local services and groups. One Time Credit is earned for each hour of time given and acts as a thank you for the contribution of time to their community or service.

- 3.2 This is the model developed and tested across a number of areas of England and Wales by the Spice Credits network. People can then 'spend' Time Credits to access events, training and leisure services provided by public, community and private organisations, or to thank others in turn. One Time Credit is worth one hour's worth of spend on activities or experiences at local and national spend venues that are part of the national Spice Spend Network.
- 3.3 Spend opportunities can often be 'spare capacity' at leisure, cultural and educational activities. Time Credits do not expire and can be used outside the area where they have been earned. Thus people earning Time Credits in Medway would have the opportunity to spend them in locations in central London and across the UK.

3.4 Time Credits in Medway

Since May 2017, 20 community groups or services in Medway have been trained in Time Credits.

- 10 groups are now active and trading.
- 60 Time Credit members have given 188 hours of their time to the community to date. 23 of these members are entirely new to volunteering.
- Time Credit earn activity has focused on the Chatham area during the pilot, while the spend network extends into wider Medway.
- There are currently 14 ways to spend Time Credits locally. Time Credit members also have access to the national spend network and two spend trips are planned to London spend venues during the pilot. All 10 active groups offer a way to spend Time Credits with them, this 'community spend' is vital for the sustainability of the local network.
- Public participation is rewarded through Medway Time Credits; for example involvement in joint CCG/Medway Council engagement activity around the Medway Model and Local Profiles.

- Time Credits was started in the Chatham area – it is now being expanded to reach communities across other parts of Medway.

4. National evidence of effectiveness

- 4.1 Spice Time Credits are a unique innovation, proven to create a wide range of tangible outcomes for individuals and systems. To date, over 35,000 citizens have earned Time Credits and over 500,000 Time Credits have been issued across England and Wales. Spice is working in partnership with over 1300 organisations and services across the private, public and voluntary sectors to create tangible system change in many settings.
- 4.2 National findings show that Time Credits offer an extraordinary ability to activate volunteering from those least likely to give their time, and are ensuring that this new cohort of volunteers feel valued and recognised; the evidence base to date backs this up¹.
- 4.3 Evaluation from a 2017 survey shows that:
- 79% of respondents report improved quality of life, with 66% feeling more confident and 49% developing new friendships and acquaintances. 69% of respondents feel more positive about their future, with 19% reporting improved mental health and 78% feeling more able to contribute to the community and peers.
 - 63% of respondents feel less isolated and lonely, with 68% reporting they could afford to do more things. 16% of respondents have gone on to establish their own community group or project.
- 4.4 A two year study of Time credits showed that earning Time Credits can have both direct and indirect health benefits for individuals. People gained a sense of purpose and felt that they were making a positive contribution which increased their life satisfaction and improved their mental health. They became more physically active and more socially connected. There is also evidence of increased confidence and development of skills and work experience to support moving into paid employment².
- 4.5 Spending Time Credits also gave members resources to access activities and services that they would not otherwise be able to afford. Time Credits were spent on activities which lead to a more active lifestyle, such as swimming, with potential health benefits and were often used for family activities, indirectly improving social capital, social participation and overall wellbeing.
- 4.6 A link to a short video clip that explains how Time Credits work can be found in the background papers section of this report.

¹ Spice Time Credits evaluates the impact of its programmes across England and Wales annually in partnership with independent evaluators Apteligen.

² The University of Cambridge conducted a two-year study of Time Credits between 2015-17.

5. Pilot outcomes and next steps

- 5.1 Medway Time Credits network activity has been concentrated in the Chatham area. A staged rollout would be planned across Medway towns over a three-year period if the programme is extended beyond the pilot.
- 5.2 Work involving Medway Time Credits has already linked into to the community infrastructure within Medway. Local organisations such as WhooCares and Derrick-Walt would be obvious partners for the next stage of the rollout. A full independent evaluation is planned for early 2018 with surveys of all those using Medway Time Credits.
- 5.3 Some early outcomes for community groups and individuals have been identified through the first six months of the Medway Time Credits pilot. Groups have reported that Time Credits have enabled them to extend the activities they currently offer, reaching more people in need by attracting new volunteers to support and grow their work. Groups also have greater awareness of the services and facilities available in the local area by coming together as the Medway Time Credit network. Members have reported that Time Credits have enabled them to try new activities, and to build skills and experiences.
- 5.4 Supporting resilience within local communities and creating stronger active networks of volunteers is a key aim of the Council and supports the common aims of council and CCG. Where similar Time Credits systems have been set up elsewhere it has been found that 75% of organisations involved have been able to recruit more volunteers, 66% of people know more about the services and support available to them, 42% have been more able to reach people in need and 43% reporting improved organisational sustainability.
- 5.5 42% of Time Credit Members nationally have been able to learn new skills.

5.6 Requirements for rolling out Time Credits

In order to scale Time Credits across Medway there is a need to grow the corporate and Council spend network significantly in the short-term and in the long-term. This will facilitate the ability of the local network to absorb Time Credit spend, and enable more groups to get involved and more hours to be given to the community.

- 5.7 Flagship spend opportunities are a priority in the short-term. These include one-off spend opportunities, such as festival events, and regular spend access to leisure, cultural and educational activities.
- 5.8 The Medway Time Credits pilot is due to end in February 2018. The Medway CCG Board is being asked to fund a further stage of the pilot. In order to ensure there is no gap in delivery, Spice Time Credits have been exploring commissioning options since August 2017.
- 5.9 Developing the project further depends on working cooperatively with Medway Council to identify spend opportunities and encourage further use of Time

Credits across Medway. The project has a number of clear potential links with established Council-led initiatives such as the volunteer network built up through the Better Medway Champions.

- 5.10 Our vision is to scale Time Credits across Medway towns in a staged roll out over three years. This will require investment in Spice Time Credits staff resource and infrastructure. A fully resourced programme typically costs £90K +VAT p.a.
- 5.11 A consortium of funding and strategic partners would be supported by Spice Time Credits to agree and prioritise outcomes and KPIs. Governance would be provided by an Advisory Group consisting of Spice Time Credits, funding partners and other key stakeholders.

6. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
A low uptake of Time Credits in Medway	Due to lack of publicity and confusion amongst communities there are low numbers of people earning and spending Time Credits, making it difficult to fully evaluate the project and demonstrate links to health and wellbeing and more resilient communities.	A strong focus on publicising the scheme and on training local groups to understand the model. Support from an experienced organisation which has successfully rolled out the schemes in other areas.
There are not enough opportunities to spend Time Credits	The numbers of Time Credits 'earned' outstrip those being 'spent' and people cannot spend their credits on activities which attract them.	Flagship spend opportunities need to be agreed with key partners within the Council as soon as possible. These include one-off spend opportunities, such as festival events, and regular spend access to leisure, cultural and educational activities.
The rollout of Time Credits does not lead to increased community resilience and less social isolation	It is difficult to prove the link between earning and spending credits and healthier communities.	An independent evaluation will take place in 2018 using a survey baseline and follow on surveys to demonstrate outcomes.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 There are no current financial requests from the Council, therefore there are no financial implications arising to Medway Council.
- 7.2 HWBs are committees of the Local Authority, with non-executive functions, constituted under the Local Authority 1972 Act, and are subject to local authority scrutiny arrangements.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:
- i) Note the findings from the Time Credits approach nationally and the initial indications from the Involving Medway project.
 - ii) As a next step to piloting Medway Time Credits, to support the exploration of spend opportunities from within Council resources.
 - iii) Agree that Medway Time Credits should be further explored as a joint initiative between the Council and Medway CCG.

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Appendices

None.

Background papers

NHS Five Year Forward View
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>

Intro to Time Credits on London Live
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2h3RH3j7bM>