

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 24 January 2023

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Use of Digital and Technology in Adult Social Care and Health – Report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 In March 2022 the People Scrutiny Committee established a Scoping Board to look into the merit of conducting a scrutiny review of use of digital and technology in Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH).

1.2 The Scoping Board heard that in line with the approach being taken by other councils, the Department was looking to encourage greater use of self-service options, such as online financial assessments and needs assessments; and linked to this, working towards implementing a 'digital by default' approach whereby digital and self-service means of contacting, accessing services from, and transacting with the Department are encouraged to be used as the primary route by those who are able to do so. 'Traditional' means of accessing services and contacting ASCH (in person or via telephone) will remain in place for those who require them. The Scoping Board also heard that significant cultural and behavioural changes are required to support this planned direction of travel. The Scoping Board concluded that based on the discussion with officers about the strategic challenges being 'digital by default' would help with, including the Department having capacity to deliver the planned care charging reforms, the topic would benefit from closer examination by People Scrutiny.

1.3 People Scrutiny Committee agreed at their July 2022 meeting that this review should explore what cultural and behavioural changes are needed to support greater use of online services, self-service options and adoption of a 'digital by default' approach by the Department, with a focus on the following service areas to avoid the review being too broad:

- Financial assessments
- Reviews (especially carer reviews)
- Information, advice and signposting
- Carer assessments

2 Supporting information

2.1 The People Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of the Use of Digital and Technology in ASCH. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 The review considered the current take-up of digital and self-service options within the above service areas; the behavioural and cultural changes required to support greater take-up of digital and self-service options; and how those changes could be supported.

2.3 The review concluded it is supportive of the Department's ambitions to be 'digital by default' and the balanced approach the Department is taking to this planned direction of travel. The Review found there are a number of positive projects and programmes already underway -

including one on behavioural change that is specifically working to address the lines of enquiry for this review - and recommends the People Scrutiny Committee is kept up to date on progress and outcomes of those. The review has identified areas where activity, both internally in ASCH and with partners, could support greater use of the platforms and innovations being put in place that it is recommended that the Department now explore in greater detail.

2.4 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 7 February 2023. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on this Cabinet meeting agenda (item 8b) there is a separate report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

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