



Policy and Resources Committee

8 December 2020

Title	Adult social care customer service model
Report of	Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public [with separate exempt Report and Appendix A: Full Business Case which contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of a particular person or body, in accordance with paragraph 3, Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972]
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	Appendix A [EXEMPT]
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Summary

This report sets out the proposal to implement a new model for customer service delivery for adult social care. The model proposes that the customer care function should adapt to better be able to resolve complex contacts effectively with a multi-disciplinary approach involving both social care and occupational therapy skills, expertise and knowledge. This will enable the service to better resolve queries at the earliest opportunity and improve the experience and outcomes of people needing information, advice or support.

The customer service function in adult social care is currently delivered by Social Care Direct (SCD) as part of the Capita Customer Support Group (CSG) Contract. It is proposed that this element of the contract will cease and the urgent response team in the council will expand to enable it to respond to incoming contact directly.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. That the Policy and Resources Committee approves the business case for a new model of responding to customer contact, as set out in Appendix A of the exempt report.**
- 2. That the Committee authorises the Executive Director of Adults and Health to take all reasonable action to prepare to transfer Social Care Direct services, subject to HR advice, by February 2021 and proceed with implementation of the proposal.**
- 3. That the Committee note the additional information set in paragraph 5.2.1 of the exempt report.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

Background

- 1.1 The national and local context for adult social care is one of increasing demand for services. Effectively managing demand for adult social care whilst providing timely access for those needing care and support is critical to ensuring the council meets the needs of its community within the current financial context for adult social care nationally.
- 1.2 A comprehensive and robust access point to social care, the 'front door', is key to ensuring the most appropriate and effective response to residents is provided - aiming to minimise inefficiency and ensure queries are properly screened, assessed and resolved.
- 1.3 This paper is prompted by a strategic review of what the right model is for managing demand and ensuring a strength based approach from the very first contact in adult social care.
- 1.4 Given the reluctance of people to step forward for support during the early stages of the pandemic, the council is now seeing more demand and we expect to see a continued significant increase over the next six months. This further increases the importance of a highly effective first point of contact to appropriately manage demand.
- 1.5 Currently customer service is provided by Capita as part of the council wide Customer Support Group contract. Social Care Direct (SCD) is the initial response service for adult social care and is delivered by a discrete team based in Barnet. The team do not have social care decision making responsibilities but receive and process enquiries by phone and email and resolve less complex enquires where possible. They also signpost enquiries to other organisations or agencies. Where enquiries require social care expertise and decision making, these are recorded on the Mosaic case management system and forwarded to the relevant team within adult social care.

What is being proposed

- 1.6 It is proposed that the implementation of a multi-disciplinary front door team will provide the best approach to deliver high quality customer service, faster resolution for residents and improved demand management. The multi-disciplinary team will consist of

professionals with the expertise and knowledge to resolve more queries at the first point of contact.

- 1.7 The team will use their professional knowledge to appropriately screen and make decisions on the best outcomes for an enquiry, thus minimising delays to resolution. The model will also provide better quality decision making through robust partnership working with our commissioned providers and professionals within the NHS. A detailed outline of the proposal is set out in the Full Business Case at Appendix A (exempt).

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council's core customer service offer delivered through the Customer Services Group contract performs well and offers good value for money to the council. The nature of contacts coming into adult social care is significantly different, requiring a more developed skillset and experience level than typical customer service roles. Service analysis has identified opportunities to improve the quality and nature of customer service provided at the adult social care front door by changing the delivery model.
- 2.2 The nature of the current model with a predominantly customer care skill set does not provide the necessary level of expertise required to resolve adult social care queries at the earliest opportunity. Enquiries that could be quickly resolved at the initial stage if dealt with by social care professionals are being passed to teams and, depending on urgency, are left waiting for resolution within team caseloads.
- 2.3 Data analysis of contacts to SCD in 2019/20 identified that 22% of the referrals they passed to social care teams were subsequently identified as needing no social work intervention. If these contacts were screened by social care professionals at the initial stage the enquiries would be quickly and appropriately resolved thus reducing the number of cases waiting in team caseloads.
- 2.4 The transactional approach of the current team can be a barrier to ensuring the customer receives the most appropriate response. Scripted conversations are often limited to information gathering and do not accommodate the complex nature of enquiries that have multiple layers of social care and health issues. Introducing a strengths-based conversation at the front door should identify the best resolution and ensure the customer is provided with the most appropriate outcome.
- 2.5 The new model will result in a small cost pressure but should also deliver significant savings both from demand avoidance and from reducing pressures on other social work teams.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The current delivery model could be continued but in the context of providing more effective customer service, heightened by the demands of the pandemic, it is viewed that this option does not present the most beneficial and sustainable solution to meet service and resident needs.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Following agreement by Committee, the overall timetable for the implementation of the proposals is set out below

WORKSTREAMS	MILESTONES	Date
APPROVAL GATEWAYS	Front Door Option Agreed at adult social care leadership team	September 2020
	Proposal agreed at corporate management team	October 2020
	Proposal agreed at Policy and Resources Committee	December 2020
STAFFING, TRAINING & RECRUITMENT	TUPE process begins	December 2020
	Staff consultation and engagement	December 2020 – February 2021
	Capita staff TUPE to LBB	February 2021
	Restructure	February – April 2021
	Staff consultation and engagement	February – April 2021
	Staff recruitment/training	March – April 2021
	New team established	April 2021
PATHWAYS, PROCESS & CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT	Workshops and process mapping	January – March 2021
	Criteria development	January – March 2021
	Processes and Pathways confirmed	March 2021
TECHNOLOGY	Contact centre telephony set up IVR development Hardware in place	February – April 2021 February – April 2021 April 2021
COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION	Member engagement	November 2020 – April 2021
	Staff engagement	December 2020 – April 2021
	User engagement and testing	February 2021
	Internal communication	March 2021
GO LIVE		April 2021

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The implementation of a new multi-disciplinary front door model delivered by the Council supports the delivery of the Adult and Safeguarding Committee priority 'Supporting those with disabilities, older, and vulnerable residents to remain independent and have a good quality of life'.

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

5.2.1 Finance and Value for Money

It is anticipated that the cost of the revised service model will be covered to a significant extent by a reduction in the CSG management fee. However, this reduction will be the subject of negotiation and, due to the proposed change in configuration of the service, is not likely to cover the full cost of the new service. Further information is set out in the exempt report.

5.2.2 Staffing

There are currently 7.4 FTE customer service advisors within SCD along with some shared management capacity. It has been assumed that the employees working within SCD will fall within the scope of TUPE provisions, but this will be confirmed by following due process as we move into implementation.

5.2.3 Any restructure will be carried out in line with the Council's Managing Change policy and Capita's change management policy. The employees and their representatives will be engaged with at the earliest opportunity regarding the proposed changes.

5.2.4 IT

The proposal will include the transfer of appropriate technology and telephony to support call centre functionality for the newly established in-house SCD team as set out in Appendix A (exempt).

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 Council Constitution, Article 7 (Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships) provides that the Policy and Resources Committee is responsible for 'Strategic Partnerships'.

5.4.2 Detailed legal support is being provided to ensure that the council meets its legal obligations, for example in relation to public procurement regulations.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 Risks will be managed through Barnet's Project Management approach. The most significant risks are being managed by the service and leadership team. These are summarised below.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
Changes to functions can create uncertainty, destabilise the organisation and distract from key priorities or cause staff to leave the organisation	Medium	Low	Work closely with HR and Trade Unions Ensure regular communication and engagement with staff Ensure management are available to support change
As functions are realigned to new areas there is a capacity and workload risk as new functions are incorporated	Medium	Low	Planning around capacity and workloads will take place as part of the implementation for the new structure. Sufficient management capacity will be available to support the team.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in decision making in the Council pursuant to the Equality Act 2010. This means the Council and all other organisations acting on its behalf must have due regard to the equality duties when exercising a public function. The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality and good relations into day to day business requiring equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies and the delivery of services and for these to be kept under review.

5.6.2 Section 149 of the Act imposes a duty on 'public authorities' and other bodies when exercising public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

5.7.1 No public consultation is required as service users will receive the same service but these proposals will mean it is delivered in a more efficient and tailored way.

5.8 Insight

5.8.1 The analysis undertaken to date has been based on information provided by Capita, Mosaic and service feedback.

5.9 Corporate Parenting

5.9.1 The changes have no direct impact on looked after children or care leavers.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Review of Capita Contracts

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s50134/Review%20of%20Capita%20Contracts.pdf>