



Adults and Safeguarding Committee

6 March 2017

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| Title | Development of online technology for adult social care |
| Report of | Commissioning Director, Adults and Health |
| Wards | All |
| Status | Public |
| Urgent | No |
| Key | No |
| Enclosures | N/A |
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Summary

The Adults and Safeguarding Commissioning Plan has included a commitment to increase the use of new support and enabling technologies: to provide information, enable people to find and arrange support, and to help people to remain independent. The aim is that services should be accessible, intuitive and efficient and that innovative technologies should be utilised where appropriate.

To meet this commitment, the Council is: refreshing and improving its social care website information; developing a database of voluntary and community organisations and services; and mobilising new telecare services for Barnet residents. In addition, an opportunity immediately available to the Council in support of the Committee's commissioning plan is the implementation of ChooseCare as a tool to support the management of direct payments and for residents not eligible for support under the Care Act 2014's eligibility criteria to plan and arrange support. ChooseCare is a website where individuals can plan, book and keep track of their social care services and products. Following a trial that has seen positive service user feedback, it is proposed to adopt ChooseCare as the default direct payment management option for the Council's adult social service users, though a choice of alternative means to manage a personal budget will still be available.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee notes the report setting out the development of online technology for adult social care in Barnet.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Adults and Safeguarding Commissioning Plan has included a commitment to increase the use of new support and enabling technologies: to provide information, enable people to find and arrange support, and to help people to remain independent. The aim is that services should be accessible, intuitive and efficient and that innovative technologies should be utilised where appropriate.
- 1.2 To meet this commitment, the Council has undertaken a range of projects and delivered service improvements across different elements of social care. This has included refreshing and improving the social care website information – developing the structure and content with local residents to ensure it meets their needs. A new database of voluntary and community organisations and services has been developed to improve awareness, understanding and uptake of services in the community. Following a successful procurement exercise a new telecare service for Barnet residents is being mobilised to launch in April 2017 and significantly increase the uptake of assistive technology in the community and in supported living and residential settings. Work has also been on-going to consider how an online care arrangement and direct payment management service could add value to direct payment recipients and individuals in the borough privately arranging their own care.
- 1.3 Around a third of individuals receiving a social care service in their own homes from the Council elect to manage this via a direct payment. The Council has been exploring alternative approaches to enable people to manage their direct payments as easily as possible; broaden the choice of services available and make the monitoring process more effective and efficient. Authorities across the country are looking at similar systems and the market for online care management systems is now growing. There are a number of systems in various stages of development with no single market leader having yet emerged.
- 1.4 As such the Council has been working with Capita through the CSG contract to co-develop and pilot a new way to manage Direct Payments through a new website called 'ChooseCare'. This fits with the Committee's own commissioning plans and approach, as well as with the wider direction of the local government sector.
- 1.5 ChooseCare is a website where individuals can plan, book and keep track of their social care services and products. The ChooseCare website allows direct payment recipients and people who organise their own care to:

- Search for, choose and pay for care using Council Direct Payments or their own funds.
 - View a calendar of planned care visits.
 - Connect to local support groups.
 - For Council direct payment users, automate the process of providing evidence of appropriate spend to the Council
- 1.6 A pilot commenced in late 2016 with fifteen new direct payment recipients who were supported to manage their direct payments via ChooseCare. To date the response from the pilot users has been positive and the pilot is being used to make service improvements in line with user feedback. These individuals are continuing to use ChooseCare.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Barnet's vision for 2020, as set out in the Corporate Plan, is to provide local services that are integrated, intuitive and efficient, making life simpler for our residents and customers. New technologies are an important part of this.
- 2.2 The Council's vision for customer services in 2020, as set out in the Customer Access Strategy is:
- That the majority of access is via digital means – 'digital by default'.
 - Customer journeys enable efficient and effective resolution at the earliest opportunity.
 - Customers receive a high quality personalised service, including relevant services from partners.
 - Customers are connected to the community, not just Council services.
- 2.3 The Adults and Communities digital vision, as set out in the same strategy, included:
- Use digital means to drive residents away from using telephone as the first form of contact.
 - Review the end to end journey and see what parts of the journey would be enhanced by moving to digital solution.
 - Available to customers on their chosen media – smartphone, tablet, computer.
 - Features like smart webforms will allow for self-assessments.
- 2.4 The introduction of an online tool to support direct payment management supports this vision. Benefits to the council of ChooseCare include:
- Supports independence, choice, flexibility and control by enabling an increase in direct payment take up.

- Provides Barnet with greater transparency of direct payment spend to simplify the audit process and minimise the costs of processing receipts.
 - Improved reporting on any potential direct payment issues and problems.
 - Supportive of anti-fraud measures.
- 2.5 When introduced, ChooseCare will be flexible and can be used to manage part or all of an individual's direct payments. Users will have the option to continue to manage their Direct Payments as they normally do or take an element as cash via ChooseCare.
- 2.6 The Council will ensure that individuals are not excluded from choosing a direct payment because of a lack of digital access. For those who would like to use ChooseCare but do not currently have the means to do so a number of support options will be offered including making use of existing services (such as Age Concern's digital inclusion services), through allowing delegate access and through a trial of issuing thirty tablet devices to direct payment recipients. Those who would like to manage their direct payment offline can continue through the traditional modes of direct payment management. The introduction of ChooseCare is about offering those who receive direct payments more choice about how they access and manage this to suit their needs.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Source a system through a competitive procurement exercise. The Council has worked as a co-production partner in the development of ChooseCare and so is confident that the system will meet the needs of Barnet residents. As such, a competitive procurement exercise is not recommended.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 As well as the implementation of ChooseCare, the current, standard method of managing direct payments for service users will continue to be available. This method involves the service user setting up a dedicated bank account and providing quarterly returns to evidence appropriate spend.
- 4.2 It is proposed that ChooseCare will conduct a brief survey on the Council's behalf with existing direct payment recipients to help inform the final website and implementation approach.
- 4.3 Before any new clients are referred to ChooseCare a number of activities will need to be completed to provide assurance to the Council. These include the development of detailed business process maps; agreeing data flows between the case management system, finance system and ChooseCare along with the development of any required interfaces; ensuring agreements for direct payment recipients are in plain English; ensuring safeguarding policies and procedures are aligned; and finalising information management

documentation including the privacy policy. Direct debit functionality will also be developed to make it easier for direct payment recipients to pay their assessed financial contributions into their ChooseCare account.

- 4.4 Once all necessary assurance and survey work is complete, ChooseCare will become the default direct payment management option for new direct payment recipients, though individuals will continue to be free to choose to manage their budget through other mechanisms. Existing direct payment recipients will be approached in cohorts and be supported to move over to ChooseCare over time but will be able to opt-out if they prefer to continue as they are. The approach will include regular review points to gain feedback from residents and mitigate the risks of change.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Developing better online opportunities supports the Corporate Plan priorities of Transforming Services (Opportunity), specifically:
By 2020 social care services for adults will be remodelled to focus on promoting independence, with a greater emphasis on early intervention.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.3 The implementation of ChooseCare will be resourced through existing capacity. Capita have agreed to contribute towards the cost of implementation to recognise the value of the Council's contribution to the co-development.
- 5.4 On an on-going basis there is no fee to the Council for the use of ChooseCare. There is also no fee to care providers for being listed on ChooseCare. A transaction fee is applied for all care services and products purchased through the site. For voluntary sector organisations, there is no transaction fee where they do not charge the service user.

5.5 Social Value

- 5.5.1 N/A

5.6 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.6.1 Responsibility for Functions, Annex A (as outlined in the council's constitution), states that the Adults & Safeguarding Committee is responsible for those powers, duties and functions of the Council in relation to Adults and Communities, which includes the promotion of the best possible Adult Social Care services.

5.7 Risk Management

- 5.7.1 The co-development of ChooseCare has included a particular focus on information management to ensure that the personal data of direct payment recipients is securely held and appropriately managed. Robust information management documentation has been put in place to this effect.
- 5.7.2 The Council has negotiated break clauses every six months for the first two years of the agreement that provide the ability to revert to the current approach to direct payment management if there are adverse consequences from using the new system.

5.8 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.8.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
 - foster good relations between people from different groups

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.9.1 Fifteen service users have been piloting the system and their feedback has directly influenced the functionality and presentation of the site.

5.10 Insight

N/A

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Updated Commissioning Plan, Adults and Safeguarding Committee, agenda item 7, 7 March 2016
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=698&MId=8364&Ver=4>
- 6.2 Customer Access Strategy, Policy and Resources Committee, agenda item 11, 28 June 2016
<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=692&MId=8728&Ver=4>