

Health and Social Care Integration - Advancing Information Systems Interoperability

Contact for further information:

Tony Pounder, Lancashire County Council, Tel: 01772 536287

Executive Summary

NHS organisations and local authority social care organisations within the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) need to share information with one other about individuals they treat or support so they can be effective and efficient in delivering joined up care and ensuring timely transfer of responsibilities between agencies. Given the number of different information systems in operation across these organisations the Integrated Care System has been committed through its Digital Strategy to ensuring these systems can talk to one another by devising solutions that advance interoperability.

This report and the presentation to be delivered at the Health and Wellbeing Board sets out the recent success Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals have had in establishing the information governance, technical and operational arrangements to allow for the smooth and timely flow of information about those people waiting for discharge from hospital. It will further outline the provisional Grant Award recently communicated by NHS England to Lancashire County Council as part of the Social Care Digital Pathfinders programme to plan for these arrangements to be widened out to all hospitals and local authorities within the Integrated Care System.

This Grant Award is provisional at this stage and NHS England has asked that their decision is not communicated publicly any earlier than 6 August 2019. Hence this is a Part II report.

Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- (i) Note and commend the progress on advancing information systems interoperability between Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals in relation to hospital discharge
- (ii) Note and welcome the provisional award of a Grant from NHS England from its Social Care Digital Pathfinder fund to enable planning for advancing system interoperability between all councils and NHS hospital trusts within the Integrated Care System in relation to hospital discharge.

- (iii) Urge all NHS and local authority organisations to prioritise their commitment of resources to the significant programme of work required to enable partners to fully capitalise on the opportunity offered by the Grant Award to further advance system interoperability across the Integrated Care System in the interests of the patients and citizens of Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Background

It is a matter of understandable frustration for patients and citizens and indeed for frontline clinical and social care staff if they cannot readily share or ensure the flow of pertinent information to enable treatment and care for individuals to be planned and delivered in an integrated fashion across professional and organisational boundaries.

At best this can leave people repeating their stories to different professionals and delay the efficient and timely provision of services. At worst it can lead to individuals being left waiting unreasonably long periods in the wrong service and even leave them at risk that their condition deteriorates in the absence of accurate and up to date information about their clinical and social condition.

A utopian vision for how this frustration and problem could be overcome is to replace the various systems in use in different agencies with a single common system for client / patient information records across all NHS and Social Care agencies in an area. However the cost and complexity of making such a shift is generally regarded as prohibitively high. Instead partnerships have tended to focus on developing the technical architecture to enable different systems to talk to one another, enabling appropriate information to be accessed and shared and indeed to flow between them.

In Lancashire a key element of this technical architecture is already available in terms of a system called Lancashire Person Record Exchange Service (LPRES), which serves as an intermediary system between the main patient and client databases of different organisations.

Over the last year and following success in a highly competitive process to secure a grant from NHS England, Lancashire County Council (LCC) and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals (LTH) have worked closely together in a programme to enable 'Digital Discharge'. This means using Lancashire Person Record Exchange Service (LPRES) to connect the systems used by the two organisations to enable the timely flow of information about people ready for discharge. This work is almost complete and ready to go live, but perhaps inevitably in pioneering new technical solutions for this purpose there remain some matters of detail still to be worked through before it can be fully signed off.

In the meantime, a further Grant opportunity became available. Lancashire County Council has led on making an application for money under this latest programme to ensure the roll out of similar technical and operational arrangements for Digital Discharge across all hospitals and the four local authorities in the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System. Within the last fortnight NHS England has informed Lancashire County Council that it is immediately offering a Grant Award of £50K for the development stage of this work, with the possibility of a further award in October / November 2019 towards the costs of full implementation.

This award is to be welcomed and is clearly in recognition of an excellent bid and evidence of the success of the work already undertaken in connecting Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Teaching Hospitals systems. However, by itself the Grant money on offer will cover only a fraction of the total costs. Significant work has been undertaken already in order to fully cost out the resources needed for this programme of work, but at the time of writing commitment of resources by various partner agencies has been understandably theoretical and provisional rather than firm.

By the time of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting some further discussions and work will have been undertaken and a short presentation will be offered to further explain the context of this work and the opportunity it will offer for advancing integration.

List of background papers

Our Digital Future - a strategy for Lancashire and South Cumbria available at <https://www.healthierlsc.co.uk/digitalfuture>

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

Exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.