

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 1 2022

Date: 21 February 2022

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: The Committee has requested a briefing note on Strategic Risk SR09A (Meeting the needs of older age people and working age adults)

Briefing Note - Adult Social Care Front Door

The Adult Social Care Transformation and Improvement Programme includes a project focused on improving the Adult Social Care Front Door. This project aims to reduce Adult Social Care demand and improve the Adult Social Care experience for our clients/customers.

Through analysis of incoming cases to the Locality Teams, it was determined that around 40% of contact is Trusted Assessor* or Occupational Therapy related. On this basis, and with the knowledge that there had been a waiting list for these cases across all Localities for a period of time, the first pilot within the Front Door focuses on this area. This pilot commenced on 31 August 2021 with Social Care Officers from one Locality Team moving into the pilot team, which is overseen by Occupational Therapists. Further Locality Teams joined the pilot on 8 November 2021 and 4 January 2022.

All new cases that are referred into the Locality Teams that require minor adaptations (i.e., simple equipment) or reablement (a six-week period of functionally assessing clients in their own homes to enable them to remain independent for longer) are referred into the pilot team where Social Care Officers undertake an immediate assessment. Additional Occupational Therapists have also been recruited on a temporary basis to focus on clearing the waiting lists.

Feedback from the staff involved in the pilot has been positive, and there has been an impact on the Locality Teams as the demand for Duty has reduced due to the number of cases being handled by the pilot. The pilot team have also reported an increase in opportunities for shared learning and cross-team working.

At the start of the Trusted Assessor pilot (Trusted Assessors carry out assessments for people who require small pieces of equipment/aids/adaptations)

there were 560 cases on the waiting list. This waiting list has now reduced to 140 cases, with one Locality Team waiting list being cleared entirely. The remaining cases continue to be progressed and it is hoped that they will be completed by the end of March 2022.

Since the start of the pilot, the Social Care Officers have processed 270 new cases. All of these cases have been allocated and assessed within the week the referral was received, and none have required care packages. As these cases have been dealt with immediately it has created opportunities for prevention and enablement, therefore reducing the need for long-term care and avoiding the costs associated with this.

The analysis also indicated that triage could be improved for around 30% of contact through improving the knowledge and skills of staff, and through improved collaboration between Customer and Business Support and Adult Social Care teams.

The second pilot, which commenced on 11 October 2021, therefore consists of Customer and Business Support and Adult Social Care staff co-locating within Gun Wharf to encourage more joint working and peer support between the two services when handling Front Door enquiries.

The feedback from staff involved in this pilot is positive, with reported improvements to collaboration and knowledge sharing between the two teams, and customers therefore receiving more timely information, including where their needs may be better met by services outside of the council. On average, the pilot team have signposted 25 customers per week to find appropriate support outside of the council and have collaborated on an additional average of 13 cases per week.

A working group has also been established to upskill staff at the Front Door, using analysis around the common reasons for contact. This work includes the creation of decision trees to support the triage of enquiries, and implementing additional training for staff, for example to improve Customer and Business Support Officers' understanding of Adult Social Care eligibility thresholds and types of equipment.

In addition to the above, the Front Door project also includes designing and implementing improvements to the Adult Social Care web pages on www.medway.gov.uk and the introduction of e-forms and automated tools to introduce additional means through which customers can find information and/or contact Adult Social Care.

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