



**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 outstanding assessments and reviews within Adult Social Care and Health.
2. To seek approval to purchase additional temporary capacity to help manage assessments and reviews and to realise efficiency savings.

Information and Advice

Background

3. 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.
4. There is no national timescale to complete new assessments within 28 days of initial contact, but the department 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 department, as reported regularly to previous Adult Social Care and Health Committee meetings, stands at 60% for 2015/16. It is worth noting that Nottinghamshire remains a high performing council in most areas and has done so for a number of years.
5. 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 needed, 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.
6. 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 to review short term goals and to increase people's independence.

7. 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.
8. As a result of increased demand for social care support, demographic changes and finite resources, like a number of councils, the waiting lists for assessments and reviews have increased.
9. As a result of staffing and funding reductions the department has 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 from the Care Act, as detailed in a separate report also presented on the agenda of this meeting of the Committee. In addition to this reviewing teams have been undertaking urgent work to transfer a large number of service users with direct payments to new accredited providers of direct payment support services, as a result of the suspension of a service provider subject to an ongoing Trading Standards investigation.
10. 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.
11. The project's aim was 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 will ensure that the department undertakes both short term action to reduce the waiting list and based on evidence at a team level, will recommend 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 and steps being taken to address this

12. Since April 2015, staff in the Council have completed 10,609 social care and occupational therapy (OT) assessments and 15,692 reviews. In the same period, staff have undertaken 2,935 carers' assessments and 2,241 carers' reviews.
13. As at 20th March 2016, the number of assessments awaiting progression outside of the Council's 28 day timescale was 443 social care and 11 occupational therapy (the latter all in younger adults' services). In relation to occupational therapy assessments, following changes to the way that referrals are handled, including innovative work in the Adult Access team, and some increase in capacity, the numbers outside the 28 day timescales are the lowest they have been for a very long time.
14. Where assessments are essentially focused on people who may need social care support for the first time, reviews are required to ensure that the support people are currently receiving is still appropriate to meet their needs. A review may require the support to be increased, or reduced in line with the level of need at that time. The number of reviews (where service users have not been reviewed within the last 12

months) is 2,508 social care; 2,252 carers; 1,679 people living in care homes and 226 occupational therapy. Many of these reviews will only be a relatively short period outside of the timescale, but nevertheless action is required to ensure the capacity is available to complete the reviews.

15. A number of immediate actions are already underway. The first step was a data cleansing exercise. By running the data against various other data sources, this identified individuals who no longer require input from the department, or who are adding to the figures by appearing more than once as duplicate records.
16. Two external agencies, one for social work and the other for OT, will be commissioned to assist with reducing the waiting time for assessment. By working with these external workers, the Council will be able to ensure people have a timely assessment and review. Unallocated work will be carefully identified to ensure the Local Authority achieves best value from agency staff. The agency staff will be paid on a per assessment basis.
17. A significant number of the reviews relate to service users who have been placed within residential or nursing settings as part of their package of support. It is proposed that these individuals will be reviewed by those providing their care. This accounts for approximately 40% of the overdue reviews. Staff from the department's Market Management Team are currently putting together a process to enable this work.
18. Significant progress has already been made in relation to Carers Assessments, with the appointment of 5.8fte Carers Support workers, within the Adult Access Service. These workers are currently prioritising work on Carers Assessments, and are seeking to undertake assessments via the telephone wherever possible. In a short time they have significantly reduced the number of carers waiting for an assessment. Once these assessments have been completed they will focus on the Carer Reviews.
19. A further part of the data cleansing exercise will focus on the prioritisation of the remaining service user reviews. It is anticipated that a significant percentage of those with outstanding reviews will be in receipt of single services, such as meals and day services. Reviews for these individuals will be straight forward and can be completed in a relatively short space of time by Council staff.

Longer Term Changes

20. The Council has recently appointed 15 additional Community Care Officers (CCOs) and 10 additional social workers. There are still significant vacancy levels across the department in operational teams. The Care Act funded posts are temporary, due to the initial temporary nature of the money to fund these posts from central government. Following clarity of future funding arrangements, the department has reviewed the posts required to meet the needs of the Care Act going forward balanced with the ongoing demand for social care that has contributed to the current backlog situation. Recommendations from this review are shared for consideration and discussion with the Adult Social Care and Health Committee in a separate report at today's meeting.
21. 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.

22. Other steps include changes in the way staff work, through the mobilisation of the workforce and the automatic scheduling of fieldworker appointments. The Adult Social Care operational workforce has now been issued with Lenovo ThinkPad devices. This uses Total Mobile software which enables assessments to be completed away from a work base and aims to increase productivity by 10% per full time equivalent post, reduce mileage costs for staff and enable the flexibility to work anywhere.
23. The scheduling of fieldworker appointments involves social work field work appointments being automatically scheduled into field workers' diaries following triage by the Adult Access Service. In advance, field workers 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. The evidence base from evaluations of similar projects in other councils, such as Kent, has shown that this is an effective way of reducing the time it takes for people to have their assessment or review completed, saves social worker time and avoids people having to wait for their assessment to start.
24. As well as changes to the way staff work, the department will introduce a number of measures that will change the expectations of people who receive an assessment. In order to maximise the ability to undertake assessments, the department will increase the use of clinics, telephone assessments or reviews and online assessments and reviews.
25. Social Care clinics have been piloted at two sites within the County during 2015, reducing staff travel time, and freeing up more time for assessment. Service user feedback from these has been positive, and staff have been able to undertake their work more quickly. It is proposed to roll this out to further sites.
26. Telephone based assessments have already been successfully tested and used within some areas of the department, for example for carers' assessments and non-complex occupational therapy assessments. In these areas, a worker can complete 3-4 non-complex assessments per day.
27. The availability of supported self-assessment is a central aspect of the Care Act. The availability of online assessment tools is crucial to enabling this in the most efficient way. Most councils are developing online assessments; in Oxfordshire for example 68% of all their carer assessments are now completed on line.
28. The Council is currently developing online service user and carer assessments forms via the County Council website. The carers supported self-assessment went live on 23rd March and has already been completed by a handful of carers who have provided positive feedback on the new process. The review of carers needs is due to go live in mid-April. The next set of forms will go live in October 2016. These will include the supported self- assessment for service users.

Additional Capacity

29. In order to assist with the number of outstanding assessments and reviews, it is proposed that Members approve £300,000 to provide additional capacity to purchase assessments or reviews from independent social work or occupational therapy agencies. The agencies will be paid on a per assessment basis and will work in accordance with the Adult Social Care Strategy. The additional capacity will also help to realise savings identified in the proposal on Targeted Reviews (C07) which was approved as part of the budget report at Full Council in February 2016. These savings have a target of £2.5million over 3 years.
30. As part of the Targeted Review proposal, £300,000 has already been approved at Full Council. The proposal focuses on prioritisation of reviewing resources to achieve maximum benefit.

Summary

31. This report identifies the steps that have been taken to keep pace with the level of assessments and reviews required, and to ensure that the Council carries out these responsibilities in a timely way. This involves ensuring there is the right level of staffing in the establishment, some temporary additional resources and taking advantage of new and innovative ways of working.
32. In line with the Adult Social Care Strategy, the department will continue to prevent or delay the development of need for care and support by providing advice, information and services that support independence.
33. Where someone is eligible for support, workers will undertake assessments and reviews according to the level of complexity service users present, whilst ensuring that the method used is appropriate.
34. Therefore, some of the more straight forward, single service reviews may be addressed via the sending and return of a letter, some carers assessments and reviews will be carried out via the telephone, those physically able to attend clinics will be invited to do so, those with the capacity to undertake online assessment can choose to reduce their waiting time by opting for this option and those with complex needs can continue to expect to be assessed or reviewed at home.
35. By taking positive steps in implementing both the long and short term measures detailed above, it is anticipated that the level of need and demand for assessments and reviews over the coming months can be managed in a timely way. However the level of demand and the effectiveness of these measures will be kept under continuous review.

Other Options Considered

36. Additional Council staff would be appointed to complete assessments and reviews. This was discounted due to the current need and the difficulty in recruiting qualified staff.

Reason/s for Recommendations/s

37. The Council has a duty to complete Community Care Assessments. In order to assist with the number of outstanding assessment reviews and to realise efficiency savings, it is proposed to procure additional capacity to undertake assessments or reviews.

38. Additional capacity is required to realise the required efficiency savings.

Statutory and Policy Implications

39. 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.

Financial Implications

40. £300,000 will be needed from departmental reserves to purchase additional capacity to assist with outstanding assessments and reviews and to realise efficiency savings, as identified in paragraphs 29 and 30.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

41. Service users will receive a timely community care assessment and review.

Implications for Service Users

42. Service users will receive a timely community care assessment and review.

Ways of Working Implications

43. The additional reviewing team will need mobilisation equipment to undertake social care assessments.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) notes the current position in relation to outstanding assessments and reviews and that the Committee will receive a further update on progress in October 2016.
- 2) approves the purchase of additional capacity to help manage the level of assessments and reviews and to realise savings, at a cost of £300,000 from departmental reserves.

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 24/03/16)

44. Adult Social Care and Health Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report subject to the procurement rules set out in the Council's Financial Regulations.

Financial Comments (KAS 23/03/16)

45. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 40 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.

Annual budget 2016 - 17 – report to Full Council on 25 February 2016.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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