

3rd February 2014**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****SERVICE OVERVIEW – CUSTOMER ACCESS TO SOCIAL CARE****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the customer journey and the role of the Adult Access Service.
2. As part of the overview the Committee will hear from a Team Manager from the Adult Access Service with some case studies on the customer experience.

Information and AdviceCustomer Access to Social Care

3. The Adult Access Team is based at the Customer Service Centre (CSC), Mercury House. The team is a mixture of dedicated advisors and professional workers who are responsible for responding to enquiries at the front end. The current make-up of the team is as follows:
 - Two Team Managers
 - Two Senior Practitioners
 - Five Service Advisors
 - Three Social Workers
 - Five Occupational Therapists
 - Four Benefit Advisors (one senior)
 - Six temporary Occupational Therapy Workers
 - One Carers Worker
 - One Pre-admissions Social Worker (temporary)
 - One Commissioning Officer
4. The Adult Access Service's function has grown significantly since the inception of the team and now provides a range of services across the County.

Triage of Referrals for Social Care

5. Through the CSC and the Adult Access Service the department assesses whether someone is in need or likely to be in need of support. To determine this,

the department uses Government guidance to decide whether a person's ability to live independently would put them at risk if services are not provided or arranged to help them. This is called Fair Access to Care Services (FACS). If there is a risk to a person's independence the department has to decide whether the risk is critical, substantial, moderate or low. Councils have a statutory responsibility to meet needs that are not met by other means, such as through care provided by informal carers or the health service.

6. People will be eligible for help if they have needs that pose a critical or substantial risk to their independence. If the identified needs pose a moderate or low risk to their independence people will not be eligible for ongoing support from the Council.
7. For those people the department considers are eligible, or who would be eligible unless they receive support, the Adult Access Service will either:

- Arrange the support at the Adult Access Service or arrange for the person to receive reablement:

41% of people requesting either a social care or occupational therapy assessment (triaged between 11 and 22 November 2013) received advice and information, or were signposted to other agencies enabling them to make informed choices to arrange the support they needed without further intervention from the department. Included in this figure are those who would benefit from a period of reablement from the Short Term Assessment Reablement Team (START).

- Arrange for a Locality Worker to undertake a full community care assessment:

53% of people requesting either a social care or occupational therapy assessment (triaged between 11 and 22 November 2013) were passed to District teams to undertake a community care assessment or a community care review.

- Arrange for a telephone intake assessment which determines eligibility using FACS

6% of people requesting either a social care or occupational therapy assessment (triaged between 11 and 22 November 2013) were passed to the Occupational Therapy Intake Team.

Occupational Therapy Assessments for Non-Complex Cases

8. In January 2013 the Adult Access Service has undertaken initial assessment work for Occupational Therapy services. As a result the department is able to meet the needs of service users and carers more efficiently and effectively. The team is known as The Intake Team. The staffing establishment is one Senior Practitioner and six Community Care Officers.

9. Between 70-80% of people who request an Occupational Therapy assessment have relatively low levels of need and do not always require a face to face assessment. In these instances, Customer Service Advisors have been trained and supported to identify those who would be suitable to have a telephone assessment; these are passed through to the Intake Team who then complete a telephone intake assessment which determines eligibility using FACS.
10. Between November and December 2013 45% of enquiries triaged by the Intake Team resulted in a home assessment. This means that individuals did not have to wait 28 days for an outcome of eligibility, nor did they have to go through a full home assessment. However, advice and information or signposting is also offered to enable individuals to make informed choices as to what support/equipment would be suitable to meet their needs.

Outcome of the Triage Service

11. The department has increased the number of queries that are resolved at the CSC and the Adult Access Service, enabling social care staff to spend time on people with complex needs. As a result, there has been an overall drop in the number of social work assessments to district teams by 33% and the number of people needing an occupational therapy assessment by 18%.

Advice and Support to Self-Funders

12. The service has a significant role in providing information and advice for people who are not eligible for council funded social care services or are self-funders. This includes signposting people to alternative sources of support.

Nottinghamshire Welfare Assistance Fund

13. The team oversees the Nottinghamshire Welfare Assistance Fund (NWAFF). This provides emergency financial support to eligible vulnerable people. The fund can help people to remain living in the community or help following an emergency or crisis.
14. The fund commenced on 2 April 2013 and at 31 December had received 2,071 applications, of these 528 awards with a value of £192,977 have been made.

Pre-assessment and Support Arrangements for Post Elective Surgery

15. There are further proposals to locate the responsibility for hospital discharges for planned admissions within the Adult Access Service. A pilot is underway funded by Health where a Social Worker completes pre-admission assessments for service users who will require support post elective surgery (Systematic Care of Older People Elective Surgery, SCOPES). To date, the Adult Access Service has received 24 referrals of which 9 were suitable for reablement (START), 3 were assessed by an Occupational Therapist and received equipment, 2 were sent to District Teams for a full community care assessment and the remaining either did not meet the eligibility criteria, refused an assessment or were happy to

arrange their own support. The project is being expanded to include older adults known to Oncology (breast cancer) and Gastro Intestinal upper bleed.

Mobility Assessments for Blue Badges

16. Since October 2011, the Local Authority has had responsibility for providing independent mobility assessments for blue badge applicants where they are not automatically entitled and are subject to further assessment. This follows national changes to the eligibility for blue badges. Two occupational therapists have been employed to do these assessments at clinics across the County. An average of 60 assessments are completed every month. Between January and December 2013 701 assessments were completed, 314 were approved of which 173 were approved for 3 years and 214 were refused.

Benefits Advice, Information and Guidance

17. The Service offers advice, information and training on welfare benefits to County Council staff, the public and voluntary organisations. This is undertaken through the Benefits Training Information Advice service which consists of one Senior and three Benefits Officers. The team provide the following services:

- Production of web information relating to welfare benefits, Tax credits and advice provision
- Undertake promotional campaigns to inform residents in Nottinghamshire and relevant Nottinghamshire County Council staff of welfare benefit related issues.
- Provide guidance and support to CSC staff on welfare benefit matters.
- Develop and deliver a training programme for staff and voluntary organisations on welfare benefit matters for example Personal Independent Payment and Challenging Decisions.
- Work closely and national organisations to represent the County Council for example Nottinghamshire Advice Network, Local Authority Revenue and Benefits, East Midlands Councils Welfare Reform Group and Local Government Association Advisers Group
- Provide telephone benefit advice to customers where CSC staff and referrals via the County Council's Framework system to establish specialist advice is appropriate.

18. In August 2013 the Benefits Service provided advice, information and support to 89 individuals. As a result of the changes to benefits and benefit entitlement, the number of referrals has been increasing. Between October and November 2013 the Benefits Service dealt with 359 enquiries. On average the Benefits Team deal with 2,000 enquiries each year.

Support to Carers

19. The Carers' Triage Workers are based in the Adult Access Team. Carers ringing the CSC are given detailed and tailor made information to help them in their caring role. Some are assessed on the phone and eligible carers offered Personal budgets. The evaluation has been very positive for carers.

20. Between 1 December 2013 and 17 January 2014, 178 carers were assessed or reviewed. Of these 63 were eligible to receive a personal budget. 6 were resolved through either signposting to other agencies or they received advice and information. 11 resulted in no further action. The rest were not eligible to receive a carers personal budget. In the main, carers referred themselves, however health care professionals also referred a significant number.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

21. The report is for information purposes only and there are no recommendations stemming from it.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, 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.

Financial Implications

23. This report is for noting only and contains no financial implications.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Adult Social Care and Health Committee:

- 1) It is recommended that the Adult Social Care and Health Committee note and comment on the information provided.

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Constitutional Comments

24. As this report is for noting only, no constitutional comments are required.

Financial Comments (KAS 23.01.14)

25. There are no financial implications contained in 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.

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.