

Open Report on behalf of Glen Garrod, Executive Director of Adult Care and Community Wellbeing

Report to:	Adults Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 October 2016
Subject:	Lincolnshire Carers Service: Serco and Carers FIRST

Summary:

Over the past five months the new Lincolnshire Carers Service has been delivered by Serco and Carers FIRST. Whilst each Provider has a specific area of the service to deliver there is an aspiration to deliver a seamless service to Carers. This not only improves the customer journey but ensures there is a range of service options available to meet a wide spectrum of needs and circumstances for example; parent carers, Young Adult Carers, Carers of adults with dementia, mental health issues, learning disabilities, those that misuse substances.

Serco Customer Service Centre is the single point for the receipt and management of contacts for individuals contacting the Council. It acts as a co-ordinator for ensuring carers' requests are triaged to reach their appropriate destination. From contacting the Customer Service Centre a carer can receive information & advice (including the universal service available from Carers FIRST), an assessment and support service and/or the Carers Emergency Response service – a scheme that co-ordinates a plan for the person for whom the carer has caring responsibilities should the carer be suddenly taken ill or be involved in an accident.

Carers FIRST was commissioned as the carer service topic specialist. They provide information & advice, a universal support service and a face to face assessment and support service.

Carers FIRST is also the council's strategic partner to facilitate all age carer engagement and assist with data and trend analysis to guide market and service shaping.

Serco's carer's service, which is situated in the Care & Wellbeing Hub, has been operational for 18 months and prior to this was the Lincolnshire County Council's carers team. Carers FIRST joined the Council in June 2016. A workforce from four incumbent providers was subject to TUPE conditions. The focus of the first five months has been to establish the operational foundations, synchronise carer pathways to develop a positive, efficient and effective customer experience based upon a no wrong doors principle.

This report provides the context of the activity and approach to mobilising Carers FIRST contract alongside the existing Serco contract to develop a collaborative Lincolnshire Carers Service.

Children's Services provides the support service for Young Carers and apart from the reference to collaborative working is outside of the scope of the report.

Actions Required:

The Adults Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and comment on this report.

1. Background

The Lincolnshire's Carers' Service is delivered by two providers bringing together the prevention and the assessment and eligibility function.

From April 2015 Serco has provided a telephone carers service as part of the commissioned Lincolnshire County Council customer service centre. Serco provides signposting, information & advice and statutory telephone assessment, plan and review service.

The Care Act 2014 introduced new legal rights for carers for support. The Children and Families Act 2014 also entitles parent carers and young carers to an assessment of their needs. There is a shift to seeing carers as people with their own rights to lead a life with choice and control: achieving emotional and physical wellbeing, access to work, education and social activities.

Carers have a legal entitlement for support that puts carers on the same footing as the people for whom they care.

In 2015 the Council produced the Carers Commissioning Strategy which brought together key themes from the Lincolnshire Joint Carers Strategy 2014-18, legislative requirements, findings from reviews, data analysis and professional and carer feedback. The Commissioning strategy has four leading principles: Early Help and Support; Collaboration; Assurance; Workforce Learning and Development.

Following a period of re-procurement of the remaining face to face assessment and support planning functions, preventative universal service, carers specific information and advice and engagement and strategic informing and planning, Carers FIRST commenced their contract on 1 June 2016.

Since the contract award and TUPE of staff on 1 June 2016 from four previous providers, Carers FIRST have focused on the operational aspects of the service including; recruitment, establishing the support workers in the community and in the acute hospitals, evaluating and developing staff's knowledge and skill base, developing the universal service offer, raising the profile of the service and of carers and building links with social care, Health, the third sector as well as carer groups.

Whilst staff in Serco Customer Service Centre are all office and telephone based those of Carers FIRST are supported with IT to work in communities, homes, hospitals, offices and HMP Lincoln. They are also supported by an administrative hub based in Grantham which also serves as the carers' main point of contact. The development of the carers service into hospitals, working alongside Health and Social Care is a new initiative introduced to Lincolnshire by Carers FIRST.

Effective working relationships continue to be established between Carers FIRST, Serco and other key providers to promote a holistic wrap around responsive service. Carers FIRST work with Children's Services to support the transition of a young carer to young adult carer.

Quality Assurance & Performance

A Quality Assurance and performance programme and framework has been designed and includes:

- Individual Provider Annual Service Review
- Joint monthly practice case audits
- Development and implementation of Quality Practice Standards
- Carers Service annual report
- Adult Care Quality Assurance programme; opportunities for carer engagement and feedback across a range of commissioned and in house services

This is in addition to the individual provider's internal quality assurance activity, contract management by the Commercial Team and Commissioners and service statutory and local performance measures.

Lincolnshire County Council's performance information is supplemented by data held on the Carers FIRST Blue Box. This is a case management as well as employee/employer data system. The system records resource time / cost per carer and reports on demographics and carer outcome trends and themes. This gives Lincolnshire County Council and Carers FIRST data for strategic planning and prioritising or targeting of resources.

A service review of the Serco Carers Service has been completed to evaluate how the commissioned service meets carers' needs effectively and efficiently in terms of practice and process in the context of the requirements of the Care Act and Children and Families Act.

2014-15 saw an increase in the provision of information & advice and reduction in carers who are eligible for a service taking a direct payment. All carers who contact the Customer Service Centre and receive information & advice also have access to the universal preventative support service including "What's On Guides" featuring community support groups and benefits advice. Whilst data for period June – September for referral and assessment volumes is not available at the time of writing some reports are anticipated to be available for the meeting.

A priority area is to ensure that all carers in contact with each individual Provider receive a consistent and appropriate service; both in terms of quality, eligibility decision making and the universal preventative service. To monitor progress and to provide the assurance, monthly case audits have been established. These are undertaken with Serco, Carers FIRST, Commissioners and Associate Lead Professional as a collective group.

Workforce learning & development

A combined workforce learning and development plan has been developed and starts in October 2016. The content has been informed from quality assurance audits, evaluation of staff training records, staff feedback and to meet Lincolnshire County Council Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse policy and procedure requirements.

Raising the profile of carers and the service

The Publicity programme is built on the principles of collaboration in order to reach a wide audience and to emphasise that everyone has a role to play in identifying carers. Examples of events or activity include participation in PREVENT and Safeguarding Boards' Women's Conference, parish and ward publication, GP surgeries, presentations at education establishments.

Carer engagement and feedback is still to be fully established and implemented and is likely to be aligned to the release of the new national Carers Strategy and subsequent review of local Joint Carers Strategy. Local carers have been involved with the service review, recruitment and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment review.

Monitoring delivery and progress

A Governance group consisting of representatives from Commissioning and Commercial service, Serco and Carers FIRST meets to oversee the delivery of programmes to ensure a targeted approach to priorities with a common drive for continuous improvement. This is in addition to the contract monitoring meetings.

An annual 'state of carers in Lincolnshire' report will be produced combining and representing data sources from a range of sources to develop the data within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and inform service development across organisations and the Council.

2. Consultation

n/a

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

3. Background Papers - No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Jane Mason, County Manager Adult Care, who can be contacted on 01522 553811 or jane.mason@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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