

Audit and Governance Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday, 26 June 2017

Electoral Division affected: N/A

Liquid Logic System Update

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Executive Summary

The Audit and Governance Committee received a report in September 2016 that set out the improvements made to the Liquid Logic system following the Ofsted report of September 2015 and also the proposed next steps for the system and the new governance arrangements for system developments and implementations. At the request of the Committee, this report sets out what action was being taken in relation to the Liquid Logic adults system.

Recommendation

The Audit and Governance Committee is requested to note the progress to date.

Background and Advice

Since its implementation, there have been issues surrounding the Liquid Logic systems. The 2015 Ofsted report highlighted some of these, many of which were found to be related to working practices and processes rather than the technical solution itself. Nevertheless, the council's significant investment in its systems and the need to manage the business effectively, means that ensuring our systems work effectively is an ongoing priority.

Significant improvements in the Liquid Logic Children's (LCS) system have been made and have been reported to the Committee. Since then further developments are underway and change management processes and overall governance have been significantly improved. The learning and the discipline brought about within the children's system have been replicated across all of the council's main systems including Liquid Logic Adults (LAS).

In addition to this, there has been a focus on data that affects payments to provider. Historically the County Council has been unable to deal with queries from providers quickly and where these have not been resolved, payments have not been made. Targeted work has been carried out to deal with issues, clear backlogs and to ensure that a sustainable position is maintained going forward that prevents further

payments issues from developing. This includes looking at the delivery model, defining and agreeing end to end processes and ensuring staff have the appropriate training to carry out their roles.

- **System ICT Implementation**

Liquid Logic is used successfully by many different local authorities so the choice of the system itself was not an issue. LAS has not been customised to the same extent as the LCS system had and therefore, no major re-configuration works have been required. In addition to this, LAS has been kept up to date with latest versions installed with relatively few problems.

The following issues that were common to both LAS and LCS have been completed:

- Some work processes were not moving through the system and were therefore not being authorised/actioned etc. This was largely due to the fact that there were no processes in place to ensure that changes to staffing hierarchies, i.e. as staff moved within the organisation or joined or left, were reflected in the Liquid Logic system. This meant that social workers could not move tasks on or could not have a clear view of what work was left in their worktrays to action. A significant piece of work was undertaken to ensure that the actual social work structure, authorisation levels etc. were updated in the system and processes have been defined and implemented to ensure that they remain up to date in the future. This has required a significant amount of work by Children's Social Care service as well as HR, BTLS and the Core Systems team. As a result of this, transactions are now flowing through the system in the way that they should and social workers have worktrays that only contain the outstanding tasks that they need to carry out.
- System changes were being requested by a range of individuals in the service and control and ownership of the system was not clear. Without this, some changes were contradictory, impacted on reporting and meant that resources within BTLS and other teams were not always focussed on priorities. The need to instil enhanced governance, discipline and control was established as being vital to overcome these as well as giving overall visibility of system changes to senior managers. New governance arrangements have been agreed and are set out later in the report that ensure that timescales and impacts are understood, resources identified and crucially that changes are implemented in such a way as to give a period of stability within the service. This implementation is multi-disciplinary as it will often include: systems, transformation, service, business intelligence and training support. The need for these core services to work together is paramount and this is now being achieved through a crosscutting system review group that has been set up. There will always be changes needed to systems, but the uncontrolled process that previously existed no longer exists.

Data Cleansing (Payments)

Although the LAS system is a case management system, there has to be a clear link to services that are commissioned and ultimately paid for. This enables the County Council to review what is being commissioned and the cost. From this, the County Council will be able to forecast costs with greater certainty and will be able to look at trends etc. This data is captured and recorded on what is known as a CPLI (Client Purchase Line Item). CPLI lines should be created for all commissioned activity. This has not always happened in the past and the quality of CPLI lines could not be relied on to provide the management information needed or to pay providers. Issues have arisen due to the fact that;

- CPLI lines are not always created
- Lack of consistency in creating CPLI lines
- CPLI line has not always ceased at date of death
- Rates at which services are commissioned are not controlled and can be over-ridden

This has caused many problems for the council and for providers, particularly as it means that payments are 'stuck' in the system. Although processes are in place for providers to raise queries with the council so that they can be resolved, a significant backlog developed that there was never any quick resolution of the problems. Significant improvements have been achieved as set out below:

- **Backlog**

Temporary data cleanse teams were established in the Care Navigation and Core Systems teams. These teams have worked collaboratively in clearing the backlog of queries from providers. To resolve some of the more difficult issues, resource from the Care Navigation team has been co-located with the systems team. The initial backlog of 2,200 CPLI lines has been reduced to 1,300 (of which 300 were received only in the last week and of the remaining 1,000 lines;

- 300 need further information from social workers
- 700 need further information from providers

Senior management support has been identified to work with social workers to provide the information quickly. The Core Systems team are actively contacting providers to obtain the required information to validate the other 700 lines. Over 150 lines have been cleared in 2 days and it is anticipated that the rest will be cleared by the end of w/c 12 June.

The fact that that the backlog has now largely been cleared means that the Care Navigation Data Cleanse team are now fully focussed on dealing with new queries submitted through the Care Portal and also 8 providers that have been submitting their invoices manually and have been flagged as requiring further assistance. Feedback from providers and the number of queries received by the Care Navigation team has already improved significantly.

- ***LD Sleeping-In Uplift***

The contractual commitment to pay an uplift on LD sleeping-in allowances from 1 April 2016 is now being made in full. Previously this was not possible due to the fact that the commissioning approach had changed without any reference to the structure of the data in the system. To resolve the problem, 3700 CPLI lines have been unpicked and restated on the systems so that individual elements are identifiable. All providers are now being paid the uplift in accordance with the contract. The exercise of restating the commissioned activity on the system identified overstated commissioned package costing the County Council c£1m per annum. These have now been set up correctly and the overpayments recouped.

Previously social workers had a choice of rates or could create a new rate. This practice has ceased and rates have been 'locked down' in the system to prevent any similar issues arising in the future. The operating model has also been reviewed and changed to ensure consistency of practice in data input. This is set out later in the report.

Discussions are taking place with colleagues in commissioning to determine a best practice approach to future contracts and changes that may affect payments. In the past new commissioning arrangements have been agreed and put in place without consulting the system teams on whether it is possible and feasible to make payments on the new basis. Timescales for system changes now have to be factored into the commissioning cycle.

- ***Date of Death***

Business Intelligence has provided details of over 1,200 dates of death that had not been recorded in LAS. These have been input and a process established within the core systems team to ensure that notifications are received on a weekly basis and input into the system (if this has not already been done). A best practice guide is currently being rolled out to social workers so they understand what action they need to take when notified of a death. In addition to this, a mechanism is being developed to pull together date of death information held by the County Council and health to provide a 'backstop' should deaths not be input by the social worker. This will be co-ordinated and actioned by Business Intelligence and Core Systems staff.

BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY

Operating Model

Whilst the above actions have dealt with the backlog, there is an absolute need to ensure that across the system, consistency is achieved and that there is sufficient resource to carry out the activity of creating and maintaining CPLI lines. To do this, the operating model has been reviewed and changed - when LAS was implemented, it was envisaged that, as well as creating and maintaining the case management files on LAS, social workers would also create the CPLI lines. In reality, social

workers either didn't have the time to input data late or, when they did, input in an inconsistent manner.

In addition to this, there was a lack of consistency in the way in which individual elements of a care package was entered on the system. This meant that, as an example, when uplifts were applied to specific elements only, the system was unable to differentiate these from the full cost and could not make the payment accurately.

The operating model was not therefore effective and did not provide a sustainable model going forward. In recognition of all of this, the Care Navigation function has been extended to take on the role of inputting all CPLI lines. Many of the social care teams have now transferred this element of the work to the Care Navigation function and a clear map of targeting the remaining services has been set out and will be completed over the next few weeks. Clear processes have also been defined and set out so that a consistent approach to inputting is achieved, and one which will enable specific elements to be identified. This will assist in planning, forecasting as well as uplifting individual elements should it be required. Close working with the systems team to identify any inconsistencies or problems is also in place and, where necessary, corrective action is taken.

Despite all of the above, it is recognised that there will always be changes to commissioned packages and therefore it is felt that the temporary data cleanse team is required on a permanent basis as a data management team. A proposal is being developed for consideration by Management Team. Continuous monitoring of changes will also be undertaken to identify areas of practice that could be improved/made consistent to reduce the number of changes/queries to a minimum.

Paper invoices

There are a small number of providers that are still sending in invoices manually, i.e. in paper format. This is largely due to a lack of confidence in the system and the belief that payments will be processed more quickly. This creates additional pressure on the Accounts Payable team. Ideally, all providers should be sending in invoices electronically however this will only happen if we can gain the trust and confidence of providers. It is therefore proposed that once all queries have been resolved with providers, a joint approach with Care Navigation, Core Systems and finance is proposed to work with them to submit invoices electronically. Acceptance of paper invoices will then be stopped. This will not only contribute towards the council's ambitions of reducing paper and of matching invoices electronically with more efficiently and cost-effective mechanisms but will also support providers in our ability to pay them more quickly.

NEXT STEPS

Although positive steps have been taken and accuracy is improving, there remains a significant amount of cleansing work to be undertaken. Some of this will be undertaken as part of planned commissioning cycles, and other activity will be scheduled over a period of time. The scale of the changes still to be made mean that this work will take place over a number of months. To give an indication of scale, the following changes have already been identified and more will emerge:

Bulk Data Cleanse

There is still a considerable amount of bulk data cleansing to be carried out – in particular in relation to the new framework contracts that are being drawn up. This will avoid any future issues as a result of changes to the way in which we commission and pay for services. Discussions are underway with the Commissioning Service to plan activity and this work will be undertaken by the Core Systems data Cleanse Team. The work identified to date is;

Description	CPLI Lines	Status/Plan
Supported Living sleep In Allowances	1700	Providers have been contacted and data cleanse work planned for mid-June to mid-July.
Supported Living Block	900	Work to take place mid-July to early August
Homecare Framework	8,000	Work to take place September and October for those CPLI lines that are estimated to be affected immediately with the new framework in November.
Homecare Framework	8,000	CPLI lines will need adjusting throughout the year as and when assessments are completed.
Total	18,600	

As part of this work, rates will be 'locked down' so that data inputters are not able to create services on different rates. A process for over-riding rates in exceptional circumstances, and with appropriate authorisations, will however need to be developed by the service and communicated to all staff.

Care Portal Systems Plan

A systems roadmap for LAS has already been developed and agreed with senior managers within adult's social care. This process will continue. A workshop to look at the care portal has also been set up and will be attended by various key stakeholders. From this, a roadmap of system enhancements and developments will be drawn up to deal with specific issues/problems that are currently being experienced by providers and staff in dealing with queries to payments, CPLI lines etc. The review will also include input from providers to look at the customer experience and how this can be improved.

Governance Arrangements

Strong governance arrangements are now in place and the Director of Adult's Services is required to sign off all changes to the system. To support this;

- System ownership for all systems has been transferred to the Core Systems/Transformation team with dedicated, named resource attached to the system. This first line of contact will be crucial in ensuring a line of sight for the Director of Adult's Services on all system related activity.

- Roadmaps have been developed for some systems and are being developed for others and will set out timelines for changes, resource requirements etc. This will be a key monitoring document for senior managers within the service.
- Best practice guidance for all system implementations has been developed and will be followed in all cases. The Core Systems/Transformation team will be responsible for carrying out the 'gatekeeper' role for all changes.
- A series of working groups will meet on a regular basis, chaired by senior staff, and will report to the Adults Senior Management Team on a regular basis. Sign-off and approvals are required, in most instances, by the Director of Adult's Services to ensure that senior oversight of these issues remains as part of the ongoing 'business as usual' processes.

Other Data

The approach set out above will improve significantly the data quality for CPLI lines but it will take time before the full impact is delivered seen. The focus of the work to date has been on payments and commissioning information. There may also be other data cleanse requirements in relation to other aspects of the service which are in the process of being identified. To oversee this, a 'project accuracy' approach is to be adopted that will also look at reporting etc. in the same way as for Children's Social Care. This work is being led by the Deputy Chief Executive and early work has already commenced. The scope of the work and the associated plans are currently in the process of being developed and it is anticipated that the group will have met by the end of June.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

Financial Implications

There will be an ongoing financial cost to the organisation of maintaining resource to manage the data within the LAS system. The requirements are currently being defined.

Risk management

None. The report updates the Committee on progress made to date.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A