

## Adult Demand Management: Occupational Therapy and Reablement Service Provision for Community Referrals

### **Evidence based equality analysis**

*Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:*

### **Programme Overview**

The Adults Demand Management Programme is a review of Occupational Therapy (OT) and Reablement Services in Adult Social Care (ASC). The areas were identified as having significant potential to reduce demand for packages of care. The programme started in November 2022 and is now considering a set of proposed changes to the in-scope services.

Occupational Therapy and Reablement were identified as the key areas where the programme should focus due to significant opportunities associated with:

- Delivering OT and Reablement (particularly community reablement) at greater scale to more people
- Increasing the level of integration between OT and reablement (therapy led)
- Embedding these services into the core ASC assessment and care planning pathway ('OT / Reablement first' approaches within range of teams)
- Reviewing / improving processes and ensuring effective ICT systems are in place
- Identifying quick wins to support short term tactical improvements

The primary benefits associated with the programme concern reducing or delaying the number of people entering long-term care (in particular Care at Home / Domiciliary care), as well as a reduction in the size and cost of care packages required on an ongoing basis.

The changes proposed will deliver a modern and effective service that is focused on prevention and the promotion of independence, against the significant challenges of growing demand, increasing complexity of cases, and rising costs.

### ***In-Scope Services***

The Council's Reablement and Occupational Therapy Services deliver direct support to people with potential to increase or extend their independence, and this in turn reduces the demand for costly care packages.

The purpose of the **Reablement service** is to provide short-term support to adults aged 18+, often following a period of illness or a stay in hospital, which enables and encourages individuals to retain or regain key skills and build confidence in tasks that they wish to undertake. The focus is on supporting and encouraging individuals to work towards agreed goals and outcomes with the aim of maintaining independence within their own homes. Support is provided to adults following discharge from hospital as well as individuals that have entered adult social care through community routes.

The Reablement service also provides longer-term maintenance support for individuals that have reached their optimal level of reablement but require ongoing support. Maintenance support is provided until an assessment by a social care professional is completed and a package of care is found. In addition CWaC is the nominated service of last resort (SOLR) for care provision for adults requiring support when another care provider cannot be identified to deliver the on-going care required.

The **Occupational Therapy** service assesses individuals and sources the provision of equipment and adaptations to individuals' homes, enabling them to continue to live independently, as well as providing advice, guidance and training to people drawing on support, wider social care teams and partners. Referrals are broadly split into straightforward equipment provision and complex minor / major adaptations. The service has traditionally focused on assessments for people with disabilities and long-term needs, however in recent years the approach has developed to allow for more of a preventative approach, providing support and interventions at an earlier stage that reduce the need for traditional package of care. The service is based within Adult Social Care but also provides OT services for Children, with all referrals and case details stored in the adults Liquid Logic system.

In addition, the programme has also looked at any other ASC services with links to Reablement and Occupational Therapy, as well as teams featuring OT staff in the structure.

## ***Recommendations Summary***

The programme has considered current working practice and performance and consulted with other local authorities before undertaking a series of design workshops between June and October 23.

The key recommendations for the programme include:

- Introduction of a redesigned Therapy-Led Reablement service, with a central goal of promoting the independence of people referred, moving away from providing care at home maintenance packages. Will result in improved effectiveness across services (reduced waiting lists, timely assessments, reduced unit cost, increased contact time and reduced downtime) – Proposal is a significant re-organisation of ASC services, with OT and reablement positioned at the front of the ASC pathway
- New Promoting Independence function within Reablement, comprised of OT's and OTA's – delivering OT input upfront, fast-paced interventions through equipment and adaptations. Close working with Reablement workers and Community Access Team (Front door).
- Redesigned Community Reablement Service delivering short-term support to help regain skills and confidence. Will support individuals following an OT intervention, provide in-reach to external care at home providers to prevent increases in package sizes, and work with partners to establish a reablement ethos. Approach supported through introduction of a new Rostering system.
- Reablement will continue to offer service of last resort, but stop providing maintenance support, with any long-term support provided by external providers.
- Improve the digital offering to our residents, including:
  - the introduction of the AskSARA tool which will give residents the option of completing a short self-assessment and gives access to a national marketplace of equipment providers.
  - Improve the ASC self-assessment forms to make them easier to complete, promote the OT First approach, and ensure that residents are fully informed and able to access a range of options.

- Refresh the ASC information on the Councils website, ensuring guidance and information is clear and concise.
- Train ASC staff as Trusted Assessors for low level equipment, allowing them to provide a range of support options without the need for assessment by an OT.
- Introduce building-based OT services available by appointment alongside other ASC initiatives, giving residents the option of meeting with an OT for an assessment and the opportunity to try equipment that would help them maintain their independence.
- Redesign the Community OT teams into specialist functions focusing on Moving and Handling, Complex Housing, Childrens OT.
- Introduce support roles across the redesigned teams that will free up professionals to focus on the assessment and provision of support / care, reducing waiting lists and increasing capacity.

The redesigned services should see the following improvements:

- Earlier engagement with the service, and access to appropriate support at the right time, should reduce or delay longer term need for care.
- A focus on up-front self-assessment, easier access to equipment and short-term interventions should see an increase in throughput of customers from the Community.
- The changes to the Community Reablement Service will improve effectiveness and include the adoption of tactical changes that have been piloted over the last 12 months to increase capacity in the service, reduce downtime and ensure that people requiring ongoing care are able to move to an external provider in a timely manner.
- Reablement team capacity will be freed up significantly by no longer supporting long-term maintenance packages.
- The effective coordination of reablement staff, supported by a new rostering system, will foster efficiencies in planning and service delivery, reduced downtime, and increased contact time.

- Developing strong relationships with community organisations will increase opportunities for individuals to access different types of support, social as well as health. Again this promotes independence and confidence of individuals, and again minimises demand on care services and therefore ongoing cost to the Council.
- The new digital tools will offer increased choice to residents and will be in addition to the current options available when contacting the organisation.

Review of service / customer feedback forms shows a high level of satisfaction with the current Reablement service. There may be general concern about change from some individuals that are in receipt of longer-term maintenance support - These concerns will be considered and mitigated as far as possible in the implementation plan.

This equality analysis has been completed to ensure that the changes being implemented as a result of the review do not have a negative impact on the target groups / areas detailed below.

The recommended changes align to the following priorities of the Council:

- **Thriving Residents: Enable more adults to live longer, healthier, and happier lives:** People will feel supported, listened to and valued. We will build on strength and aspirations as well as recognising and supporting needs. People will tell their story once to local services and be supported to live at home for as long as possible. There will be support to access local communities and residents will feel supported to make a contribution.
- **Thriving Residents: Vulnerable adults feel safe and protected.** Awareness of the services and support available will be increased in the community, and access points sign posted with guidance easily available. All ASC workers will receive training in the therapy-led approach, and the culture of the service will promote timely access to the services and therefore increase residents' opportunity to maintain their independence as long as possible.
- **Thriving Communities: Aiming to tackle the climate emergency:** Through fleet management and efficient journey planning.
- **Our resources are well managed and reflect the priorities of our residents: An efficient and empowering council:** Improved access to management information.

**Lead officer:** Charlotte Walton

**Stakeholders:** CW&C ASC staff, Individuals drawing on support, their carers and families, CW&C Members, partners and community organisations, External Care Providers, suppliers / partners.

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

Medium impact –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Target group / area</b>			
<b>Race and ethnicity</b> (Including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.)	The redesigned service should support people regardless of these protected characteristics, as required by the Equality Act 2010. Translation services are available and incorporated into care package arrangements for Individuals that require the support.	The new service will improve the quality and availability of data on the characteristics of people accessing support, enabling the identification of opportunities to improve the experiences of Individuals possessing protected characteristics.	
<b>Disability</b> (As defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a	Access to physical sites to trial equipment may be offered. Consideration of physical access	The recommendations should see a positive impact on individuals receiving OT and/or	Medium Impact – A small cohort of existing Individuals will require transferring from

<p>substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>	<p>requirements will be made as for all council buildings when there is public access.</p>	<p>Reablement support. The service will focus on an individual's strengths and needs, helping them work towards goals that are meaningful and will contribute to improved outcomes, particularly a reduction in care and an increase in independence. Where an individual has longer term needs, the service will recognise this and is designed to support these customers in a different focussed way.</p> <p>The new service will improve the quality and availability of data on the characteristics of people accessing support, complying with data protection regulations. This will enable the identification of opportunities to improve the experiences of people possessing protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Reablement maintenance to an external care provider. This is already standard practice but is often delayed due to inefficiencies in the process which results in maintenance being prolonged and should be improved in the new model. Individuals will be supported through the transfer via existing processes.</p>
<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<p>The recommendations have a neutral impact, the redesigned service will support people regardless</p>		

	of protected characteristics, as required by the Equality Act 2010.		
<b>Gender identity</b> (gender reassignment)	The change has a neutral impact and will assist people regardless of protected characteristics, as required by the Equality Act 2010. All social care staff are provided with practice guidance and a range of training for trans awareness.		
<b>Religion and belief</b>	The change has a neutral impact and will assist people regardless of protected characteristics, as required by the Equality Act 2010.		
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual)	The change has a neutral impact and will assist people regardless of protected characteristics, as required by the Equality Act 2010. All social care staff are provided with practice guidance and a range of training for staff on sexual orientation.		



<p><b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults 25 – 50, younger older people 51 – 75/80; older people 81+. Age bands are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs</p>	<p>Adults and children will continue to be able to access support for occupational therapy. Reablement services will continue to be offered to adults aged 18+.</p>	<p>The changes to the Community OT Teams will see staff specialising in Childrens OT – this should offer more consistency and wider changes to the team structure should allow for shorter waiting times.</p>	
<p><b>Carers</b></p>	<p>The changes should increase the capacity of Social Workers in the wider service, allowing more time to complete Carers assessments.</p>	<p>Carers will be supported through intervention of Reablement and Occupational Therapy as both services work with formal and informal carers as part of service delivery</p>	
<p><b>Rural communities</b></p>		<p>The proposed service will improve existing / introduce new digital tools and self-assessment forms available to all residents.</p> <p>The introduction of building based services across the borough should allow the service to reach into different localities across the borough.</p> <p>The programme will link in with the Commissioning team to ensure that the new care at home recommission considers</p>	<p><b>Medium Impact</b> Poor transport links to hubs may make it difficult for some rural based Individuals to access physical locations in order to trial equipment. This may be partially overcome through OT visits to the community and the implementation of a web-based assessment which is to be accessible to everyone.</p> <p>In addition transport links for rural communities are improving through</p>

		coverage across the entirety of the borough, including rural communities.	initiatives such as iTravel and Dial a Ride.
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	Consideration is always given to individual's needs during the development of personal support plans	<p>The reach of the service will increase with demonstrations available in different physical locations across the area.</p> <p>The new service will improve the quality and availability of data on the characteristics of people accessing support, complying with data protection regulations. This will enable the identification of opportunities to improve the experiences of Individuals possessing protected characteristics.</p>	<b>Medium Impact:</b> Deprivation may mean that some Individuals are unable to access the self-assessment element of the new service as they do not have the appropriate technology. However individuals will still be able to access services via the phone, and Reablement and OT services will continue to support all referred individuals across the borough with home visits and assessments where required.
<b>Human rights</b>	<p>There will be no change from the current model in terms of human rights as service will continue to operate under the relevant legislation and local policies.</p> <p>All staff will be provided with practice guidance on key legal duties.</p>		

<p><b>Health and wellbeing</b> (consider both the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, as well as the possible impacts on lifestyles and any effect on health and care services)</p>		<p>The service will strive to identify further ongoing opportunities and networks of support in the wider community in order to link in Individuals to available groups and information in order to promote independence</p>	
<p><b>Procurement/partnership</b> (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)</p>	<p>Services are already provided by a mixture of in-house and external providers. Under the new model ongoing maintenance will be provided primarily by the external market based on a defined specification. The tendered specification will require compliance with the Council's equality and diversity policies. The selection questionnaire to take up a contract covers whether an organisation has an Equality and Diversity Policy and requests details of its contents. whether the organisations monitor employee and applicant numbers by protected characteristics, and asks</p>	<p>Improved relations and understanding of responsibilities between the service and care companies, mean that Reablement will be able to offer a more definite idea of future care arrangements to Individuals, giving clear direction and removing worries for Individuals, while also allowing better planning re future capacity in the Reablement service itself, improving the flow of people through the service.</p>	

	organisations to disclose any findings of unlawful discrimination. (See the full set of questions in the evidence section).		
--	---	--	--

**Evidence:**

Social care services have seen increasing demand, both in terms of the volume of people needing support and the complexity of the type of support needed. These pressures have seen the amount of money that the council spends on care packages increasing year on year, with the situation further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The information below provides an indicative list of the key activities undertaken in baselining and then developing the proposed model for future service provision:

- Process mapping with staff to understand the current operating model.
- Interviews with a range of staff in a variety of roles to gain an in-depth understanding of responsibilities and delivery.
- Analysis of the available management information including referral data, client lists, staff caseloads, closure reports
- Analysis of team structures, job descriptions, service / team budgets, unit cost information where available
- Customer feedback forms
- Conversations with several other LAs operating or commissioning similar services to identify best practice.
- Conversations with a range of staff in the service to understand the relationship with external Provider Services.
- Analysis of spend / commissioning of external provision.
- Review of previous West Cheshire Offer review and recommendations, and an analysis of how well these were implemented and achieved successful outcomes.
- Set up of a focussed Design-Phase group to consider all the information gathered, the needs of the service, the opinions of the wider ASC service, to pull together a new model for CW&C OT and Reablement delivery and to encourage an OT first, or therapy-led approach across the whole of the service.
- Discussions with external suppliers for a self-assessment tool

- Soft market testing exercise with external providers for a new rostering system.

The review of the in-house service found that:

- The capacity / utilisation of Reablement staff has been affected by:
  - Inefficient rostering due to system issues
  - High staff vacancies
  - Significant maintenance demand
- Reablement has focused on providing long-term, ongoing maintenance support - effectively “blocking” the service and limiting its effectiveness. Maintenance is prolonged by a lack of timely access to Social Work / OT assessments and further prolonged by delays in sourcing packages of care.
- The current rostering system is not fit for purpose and staff are currently planning ‘runs’ manually as this is proving more efficient on the ground, although is extremely labour intensive.
- There are limited links with the wider community and third sector. Where links do exist, it is often not joined-up.
- There is a relatively small number of OT staff covering multiple complex functions and roles across Adults and Children’s OT services.
- OT process full of ‘waiting periods’, long term cases can be open for months / years.
- OT staff feel they lack the resource and capacity to carry out their roles effectively – waiting lists are a source of anxiety.
- Frustrations around contracts i.e. availability of equipment, specialist equipment, delays with HIA, lack of access to TEC
- OT demand at front door felt to be increasing with growing waiting lists - sense that with training and resources OTA’s could deliver more at the front door.

The recommendations should allow for the introduction of a modern and effective service, able to meet the needs of a wider cohort of individuals, allowing for increased choice, reduced waiting times, and support that is tailored to an individual's strengths. The proposed digital solutions will meet accessible standards and be promoted widely across the Council website(s). Staff and partners will also be made fully aware of the tools and encouraged to promote it with residents enquiring about support.

**Action plan:**

<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Key activity</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcomes required</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Review date</b>
<p>Ensure that all staff in affected teams are suitably trained, as well as being aware of community opportunities that may support people, as well as having an understanding of wider Council policies as required for their roles.</p>	<p>Training needs analysis and subsequent training of staff – including care providers and partners.</p> <p>Staff to undergo training and development plan and be signposted to best practice guidance and available iLearn modules (including Equality and Diversity)</p> <p>There will be an emphasis on culture change during delivery and new approaches to</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Evidence that all staff within the new service feel that they have been given appropriate levels of training and support and are confident in supporting reablement and OT cases.</p>	<p>Nadia van Der Wath</p>	<p>April 2024 – prior to new model go-live</p>

	<p>training will be considered to ensure the therapy-led model is successfully embedded.</p> <p>Identify and commissioning single handed care equipment which will support the model and train Occupational Therapy and trusted assessors in its use</p>				
Development of robust performance monitoring tools and reports.	Creation of service performance reports and dashboard, including improved availability of equality data.	High	Will allow service to monitor performance, easily identifying and addressing areas of concern, including in areas related to equality and diversity.	Neil Jackson – Programme Manager – Change and Technology Team	April 2024
Develop a communications plan to support the roll out of the new model and digital tools	Communications plan to include internal and external approaches to ensure that residents, staff and partners are aware of the new approaches and aware of the new digital tools.	High	Will ensure that residents within the community are able to access the new service regardless of their route into Adult Social Care.	Neil Jackson – Programme Manager – Change and Technology Team	April 2024

Introduce Customer Satisfaction surveys	Residents that have received support via new model will be asked to provide feedback via a satisfaction survey.	High	Will help the service understand the impact of the new model, and whether residents were able to access and utilise the new digital tools. Regular feedback will allow the service to ensure that the new tools are meeting the needs of residents, making changes where necessary.	Nadia Van Der Wath	April 2024
---	---	------	---	--------------------	------------

<b>Sign off</b>	
Lead officer:	Charlotte Walton
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Nadia Van Der Wath
<b>Moderation and/or Scrutiny</b>	
Date:	Moderation Group 4 January 2024
<b>Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating</b> (high impact – review in one-year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	