

## London Borough of Merton identify £100K+ of waste

### Results & ROI

On completion of this project, the identified benefits included:

- Waste totalling over £100,000 identified
- Reduced cost for assessment
- Reduced cycle time and overall work input
- Reduced amount of care delivered without Financial Assessment
- Reduced reactive working due to increased monitoring activity

### The client

The London Borough of Merton Council (Merton) is one of 26 4-star councils in England and Wales. It has an annual budget of £230 million and employs over 5,000 staff. To maintain its financial position, Merton had to annually close a gap between its resources (council tax and central government funding) and its commitments. Despite achieving its yearly 4% efficiency savings target, Merton needed to make a more radical change and thus embarked on a Lean transformation programme to make the required reductions in spend.

### The challenge

With a new policy being introduced in the social work environment (self-directed support for Adult Social Care) and significant reductions in staff (via voluntary redundancy), Adult Social Care was seen as a significant improvement area. Issues included workplace organisation, waiting for communications (lots of back and forth between teams), duplication of work, inconsistent process and lack of the right skills for activity. There was also a conflict between process-driven (30%) and client-reactive (70%) activity. The challenge was therefore to analyse Adult Social Care processes to ensure money was only spent on things which directly add value to the customer.

### The approach

To clarify the main project themes, a diagnostic was carried out based on existing data within the organisation, with a number of potential areas for

service reviews investigated. Reviews were selected across 4 of the 5 directorates within the council: transactional process (Revenues and Benefits), Adult Social Care, waste operations and Children's Services. Given the scope for improvement, Adult Social Care was prioritised.

Using a four stage approach (diagnosis, confirmation, change, sustain), managers and staff were guided on using Lean tools to identify all non-value add or waste activities. Issues were fed into the 'To Be' design workshop where staff were supported in finding ways to mitigate the waste. The process was re-mapped and this (along with subsequent discussions) formed the basis of an implementation plan.

### The benefits

Areas ripe for efficiency improvement were captured. These focused on removing hand-offs and implementing a monitoring system which would identify issues prior to them becoming major problems.

Key changes to how the work was managed included pulling work from defined work queues only when staff were able to complete. To ensure work is pulled and completed against the agreed standards, Information Centres were set up across the team and included measures such as the Referral Right First Time (RFT) rate (from professions).