

HANDYPERSON SCHEME LEARNING REPORT

To: **Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board**

Date: **30 April 2015**

From: **Claire Bruin, Service Director, Adult Social Care, Cambridgeshire County Council, on behalf of the Handyperson Task & Finish Group**

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to feedback to the Board the learning from the Handyperson Task & Finish Group under Priority 6 of the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Working Together Effectively.

1.2 The group was established initially to consider the Handyperson/Safer Homes schemes and following the report to the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board in April 2013 it was tasked with taking forward work to secure a countywide scheme. [For the purposes of this report the scheme will be referred to as handyperson service.]

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In October 2012 the Board received a report highlighting the value in terms of preventative work carried out by the existing handyperson service that provides small practical jobs around the home for older people. The Board recommended that the Local Health Partnership Network and District Councils Health & Wellbeing Lead Members Forum to establish a “task and finish” group comprising of officers from all the District/City Councils, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to **‘explore possible future funding and procurement options and delivery models to enable this highly successful service to continue’**.

2.2 The group reported back in April 2013 and gained agreement in principle from the CCC and the CCG to contribute towards a countywide handyperson service, subject to a business case. The membership of the Task and Finish Group was reviewed and the focus of the work moved onto developing the business case and preparing for a tendering process to secure the service.

3.0 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND OUTCOMES

3.1 The Cambridgeshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2012-17 contains six priorities for the Health & Wellbeing Board and Network to focus on to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of Cambridgeshire residents. The Strategy makes a commitment to work to improve the health of the poorest fastest.

3.2 The handyman service supports Priority 2: Support older people to be independent, safe and well and Priority 4: Create a safe environment and help build strong communities, wellbeing and mental health.

3.3 The commitment to work together to secure a countywide handyman service supports Priority 6: Working Together Effectively.

4.0 LEARNING FROM WORKING TOGETHER

4.1 Although the financial value of the handyman service is relatively small, working together to secure a countywide service that can benefit all partners has highlighted the challenges that are faced when a number of different organisations collaborate.

4.2 The Task and Finish Group had been working well together in preparing the report for the April 2013 Health and Wellbeing Board meeting and there was a lot of commitment to establishing the countywide handyman service. CCC strengthened its membership of the group and the CCG identified a colleague to join the group.

4.3 The group quickly identified the biggest challenge to the progress of the work which was the identification of funding for the service. The CCG had just started the work to procure older people and community services (OPACS) in a fundamentally different way with voluntary sector spend on preventative or wellbeing services being committed to the procurement process. The Districts, City and County Councils had to identify funding in the context of significant financial challenge.

4.4 Initially, it was thought that the timetable for the CCG procurement would mean that the provider of OPACS would be identified and could be engaged in the work of the group ahead of the start of the procurement process for the handyman service (September 2014). However, as the timetable for the CCG procurement was extended, it became clear that the successful provider would not be known until at least October 2014 and would not have responsibility for the funding until April 2015. This also limited the contribution that the colleague from the CCG could make to the work with the funding decision sitting with the future provider of OPACS. A funding contribution has not yet been secured from the new provider of OPACS, Uniting Care, but discussions are ongoing.

4.5 As the discussions about funding were considered in the District and City Councils, it was clear that the funding could not be confirmed by some partners until the budget was agreed by the Council Members. This meant that the procurement process could not start until after February 2015. The ambition to secure a countywide handyman service from April 2015 was clearly not deliverable and there was a key learning point, that financial cycles will define the timetable if funding has to be agreed through this process. The group are now working to secure the service from October/November 2015.

4.6 Despite the challenge of securing the funding, the Task and Finish Group agreed that work should continue on the assumption that all of the local authorities would identify funding and that the provider of OPACS would

agree to contribute once they had an understanding of their commitments and the value of the handyperson service.

- 4.7 Work undertaken in preparing the April 2013 report was used to develop the business case and specification for the service with care being taken to ensure that there is scope for some differentiation across geographical areas to support any specific requirements of partners. This was an approach that had been requested by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 4.8 CCC offered to provide a lead on the procurement process and development of a partnership agreement to support the joint commissioning of the handyperson service. It has been important to be clear about the procurement process used by CCC because of differing experience within the group. CCC also provided some initial project management support to scope the tasks and timescales to deliver the new service. Although the project management demands of this work have not been that great, it was an additional pressure on the contracts officer from CCC. Ongoing part time project management support could have relieved this pressure.
- 4.9 Members of the group worked together on a survey for older people to inform the service specification and found the feedback very useful in guiding some key decisions including the issue of charging and the range of jobs that people would be interested in being able to access.
- 4.10 The service specification and the “method statements” or questions that potential providers have to answer through the procurement process have been developed by the group and partners will be involved in scoring the responses. An important feature of the service specification is the assessment (including the offer of a safer homes check) to identify if the person would benefit from signposting to other organisations. The approach to developing the service specification has ensured good ownership throughout and this will continue through the bidding and evaluation part of the procurement process. Older people have also been involved in developing two “method statements” that they will score.
- 4.11 Members of the group shared examples of partnership agreements supporting joint commissioning from other local authority areas to inform the work locally and legal staff from each partner have been identified to finalise the agreement.
- 4.12 Initially it was suggested that the share of financial contributions could be based on a needs analysis used for the Home Improvements Agency. However, this was carried out a few years ago and partners agreed to use the same independent agency to undertake a specific piece of work for the handyperson service. The independent nature of this work was important and all local authority partners agreed to accept the results that linked contributions to activity. This did not tie each partner into contributing a specific level of funding but it did help to make it clear how contributing less or more than the allocations would impact on activity in each of the Districts/City areas. This was important because each local authority needed to determine the level of investment that they were able to commit for the term of the contract.

4.13 Summary of learning points

- Do not underestimate the impact of other drivers on partners, but don't let this stop progress.
- Consider the processes that will be required to secure funding and reflect this in a realistic timetable.
- Consider what level of project management support is required and review this during the work.
- When a process operated in one organisation is going to be used ensure that all partners understand all the stages of that process.
- Make good use of materials from other local authority areas.
- Involve all partners in the design of all aspects of the work e.g. survey, service specification, "method statements", partnership agreement, scoring of bids.
- Involve people who are using or may use the service to inform what the service will deliver and how it will operate in the future.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

For Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider and comment on the learning from the work on the handyperson service.

Source Documents	Location
None	