



14 November 2016

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

PROVIDING ADULT SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS AND REVIEWS

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the current position in relation to the number of assessments and reviews completed within Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection (ASCH&PP) department.
2. To seek approval for the establishment of temporary posts to help manage assessments and reviews, and to realise efficiency savings.
3. To inform Members of future proposals to further improve performance in relation to assessments and reviews.
4. To seek approval to extend the scope of the existing Targeted Reviews project to include activities identified as part of the proposals mentioned in **paragraph 3**.

Information and Advice

Background

5. People whose social care needs cannot be met through the provision of information and advice, or by signposting to other agencies at the Customer Service Centre, will be referred for an assessment of their social care needs. These assessments are usually completed by social work or occupational therapy staff and may result in the person being deemed eligible for support from the County Council, resulting in the creation of a Care and Support Plan to meet their agreed outcomes.
6. There is no national timescale to complete new assessments within 28 days of initial contact, but the Council has a local target to achieve this in 80% of cases. In some cases there is a legitimate reason why an assessment may take longer than 28 days, due to rapidly changing circumstances or an extended period of rehabilitation or reablement. The performance of the Council, as reported regularly to previous Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Committee meetings, stands at 70% for the period from April to August 2016 up from 60%. It is worth noting that Nottinghamshire remains a high performing Council in most areas and has been for a number of years.

7. Given that the needs of service users change over time and that resources are finite, workers will need to ensure whether the support from the Council is still needed. If social care support is required, workers will need to ensure it is provided in the most cost effective way possible. To achieve this, workers will need to regularly review people's support needs and their Support Plan. This is in line with the Adult Social Care Strategy.
8. There is also an expectation within the Care Act 2014 that authorities should conduct a review of a service user's care plan no later than every 12 months. In reality a high proportion of reviews are often completed earlier where Services Users have short term goals which can increase their independence.
9. In addition the Council is also responsible for assessing and reviewing the needs of those who act as carers to those with social care needs.
10. As a result of increased demand for social care support, demographic changes and finite resources, the waiting lists for assessments and reviews have increased, as is the case for a number of councils.
11. The department has also had to prioritise work requiring an urgent response such as safeguarding, carer breakdown and Mental Health Act assessments above more routine and less urgent assessments and reviews. This situation has been exacerbated by increased demand on social care arising from the Care Act 2014.
12. In order to address this, the department established a project under the direction of the Service Director, South Nottinghamshire and Public Protection, to look at ways of addressing the issue outside of the usual day to day operating procedures.
13. The project's aim has been to analyse and understand the causes and significantly reduce the number of unallocated social care and occupational therapy assessments and reviews across the department. The project has sought to ensure that the department undertakes both short term action to reduce the waiting list and, based on evidence at a team level, will look to make a number of recommendations to form a future approach that avoids the future build-up of backlogs. The future approach will be in line with the Adult Social Care Strategy and support new ways of working.

Current Situation

14. The report to ASCH Committee in April detailed the number of unallocated cases. The table overleaf demonstrates significant improvement in all areas.

Table: Progress in allocating cases within timescale

	Number in February 2016	Number in September 2016
Unallocated Social Care Assessments outside of the 28 day timescale	443	1
Unallocated Occupational Therapy Assessments outside of the 28 day timescale	16	3
Unallocated Carers' Assessments outside of the 28 day timescale	152	10

15. In the period from April to September 2016, staff in the Council have completed 6,406 social care and occupational therapy (OT) assessments and 11,034 reviews. In the same period, staff have undertaken 2,103 carers' assessments and 2,224 carers' reviews.
16. As at 28th September 2016, the number of unallocated assessments awaiting progression outside of the Council's 28 day timescale was one care and support assessment and three OT assessments.
17. The table shows that the additional funding previously agreed by Committee, to deal with the increasing demand in Adult Social Care stemming from the Care Act reforms, has successfully increased the Council's capacity for this work.
18. In addition to the above, the Council would be on target to undertake 50% more reviews during 2016-17 than were undertaken in 2015-16. The number of carers' assessments undertaken would rise by 54% and carers' reviews would double.
19. Credit is also due to colleagues in the department who have adapted to new ways of working and improved the Council's performance in this area in a short period of time.
20. However, despite these sizeable increases in these areas, there remains a small backlog, and, to meet increasing levels of demand, measures are now being put in place to ensure that this improved level of activity can consistently across services.

Steps being taken to address situation

21. There remains an issue with data quality within the Council's case management system. This means that the figures for unallocated work included individuals who appear more than once or who no longer require input from the Council. By undertaking in-depth work to identify these errors and rectify them, the Council will have a better idea of the work it needs to undertake and be better able to prioritise services to those most in need.
22. A number of these errors arise from the complex commissioning processes with the case management system. In April 2016, ASCH Committee recognised the need for a resource to address this and permanently established a Data Input Team (DIT). This team had existed in a temporary form since 2013 and the staffing levels were based on activity from 2013-2015. However, in line with the upward trend in departmental activity referenced above, the number of packages being commissioned by this team since April 2016 has doubled.

23. It is felt that the addition of some additional staff, on a temporary basis, will enable this team to both address the existing data quality problems and meet the increase in demand. Four full-time equivalent Grade 3 Business Support Administrator (DIT) posts, for 12 months, at a cost of £109,316, are needed to address this issue.
24. Data cleansing work undertaken in one locality has reduced the number of reviews outstanding by 25% demonstrating the high levels of error currently contained within Framework and the requirement for increased temporary resource to support the cleansing.
25. A focused period of activity to address the data errors will enable the Council to report accurately on the outstanding and overdue levels of work, ensuring these can be tackled by both the internally resourced reviewing teams and the additionally established agency capacity.
26. A number of remedial and developmental activities have been included within the newly proposed scope of work which will prevent the errors currently found within Framework from reoccurring; ensuring this resource intensive and costly activity of cleansing the data will not be required in the future.
27. Through formal procurement mechanisms external contracted agencies have been utilised to assist both Social Work and Occupational Therapy to maintain the unallocated waiting lists, to keep all cases within the 28 day target timescale. During the last nine months this intervention has also assisted the ASCH&PP department to introduce and embed new ways of working, for example, the formal scheduling of new work from a central point (Adult Access team). The new ways of working and assistance of the external agencies working alongside the in-house staff group has significantly reduced the unallocated waiting lists across the County.
28. Part of the increase in numbers of reviews relates to the Council's focused work to support carers, but it should also be noted that the online Carers' Assessment and Review forms went live in late March 2016. These have allowed carers to answer the review questions in their own homes, at a time suitable for them.
29. The number of assessments and reviews for carers completed on-line is as follows:

	1st May – 4th October 2016
Carers' assessment episodes completed on-line	299
Percentage of assessments completed on-line	3%
Carers' review episodes completed on-line	15
Percentage of reviews completed on-line	30%

30. It is worth noting that 74 (32%) of the carers' assessments were completed in September.

Longer Term Changes

31. Given the increase in the number of people in Nottinghamshire who will need social care to help manage long term conditions and disability, part of the response is to continue rolling out new ways of working and the principles of the Adult Social Care Strategy. This includes utilising clinics and hubs to keep up with future demand. There will also be strong performance monitoring of teams in relation to this work, to ensure that good practice can be shared across the County.
32. Following triage by the Adult Access Service, appointments are automatically scheduled into fieldworkers' diaries. In advance, fieldworkers block out a pre-agreed number of slots in their diary and forward these to the Adult Access Service for work to be scheduled into. This has been piloted in a number of teams across the County, and the evidence from the pilot has shown that this has been very successful in increasing the number of assessments undertaken within the 28 day timescale – in one team this increased from only 25% of assessments being completed in a timely manner to over 65%. In the same team, service users, who had previously been waiting an average of 51.5 days for their assessment, were now receiving a completed assessment in, on average, 25.1 days. Whilst there were improvements in relation to this indicator across the department during this time period, the increases in performance from the teams taking part in the pilot outstripped the average figure.
33. A significant number of pilots have been taking place across the department to reduce waiting times by using staff time more effectively. These have included use of clinics to assess and review and increased mobilisation of the social care workforce. For example, staff are using tablet devices to complete assessments. Early indications are that throughput of work is increasing as a result of these innovations, further reducing waiting times for citizens.
34. The current organisational strategy for reviewing social care cases is being reconsidered. The revised strategy will make available a wide range of review types, including on-line, telephone based, clinic based. This will provide greater choice and will facilitate more proportionate timely reviews, significantly improving the organisation's ability to undertake the significant number of reviews required annually and providing appropriate and proportionate methods of review for the variety of care packages provided.
35. These changes will enable the organisation to achieve the target of 80% of reviews completed within timescale, a target currently proposed by the end of March 2017. Along with the revised strategy, a number of system changes will be required within the Council's case management system (Mosaic) to enable this.
36. It is recommended that a 1 full-time equivalent (fte) Commissioning Officer post is established for a six month period, commencing once the data cleansing is complete, to support the design and implementation of the Council's revised Reviewing Strategy and to provide operational guidance to clearing the backlog of reviews. A job description is

currently being developed and if required job evaluation will be undertaken supported by the services HR Business Partner.

37. The role will be funded from the existing budget previously approved to deliver the Targeted Reviews project. The cost of this post would be £22,360 including on-costs, at indicative Grade C.
38. The current Targeted Reviews project prioritises the undertaking of reviews where service users are most likely to have decreasing care needs and therefore reviewing these packages of care as a priority is likely to enable the department to release significant savings.
39. This project builds on previous savings projects which aim to maximise people's independence, and thus reduce the cost of community care in younger and older adults, by reviewing packages of care, ensuring they remain sufficient to meet the needs of individuals in the most cost effective way. The project is delivering savings by focussing the work of the Central Review Team on reviewing packages of care falling into the categories detailed below:
 - a) Direct Payment packages - where surplus amounts have been identified, linking with the recoup project underway within Direct Payments
 - b) new packages that have been set up, particularly following hospital discharge, including individuals who have not received reablement and may only need a time limited service
 - c) people who have two carers where, through the use of equipment, this can be reduced to one carer
 - d) packages of care which have not yet received an annual review.
40. To date this year this activity has achieved a saving of £697,000 with the potential for £894,000 full year effect (dependent on package reductions being maintained for the full year). As such the project has already exceeded the savings target of £480,000 for 2016/17.
41. The currently capacity provided by the Central Review Team and the agencies now approved will enable the undertaking of outstanding reviews to be achieved and support the Council to meet the challenging savings targets for 2017/18 of £1.01m and 2018/19 of £1.01m.
42. The Reviews Savings Board is now seeking approval to extend the scope of the work in order to ensure the accuracy of data about performance, design a system and implement the necessary changes to ensure more cost effective and timely methods of assessments and reviews.
43. In order to support the delivery of this extended scope, agreement from the Programme and Projects team has been given to extend the allocation of 1fte Project Manager and 0.5fte Programme Officer from the existing staffing within the Programmes and Projects team from the initial six month allocation until December 2017. These are existing roles within the current staffing structure of the Programme and Projects team.

Other Options Considered

44. Maintaining the Data Input Team at its current levels was discounted as it would not give sufficient capacity to deal with the increase in assessments and reviews.
45. Not establishing these additional temporary posts will increase pressures on all ASCH&PP operational teams, delaying reviews and preventing new support packages from being commissioned in a timely and efficient manner. Inaccurate financial information would increase, making it difficult to accurately forecast the Council's financial commitments.
46. Not increasing the scope of the existing Reviews project to include the developmental actions identified. This would not have provided the necessary developments to ensure data accuracy and accurate reporting of outstanding reviews.
47. Not developing the alternative methods of review defined within the additional scope would impact on the Council's ability to meet its target of undertaking all assessments and reviews within the target of 80% within timescale.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

48. The temporary increase in staff recommended will ensure the Council is able to deal with increased demand for social care and to meet its targets for achieving 80% of assessments and reviews within timescale.
49. The additional temporary resource will support the removal of the current backlog of reviews and ensure the data cleansing activity required can be resourced, enabling accurate reporting of reviews in the future.
50. Increasing the scope of the Reviews project will ensure the Council has systems and processes which enable reviews to be undertaken in a timely manner, ensuring packages of care are suitable and reviewed at the earliest suitable opportunity to maximise the potential for promoting independence.

Statutory and Policy Implications

51. 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 services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, 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

52. Funding for the additional temporary posts will be met from the £600,000 previously agreed. No additional funding is required. The total cost of additional temporary staff requested is £142,056.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

53. Service users will receive a timely assessment and review of their care and support needs, reducing the potential of identification of potential safeguarding issues being missed.

Implications for Service Users

54. Service users will receive a timely assessment and review of their care and support needs.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) notes the current position in relation to the number of assessments and reviews completed within the Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection department.
- 2) approves the establishment of the following additional temporary posts to help manage assessments and reviews, and to realise efficiency savings:
 - Four full-time equivalent Business Support Administrators (DIT), Grade 3 SCP 14 – 18 (£16,481 - £17,891) for 12 months, at a cost of £109,316 to commence December 2016.
 - One full-time equivalent Commissioning Officer post, for a 6 month period, indicative Grade C, at a cost of £22,360 including on-costs.
- 3) notes the future proposals to further improve performance in relations to assessments and reviews.
- 4) approves the extension of the scope of the existing Targeted Reviews project to include the proposals identified in paragraph 42 of this report.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 27/10/16)

55. The proposals outlined in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

56. The Employment Procedure Rules provide that the report to Committee include the required advice and HR comments and that the recognised trade unions be consulted on all proposed changes to staffing structures (and any views given should be fully considered prior to a decision being made).

Financial Comments (KAS 01/11/16)

57. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 52 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.

Providing Adult Social Care Assessments and Reviews – report to Adult Social Care and Health Committee on 18 April 2016

Savings and Efficiencies Update and Proposal to Maximise the Income Available to the Council's Directly Provided – report to Adult Social Care and Health Committee on 10th October 2016.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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