

## Agenda Item 12

Report to: **Adult Social Care and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **8 September 2011**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care**

Title of report: **Progress report: Review of alignment between the social care and financial assessment processes, Scrutiny Review, April 2010**

Purpose of report: **To inform members of the progress made against the action plan resulting from the above Scrutiny Review.**

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### RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:**

- 1. consider the progress made against the Scrutiny Review action plan; and**
  - 2. decide if further updates are required**
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#### **1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 The review considered a number of finance related aspects of the assessment process, including the timeliness of financial assessments, the devolution of funding responsibility to officers and staffing capacity to undertake financial assessments.

1.2 Implementation of recommendation 2(g) '*A more user-friendly style of letters sent to service users who make a personal contribution towards the cost of their service to reduce the number of complaints in this area*' has been implemented at a cost of £4,023.50. This was the cost payable to Serco to change the standard letters. This price reflects a 20% reduction negotiated by the Corporate Resources Finance (CRD) Team and further changes to the debt recovery letters will be picked up with the re-tender of the Serco contract.

#### **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 Appendix 1 is the action plan arising from the Scrutiny Review of the alignment between the social care and financial assessment processes, and the right-hand column contains the September 2011 updates against the recommendations.

#### **3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the progress against the recommendations and to decide if further updates against the action plan are required.

**KEITH HINKLEY, Director of Adult Social Care**

Contact Officer: Samantha Williams  
Local Members: All

Tel No. 01273 482115  
Background documents: None

**East Sussex County Council Adult Social Care Action Plan: Alignment between the social care and financial assessment processes**

Recommendations	Action	Outcome	Progress Update
<p>1. That Adult Social Care investigates the feasibility of expanding the provision of financial support to more vulnerable service users, who do not have family or friends to support dealing with their finances when they lose capacity, so that a greater number can receive help to manage their finances in the remit of Appointeeship or Deputyship.</p>	<p>Feasibility study to be undertaken</p>	<p>More service users will be supported to manage their finances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the regulations of the Court of Protection, Adult Social Care has increased its capacity to take on the remit of Deputyship to protect the property, financial affairs and personal welfare of people who lack mental capacity to make decisions for themselves.</li> <li>• Following the Scrutiny Review, a post was funded to support this work and ICT systems are being investigated that can further assist with supporting this work.</li> <li>• 68 additional people are now supported in this way, an increase of 35% since September 2010.</li> </ul>
<p>2. That Adult Social Care monitors the development of the following service improvements to ensure that they are successful in addressing the particular issues raised by the Review Board:</p>			

<p>a) A 'buddy system' within the financial assessment team so that staff are able to manage cases on behalf of colleagues when they are on leave or off sick.</p> <p>b) Electronic 'triggers' within the Carefirst database to provide an earlier alert to the Financial Assessment Team that a financial assessment is required.</p> <p>c) Final assessments for service users leaving the Living at Home programme to be carried out by that team to speed up their discharge from the programme.</p>	<p>Staff to 'buddy' other members of the financial assessment team</p> <p>Carefirst trigger to be developed</p> <p>Living at Home Service staff to be trained in Financial Assessments</p>	<p>Service users experience will improve as the assessment process can continue in the absence of team members Improved efficiency of the financial assessment process.</p> <p>More timely financial assessments.</p>	<p>2a) The buddy system has been implemented and is working well.</p> <p>b) This has been developed but remains a manual, as opposed to electronic process to trigger. The prototyping of the LEAN pathway in Hastings locality is resulting in much more timely social care assessments, which in turn is enabling earlier alerts to the Financial Assessment Team that a financial assessment is required.</p> <p>2c) An alternative approach was implemented. Training Living at Home Service staff was, on balance, not the most effective way of delivering the improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral processes have been reviewed and the Financial Assessment team are now notified of individuals who will require appointments, 5 weeks into the 6 week support provided by the Living at Home. This enables appointments to be booked in advance, ensuring that benefits advice given is timely and relevant.</li> <li>• If individuals require Living at Home Service support in excess of 6 weeks, a the financial assessment team book a full financial assessment with the service users</li> </ul>
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<p>d) Financial questions within the social care assessment so that officers can provide a more accurate indication to service users as to what their level of personal contribution is likely to be.</p> <p>e) A new process to manage appeals against the outcome of financial assessments so that there is consistency in the way these complaints are handled.</p> <p>f) Use of two types of assessments during the social care assessment process. With initial assessment being used for the provision of low level services so that the process for providing these can be speeded up.</p>	<p>Financial questions to be developed, tested and included in the Assessment as part of Self Directed Support</p> <p>Appeals process for financial assessments to be developed</p> <p>Develop assessment for 'simple' services and a separate assessment for more complex cases</p>	<p>Service users have a more accurate assessment of what their likely personal contribution will be.</p> <p>A more consistent approach to complaints for service users and carers</p> <p>The service user experience of having their needs assessed will be proportionate to their level of need</p>	<p>2d) The Social Care Assessment documentation has been reviewed as part of the LEAN project for the Self Assessment Pathway.</p> <p>The decision has been made to use the core assessment tools (BICA &amp; Needs Profile) provided by the organisation FACE with overview and other appropriate specialist assessments as required for more complex needs. This enables the Resource Allocation System (RAS) to be applied to the majority of service users (if required), providing consistency of assessment and indicative personal budgets. Using the FACE assessment tools separates the two different functions of assessment and scoring for resource allocation. In current SSA there is sometimes confusion between these two functions.</p> <p>2e) During 2010/2011 there were 2 cases taken to the Local Government Ombudsman regarding complaints relating to financial assessments, neither of which were upheld.</p> <p>Two other cases have since been logged with the Ombudsman, one was referred back to ASC because it had not been through our complaints process first, and the other was information provision to the Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman.</p> <p>2f) See 2(d) above.</p>
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<p>g) A more user-friendly style of letters sent to service users who make a personal contribution towards the cost of their service to reduce the number of complaints in this area.</p> <p>h) A computer based prompt system used to alert social workers in hospitals as to who needs a care package put in place before they are discharged.</p>	<p>SERCO letters sent to service users to be made more user friendly</p> <p>Develop an electronic system to alert hospital based social work staff of individuals requiring social care support</p>	<p>Vulnerable people will no longer receive inappropriately worded letters about charges for services</p> <p>People's social care needs will be assessed in a timely way and care packages can be organised before hospital discharge</p>	<p>2g) The amended and approved letters (Reminder, second reminder and final reminder before legal action) were implemented during July 2011. The first run of the new reminder letters was despatched on 08/07/11. We will analyse feedback on the revised letters during October 2011.</p> <p>2h) Following the Scrutiny Review, a trigger system was implemented which has resulted in reducing numbers of complaints relating to hospital discharge. In addition, a trial was undertaken where benefits advisors were placed in hospitals, however patients did not have the necessary information with them for meaningful advice to be given so this trial was discontinued. As for 2(c) above, financial assessment appointments are set up in advance to ensure timely advice and support is given. In complex cases, social workers and financial assessors are now undertaking joint visits to ensure all the right support and information can be provided in one visit.</p>
<p>3. That Adult Social Care: a) provides advice and guidance to service users so that they are able to make informed decisions on who they employ to support them;</p>	<p>Accessible information about employing personal assistants to be developed</p>	<p>People can make informed choices about employing personal assistants</p>	<p>3a) A comprehensive range of support has been developed for people considering employing personal assistants and also for personal assistants themselves. Examples include: Quarterly Focus magazine designed for Direct Payment Employers, Carers and Personal Assistants; 'Support with Confidence' training to accredit personal assistants; Face to face and e-learning opportunities for personal assistants and their employers.</p>

<p>b) Develops a robust mechanism for carrying out service user reviews. This will identify whether service users are accessing the right level of support to meet their needs and, where necessary, flag up any risks which can be quickly addressed; and</p> <p>c) Closely monitors the number and complexity of financial abuse cases handled by the Financial Assessment Team. This will ensure that the Team has sufficient resources to manage any additional workload and minimise delays in carrying out assessments.</p>	<p>Ensure timely and proportionate reviews are undertaken.</p> <p>Establish monitoring processes for financial abuse cases</p>	<p>Care packages will be proportionate to service user needs</p> <p>Financial assessments will be timely and vulnerable people will continue to be safeguarded against abuse</p>	<p>3b) 14,103 clients received a review between July 2010 and June 2011. This equates to 79% of all clients.</p> <p>3c) The numbers of Financial abuse cases are closely monitored through the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Steering Group and East Sussex Safeguarding Board. Between February and July 2011, 15% of safeguarding investigations started (112 out of 728) were identified as Financial Abuse, a slight increase on the 12% reported between April and September 2010. The most common perpetrator relationship for Financial Abuse (24%) was another family member. This is also an increase on the 18% reported previously.</p> <p>Deprivation of capital is increasingly becoming an issue in financial abuse cases. These cases are extremely complex and resource intensive to manage. We are working with partners including Trading Standards colleagues to raise awareness about financial abuse, and about abuse to vulnerable adults more generally, for example the 'Speak Up, Speak Out' Campaign held in Autumn 2010.</p>
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