

30 March 2015**Agenda Item: 10****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, MID AND NORTH
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE****OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on progress with projects being undertaken in relation to the work completed by Occupational Therapists (OTs) to both improve and streamline services from a customer perspective. The report also seeks approval to establish a 1 fte (full-time equivalent) temporary Hub Service Advisor post to undertake the rising number of assessments coming through to the services and receive a further progress report including the outcomes of the hub evaluation in October 2015.

Information and Advice

2. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Occupational Therapists (OTs) undertake assessments and provide practical support to enable people to recover their independence, health and mobility after a period of ill-health. The service supports people of all ages to overcome the effects of disability caused by illness, ageing or accident so that they can carry out everyday tasks or occupations. This may include, for example, advice on approaching a task differently, using equipment or assistive technology, adapting living or working environment and finding strategies to help people reach their chosen goals.
3. The aim of the NCC OT service in providing adaptations, equipment, signposting, advice and guidance to eligible disabled people living at home is to maintain and improve their independence, increase self-esteem and general well-being. These goals assist to reduce hospital admissions, residential and nursing care placements and the incidence of re-referral to both health and social care. With emphasis on promoting health, wellbeing and independence, Occupational Therapy contributes to delivering key outcomes of the following policies:
 - Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017
 - The Strategic Plan 2014-2017
 - Adult Social Care Strategy - March 2014

4. The Council currently employs 59 Occupational Therapy staff (37 qualified and 22 unqualified). The staff work with both older and younger adults and are based in a variety of teams including the Adult Access Service, District, Intermediate Care and Re-ablement Teams.

Work with Health and District Councils

5. The Health Trusts also employ Occupational Therapists (OTs) and in hospital settings staff have a key role in enabling patients to regain as much independence as possible prior to leaving hospital. Joint working between health based OTs and community based NCC OTs at the point of hospital discharge is invaluable in order to facilitate and promote longer term independence so to reduce the incidence of re-hospitalisation or re-referral to social care.
6. Nottinghamshire County Council OTs also work with the district/borough councils on the adaptation needs of disabled people, to determine whether Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) works are necessary and appropriate. They provide a statement of needs with recommendations for a DFG for a major adaptation and also for major adaptations to the councils' own housing stock. It is then the district and borough councils' responsibility to decide whether it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the recommended adaptation works.
7. The DFG funding currently goes from central government direct to the district councils, but from April 2015 it is a ring fenced part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and although the DFG funding will initially come to the Council as the host for the pooled budget, it will be passed directly to the district and borough councils to operate as they currently do. Development work is being undertaken between the Council's OT service and the district and borough councils to develop a more consistent operational approach to the DFG pathway, streamline the process and make it more efficient and easier for service users.

OT Assessment Performance

8. The target timescale for district teams from receipt of a contact assessment to completion is 28 days. From 1 January to 31 December 2014, 5,728 Contact Assessments were received by the Adult Social Care and Public Protection department requesting an OT Assessment. Following a successful pilot, the OT Intake team has now been made permanent. The aim of this team is to complete as many less complex assessments as possible early on in the customer journey, mainly by telephone assessment. The Intake team received 1,274 (22%) of the 5,728 Contact Assessments requesting an OT assessment, resolving them at the earliest point of contact. The remaining work is more complex and passed to the District Teams.
9. Demand for OT assessments is steadily rising, due to demographic increases in numbers of older people, more of whom are supported with complex needs for longer in the community. In August 2014 this increased demand led to a waiting list high of 704 cases across the County, with 328 of those cases being out of the 28 day timescale.
10. In order to address this both short and long term actions have been implemented. As a short term measure, an independent agency, Access Independent, has been commissioned to undertake OT assessments and assist in clearing the backlog of cases.

Initial work has focused on Ashfield and Mansfield. Alongside this, new ways of working are being introduced in order to manage the demand and avoid waiting lists rising in the future. This approach has had a positive impact and reduced the waiting list down to 355 cases in February 2015, of which 73 cases are out of the 28 day timescale.

11. The strategy and new ways of working include:

- a more streamlined, shorter assessment tool has been developed for dual purpose use for either a telephone or face to face assessment
- the electronic recording process has been reviewed and reduced by 50% thus reducing the amount of time spent inputting data onto electronic records system
- more assessments are now completed over the telephone where appropriate. This has reduced travel time and enabled faster decisions to be made which is of benefit to service users
- a project is being piloted to use equipment and training to safely reduce the number of homecare staff from two to one on appropriate calls. Initial evaluation shows that this provides greater dignity for the individual, increases the availability of home care and also delivers savings
- a number of departmental new ways of working are due to be rolled out and tested in OT services, including scheduling visits for staff, online referral and assessment tools and use of tablets to enable mobile working by staff
- OT appointments are due to be made available to people at local clinics. Venues are to be identified and could include Council day services, Care and Support Centres or health venues such as GP practices, or community hospitals
- improved information is due to be available to promote self-help, for example, online video clips to help people understand which items may be best for them to purchase to meet their needs and demonstrate safe use of equipment
- a 'hub' support system is also now being piloted in Newark and Bassetlaw. A Community Care Officer works across a team and co-ordinates and completes as much as possible of the non-assessment tasks. Since January 2015, this approach has enabled the number of cases waiting to reduce by more than half from 97 to 36 and all cases are now within the 28 day time-scale. A further 'hub' pilot is planned for Ashfield and Mansfield, to see if a Service Advisor role can undertake this work, rather than a community care OT post. If successful this would then be rolled out across the County. Approval is therefore sought to establish:

1 FTE temporary, one year, Hub Service Advisor post, NJE Grade 4 Scp 19-23 at a cost of £23,279 – £26,493, including on-costs.

Other Options Considered

12. In order to develop this strategy, the OT service has been through a Lean+ review. The lean+ recommendations that were selected have been those with the best evidence base

with the greatest impact to achieve the objectives relevant to the resource investment. The strategy has also been informed by OT staff and people who use the service.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

13. To modernise the OT practice and pathways to define and implement new ways of working and to increase capacity and reduce waiting times for assessment.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

New Ways of Working Implications

15. Office space will be required for the Hub Service Advisor post to enable them to be based with the team that they support.

Financial Implications

16. The establishment of a 1 FTE Hub Service Advisor post, NJE Grade 4 Scp 19-23, at a cost of £23,279 – £26,493, including on-costs, which will be funded from departmental reserves.

Implications for Service Users

17. The initiatives outlined deliver an improved service for individuals that is faster to access and more streamlined.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) notes the progress with projects being undertaken within Occupational Therapy and improvements made to date to improve and streamline services.
- 2) receives a further progress report including the outcomes of the hub evaluation in October 2015
- 3) approves the establishment of 1 fte temporary Hub Service Advisor post for one year, as described in the report.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 16/03/15)

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

Financial Comments (initials 17/03/15)

19. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 16 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017
The Strategic Plan 2014-2017
Adult Social Care Strategy - March 2014

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.