

Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 4 October 2013

Electoral Division affected: All

Progress on improving support for carers in Lancashire and the introduction of a Carers Break Fund

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Executive Summary

During 2012 there were four reports to the Cabinet Committee relating to assessments, reviews and short break services for carers. These reports have included:

- The issues relating to formally assessing and reviewing carers, including concerns about the timing of reviews which prompted action to investigate replacing the existing short breaks voucher scheme with a carers' break fund.
- The link between the introduction of a carers' break fund and the implementation of the new Adult Social Care IT system.
- The agreement to undertake a pilot to establish whether a carers' break fund would be well received by carers, and ensure the new IT system could facilitate the scheme.
- A pilot to see whether Carers Centres could offer to fulfil the statutory obligation to undertake carer assessments,

This report provides an update on:

- the success of the carers' assessment pilot in Carers Centres and proposals for implementation across the county
- learning and practice development initiatives
- the pilot of the carers' break fund
- comprehensive performance monitoring plans

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement is asked to note the report and to continue to support the long term actions.

Background and Advice

In order to achieve the Adult Social Care priority of providing better support to carers, a target was set to increase the number of carers receiving a formal assessment or review in 2011/12 by 5% and in 2012/13 by 2%. In February 2012 a recovery plan was presented to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement (CCPI) as performance was not on target. The report highlighted that carer reviews are

primarily associated with the provision of short break respite vouchers and review activity peaks in the first and last quarter of each year, when updated vouchers are requested and produced. Discussion took place at the CCPI meeting around distributing the number of reviews required more evenly throughout the year, to avoid the additional demands on teams in the first and last quarter of each year.

In October 2012, an update report to CCPI gave details about the proposal for a scheme which could replace current short break respite vouchers: a "carers' break fund". This fund would give carers more choice about the type of support they could purchase, and allow for more accurate monitoring of spend. It would also remove the need to print and issue vouchers at the beginning of each financial year, and enable review activity to be better planned. Concerns were raised at CCPI about the length of time it would take to introduce the fund, as it was dependent on the introduction of new IT systems.

In November 2012, a further report to CCPI clarified the timescales for the introduction of the new IT system, and gave full details of the proposed pilot scheme for the carers' break fund.

The number of carers being formally assessed or reviewed by social care teams decreased from 2011/12 to 2012/13. However, in the same period the number of carers supported by Carers Centres increased:

- In 2011/12 there were 6,998 carers formally assessed or reviewed by social care teams, and in 2012/13 there were 6,165 (a decrease of 12%).
- This equates to 66.5 per 10,000 population aged 18 or over and Lancashire's performance in 2012/13 was higher than the North West average (61.9 per 10,000 population).
- In 2011/12 there were 11,736 carers supported in carer centres, rising to 13,672 in 2012/13 (an increase of 16.5%).

Actions

Carers Assessments

In line with other authorities, Lancashire is looking to involve Carers Centres in carer's assessments. Whilst Local authorities have a statutory duty to undertake carers assessments, authorities can choose to contract with a 'trusted assessor'. Trusted assessors are able to undertake carer's assessments, identifying universal support but make any recommendation for formal service to the authority for 'sign off'.

This approach has been seen to have a number of benefits for carers:

- signposting carers to local universal services/facilities. Carer specific organisations have up to date knowledge of the local support available that they are able to signpost carers to.
- offer carers the support that carers centres themselves provide, such as Peace of Mind 4 Carers, sitting in service, courses, support groups.
- increased carer satisfaction with the assessment process.
- carers may feel more comfortable and more open 'telling their story' with a carers centre worker than with a social worker.

- increased choice around who would undertake their carers assessment.

A pilot took place in 2012 in North and Central Lancashire which offered carers who wanted a separate assessment the opportunity to have their assessment undertaken by a Carers Centre. The pilot project successfully met the initial aims and the outcomes for carers. Feedback received from carers, social workers and the workers undertaking the assessments as part of the pilot was positive. It was clear from the experiences and evidence gathered that there was a good case for rolling out the project across the county. As a result, it was agreed by ACS Senior Management Team that carers' assessments by Carers Centres should be implemented across the county. The plan is to have all Carers Centres undertaking assessments by the end of October 2013.

- On average, there are 166 new referrals a month to Carers Centres, 88% of which are people referring themselves or via Help Direct or Health.
- Peace of Mind 4 Carers, referred to above, is a service that provides cover for people's caring responsibilities in the event of an emergency. There were 3,178 carers with a plan in place in 2011/12, rising to 3,885 in 2012/13.

Practise Development

Practise development within Personal Social Care is delivered by Advanced Practitioners who supervise staff and identify learning opportunities to facilitate continuous professional developments.

Recent emphasis on carers in practise development means practise issues relating to carers will be highlighted and staff signposted to appropriate training courses. Examples of good practise will also be shared through the staff newsletter – Change Matters.

A new e learning course has recently been developed and circulated to staff. The objectives of the course are to provide easily accessible refresher training for all staff within LCC and for external organisations. A review of other learning options is being taken up by the County Learning and Development Group and at the County Advanced Practitioners Meeting.

Carers Break Fund

A proposal to replace the current short break voucher scheme with a carers break fund was presented to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement on 12 October 2012. The carers break fund provides carers with more choice than traditional services, and the fund is not limited to a financial year. This gives more flexibility to carers when planning their services, and removes the need for reviews of carers to take place around March or April each year.

There have been delays in setting up the carers' break fund pilot. The new IT system for Adult Social Care needs to be able to accommodate the scheme and it has taken time to establish how the scheme may work in the new system. A small group of volunteer carers identified by Carers Centres from across the county will be issued with pre-payment cards to use instead of their unused vouchers up to March 2014. This pilot will test out the "fund" and its impact upon respite for carers and inform

future delivery of more varied respite provision. The roll out of the pilot will be dependent upon a procurement process for the additional pre-payment cards for carers. The pilot and issuing vouchers will continue until the procurement process is completed.

Performance Management Sub-Group

A Carers Performance Group has recently been set up as a sub group of the Social Care Performance Management Group to monitor the progress of the above actions. Performance data relating to formal assessments and reviews of carers and services provided is routinely collected from the local authority social care information system (ISSIS). However, this is an incomplete picture of Lancashire performance as support for a high number of carers is managed by the carers centres, whose data are restricted because of their charitable status. The Carers Performance Group will be utilising both sources of data, along with comparable information from other authorities, to ensure that progress in supporting Lancashire's carers is well monitored.

Consultations

N/A

Risk management

Risk associated with the actions will be monitored by the Carers Performance Group

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Report to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement – Number of carers receiving assessments or reviews in the year.	21 February 2012	Andy Milroy, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261
Report to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement – Optimising the review process for carers.	31 st May 2012	Andy Milroy, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261
Report to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement – Progress on the proposal for a Carers Break Fund	12 October 2012	Andy Milroy, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261
Report to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement – Progress on the proposal for a Carers Break Fund	22 nd November 2012	Andy Milroy, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A