

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
26TH MARCH 2009**

TRANSFORMING SOCIAL CARE – THE FOCUS PROJECT**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update of Phase 1 of the FOCUS project, transforming the way Adult Care Services are accessed and delivered.

Background

2. Consultation responses to the White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say*, confirmed that people want access to support when they need it and they expect it to be available to them quickly, easily and fit into their lives. It is clear that Adult Social Care should make provision for a range of needs with a greater focus on using preventative approaches to promote people's independence and wellbeing.
3. This requires Adult Social Care to fundamentally transform how it engages and delivers what the customer wants. The Department of Community Services in Wiltshire recognises that this transformation represents a journey and that the FOCUS project contributes significantly to putting the customer first.
4. Cabinet received a report on the 22nd April 2008 entitled "Transforming Social Care". In that report, the FOCUS project was referred to in the context of helping the authority to deliver on the wider personalisation (customer focused) agenda.
5. Adult Care is currently implementing a major change programme in the way services are accessed and delivered. The work has involved people who use services and staff over the past 18 months and will transform the way the service operates. The headline changes will mean that:
 - All people will have access to good quality information, advice and assessments whether people pay themselves or need support.
 - People will be able to access support and information irrelevant of eligibility criteria.
 - People will be dealt with by the right person at the right time and supported through the process which will be as free from bureaucracy and 'hands offs' as possible.
6. In June 2008 a report on the FOCUS project and the proposed benefits was considered through a Rapid Scrutiny exercise and the members of the panel supported the Cabinet Members delegated decision proposal to appoint Charteris to

continue to support the FOCUS project on terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Corporate Procurement Unit.

Current Position

7. FOCUS, in phase 1, has concentrated on developing a customer-focussed process and defining the roles required to effectively and efficiently support this.
8. Practitioners had told us that they spend too much of their time on inappropriate tasks. Indeed, activity analysis undertaken in 2007 showed that only 23% of the tasks undertaken across Adult Care add value to the customer, with 73% adding little or no value. FOCUS Phase 1 addresses this with processes and new roles designed for appropriate use of skills and reduced bureaucracy to reverse this trend.
9. Whilst ensuring that customers have support from the right person with the right skills, Proof of Concept has demonstrated that adopting the FOCUS approach has released practitioners from undertaking inappropriate tasks. The majority of customers are able to be fully supported by the Customer Co-ordinator, with reduced input from social workers and occupational therapists and with social work and occupational therapy advice and guidance being given where appropriate. For the minority of customers who have more complex requirements, professionally qualified practitioners have more time to work with these individuals to achieve an appropriate outcome. This has been welcomed by the practitioners within Proof of Concept.
10. Phase 1 of the FOCUS Project is planned to end in October 2009, having re-designed and re-implemented the customer experience from point of contact to fulfilment of need within Adult Care. Its scope includes all administrative activity for managing cases, but excludes qualified practitioner processes that involve professional judgement.
11. Between October 2008 and April 2009, the Proof of Concept team have been working to fully test the FOCUS approach, refining the new roles and developing interfaces with all 'offline' specialists and specialist teams
12. Formal consultation with staff began on 3rd February and finishes 4th May 2009. This is genuine consultation, with staff encouraged to contribute to the content of draft Job Evaluation Questionnaires for the new roles, and proposed geographical options for location. Comments received will inform the Transformation Steering Group's decision making process. We will appoint to new roles in May and June.
13. From May 2009, the Proof of Concept team will become the Implementation Team, supporting the development of procedure manuals and a training plan. They will provide training and support to the wider department through the roll-out phase.

14. Full implementation of the FOCUS process will take place between July and October 2009.

Benefits

15. Implementation will result in benefits realisation of £700k, which is reflected in the allocation of operational budgets for 2009/10.

16. The Customer Reference Group remains involved, recognising the improvement in the customer experience. The group has reiterated the importance of communication, having access to a knowledgeable person skilled to deal with the presenting situation, and timely support. Feedback received includes:

- “Recognise the importance of providing support to self-funders, and the improvement offered by FOCUS in reviewing care packages, liaising with agencies, etc”
- “This new way of working is definitely going to be an improvement”
- “Things have improved, communication is vital and it is important to be able to talk to somebody. It is important for customers to be involved in the development and to check how things progress”

17. Early results from a customer survey also indicate improvement to the customer experience. For example, 57% of respondents to the FOCUS POC survey answered “strongly agree” to “we listened and understood your needs”, this compares to 33% of respondents to the baseline survey. 57% of respondents to the FOCUS POC survey answered “strongly agree” to “we offered you choices, suggesting different kinds of help available”, this compares to 26% of respondents to the baseline survey. Additional comments from the FOCUS survey include:

- “You are doing a wonderful job and am pleased”
- “Extremely pleased with the service and support received”
- “Very pleased with service offered by xx and OT and Medequip. Very grateful”

18. Staff satisfaction has increased, with team members gaining a greater understanding and respect of different roles and a sense of achievement in supporting customers to achieve their outcomes. Some comments from staff:

- “For the first time in a long time I’m been able to do the job that I trained to do”
- “Good to have extra time to spend doing specialist social work assessments”
- “Good to differentiate what our skills are and who is the best person to be doing one specific job”
- “We really feel outcomes have been met in a timely way – which was one of the customer group’s main concerns”

- “Able to be more preventative”
 - “Allows us to use the skills, training and experience we have, freeing up social workers and occupational therapists and ensuring the appropriate person is involved with the customer”
19. ‘Business as usual’ volume testing has ensured through-put is comparable with existing operational teams (taking into account team size and proportionality).
20. Increased performance has been demonstrated within Proof of Concept with respect to timeliness. For example, initial capability data shows the average number of days to complete an assessment or unscheduled review has reduced from 16 days in the current process to 8 days within FOCUS.

Main Considerations

21. The FOCUS project has demonstrated it can realise significant benefits within Adult Care.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

22. There are no direct environmental implications. However, the proposals in this paper are based around giving more people choice and control over the services they receive which along with commissioning different and improved services, will all contribute to sustainability.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

23. The proposals in this paper attempt to improve the access for all customers to support when they need it, and they expect it to be available to them quickly, easily and to fit into their lives.

Risk Assessment

24. The transformation of adult care is essential for the Council, not only for its performance ratings in CAA and for Adult Social care and for budget sustainability, but most importantly for the improvement in the lives of people who will need support and help over the coming years.
25. Project risks will be managed using appropriate project management tools, eg PRINCE2 and considered by the Transformation Steering Group as part of the overall governance of the transformation of social care.

Financial Implications

26. Benefits.

27. 09/10 : £700k (part year)

28. 10/11 : £933k (full year, recurring)

Legal Implications

29. None have been identified as arising directly from this report.

Reason for Proposal

30. To inform the Committee of the progress within FOCUS and to demonstrate that the FOCUS customer focused approach can realise significant benefits.

Proposal

31. To continue with the FOCUS project, with implementation by October 2009.

SUE REDMOND

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: