



6 October 2014

Agenda Item: 10

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR ACCESS AND PUBLIC PROTECTION EXTENSION OF THE DATA INPUT TEAM

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek ASCH Committee's approval to the extension of the Data Input Team for a five-month period, from November 2014 to 31 March 2015, from existing budgets.

Information and Advice

2. The establishment of a Data Input Team (DIT) was approved by ASCH Committee on 22 July 2013 for a 12-month period to fulfil the following aims to:
 - improve the commissioning of packages of adult social care
 - reduce associated financial risk
 - help to maintain timely records
 - improve the effectiveness of social workers' time.
3. Training of the team began on 4 November 2013, with the team launching in early December 2013. A graphical 'impact assessment' for the team is attached as appendix A.
4. A 'pre-launch' survey of ASCH&PP social care staff was carried out, which showed that the majority had had to seek help either sometimes, or often, in completing a commissioning outcome on Frameworki. About two-thirds of those who responded felt that the introduction of the DIT would have a positive impact on their work, with the most commonly-cited reason being the hoped-for ability to spend more time on social care tasks. On average it was taking respondents about 45 minutes to commission services on Frameworki for an individual service user.
5. A second survey was run six months after implementation, in June 2014. The results were that about two-thirds of respondents thought that the transition of commissioning activity from social care staff to the DIT was better than expected; the vast majority considered that the team had saved them time, with about a third saying that it saves them about 45 minutes per case, and one-fifth over 45 minutes. 91% of those responding said that the team had had a positive impact on their work. Two-thirds reported that it had allowed them to dedicate greater time to social care tasks. About two-fifths said they have been able to complete more assessments and reviews and that they have spent more time with service users.
6. Opinions shared by social care managers outside the survey have included:

- increased productivity; more packages sent for authorisation
 - increased confidence in the accuracy of commissioning
 - increased speed of commissioning
 - eased pressure on operational teams and reduced stress levels
 - time recouped which would previously have been spent on checking for errors.
7. The surveys indicate that social care staff time saved by the team has so far been used to enable social care staff to concentrate on core activity, and from 2015/16 will assist the authority to release savings from operational teams, should the DIT continue.
8. It is felt that the exit strategy if the team was to cease would be very problematic, with large numbers of workers having to be retrained and regain experience and confidence with commissioning care on Frameworki.
9. A number of DIT post holders have departed since the start of the team on 4 November 2013, as their 12 month contracts near their end. From a starting point of the original 10 fte, the team is currently comprised as follows:

<i>Base</i>	<i>FTE</i>
Sir John Robinson House	2
Lawn View House	1.6
Sherwood Energy Village	2.6
TOTAL	6.2

10. The team members have become more proficient since the team's inception in December (see appendix A) and Business Support managers consider that DIT could continue to offer its current service with these smaller staffing levels. In addition, it has been shown that the team can work across bases, providing flexible cover and an ability to deal with fluctuating demand.
11. Consequently it is proposed that the team is extended on a two-phase basis:
- November 2014 to 31 March 2015: the same tasks as during the pilot phase but with staff resources limited to individuals currently occupying posts in the team; and
 - On a permanent basis from 1 April 2015: a wider range of prioritised activities with either the same or a greater number of FTE as the pilot phase.
12. From 1 April 2015, the suggestion is to increase the team's capacity back up to 10 FTE or more, in order to consume additional work types, and to tie tasks and funding in more closely with projects emerging from the targeted review of adult social care spend. Areas which have been proposed, which are not listed here in priority order, are as follows:
- Data cleansing and data quality improvement generally
 - Notifying managers of forthcoming reviews
 - Prompting managers for additional documentation required
 - Assisting the commissioning of home based services
 - Commissioning 'non personal budget' care packages
 - Commissioning intermediate care

13. This would also provide stability and an assurance that the team would be able to continue creating capacity within operational teams during the forthcoming period of organisational redesign. The proposal to continue the team on a permanent basis from 1 April 2015 would be subject to a further report in early 2015 when a source of budget can be identified.
14. The 2014/15 budget for the team is £157,471, which assumes a contract end date of 3 November 2014. The team's costs by the end of October 2014 will be approximately £90k in total.
15. For phase 1 (continuation of the existing 6.2 fte from November 2014 to 31 March 2015), the cost of 6.2 fte Business Support Assistants, grade 3, scp 14-18 (£15,882-£17,333) for 5 months is £56k including oncosts, which can be contained within existing budgets.

Other Options Considered

16. Another opportunity is the potential for the team to pick up some items of Children Family & Cultural Services (CFCS) work, which would be consistent with the combination of ASCH&PP and CFCS business support teams. However, this is not recommended at this stage because:
- the proposal would require significant development work with CFCS which would extend beyond the available time period for approvals
 - CFCS does not currently commission services in the same manner as ASCH&PP. There is a danger that taking on this additional and very different piece of work would detract from DIT's focus, and could risk spreading the team too thinly for this focussed 5 month period.
17. The possibility of a joint ASCH&PP and CFCS team will be explored for the period 1 April 2015 and beyond.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

19. If this proposal is approved, service users would benefit from social care staff being able to spend greater time on their substantive and professional duties.

Financial Implications

20. The financial implications are outlined in paragraphs 14 and 15.

Human Resources Implications

21. This report proposes to continue the employment of an existing 6.2 fte business support staff from 4 November 2014 to 31 March 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1) approves the continuation of the contracts of the existing staffing of Data Input Team for a five-month period to the end of the financial year, at a total cost of £56k, which can be met from existing budgets.
- 2) receives a further report in early 2015 considering the permanent extension of the team.

PAUL MCKAY

Service Director, Access and Public Protection

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Kate Revell

Group Manager – Quality & Market Management

Email: kate.revell@nottsccl.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LM 16/09/14)

22. The Adult Social Care and Health Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (KAS 16/09/14)

23. The financial implications are contained within paragraphs 14 and 15 of the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.

ASCH 55