

SCDIP Discovery Phase – North East Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group

The solution is an open-source web app that allows for tracking of home carers and allows the user to provide post-visit feedback.

Understanding my care at home

The context

Customer insight work into North East Lincolnshire's Support at Home service found that understanding and having clarity around the day-to-day timing and delivery of scheduled care and service delivery is possibly the most common cause for user dissatisfaction due to lack of visibility of the schedule and differing expectations. The Support at Home contracts are due for recommissioning and as such, the council and CCG believe that there is an opportunity for redesign of the service around the needs of the user by moving away from a time and task delivery to a flexible outcomes based model.

The challenge

The team's (comprised of members from North East Lincolnshire Council and North East Lincolnshire CCG, focus adult social care and a community lead) problem statement was: *"to improve communication between home area providers and individuals and their representatives and commissioners"*. The solution they have designed is an open-source web app that will allow service users and relatives to be updated about the care delivery in real-time before the carer visits (i.e. changes in carer or delays). It enables the provider and relatives of the cared for person to check on what care has been delivered. Finally, it allows the service user to give real-time feedback on the care they have received.

What did the project involve?

The team began the project with a round of user engagement. They identified six key stakeholder groups: service users, service providers, carers, relatives, micro-commissioners and support staff. They used this research to understand service user need and map out a blueprint of the current service to identify system processes, problems and digital processes using agile methodology. They then met with software providers to understand what solution they could develop and designed a paper prototype which was used to help stakeholders have a visual representation of the solution.

Stakeholder engagement and user research

The team used a variety of engagement and user research tools as described below:

- **shadowing carers:** to understand the support at home experience of the cared for person and the provider. It gave the team a better insight into the day to day work life of a care provider and enabled the council to interact better with service users
- **four interviews with providers:** discussing care delivery and the challenges faced in providing a service added to the understanding of the differing models of delivery used
- **stakeholder events:** the team hosted a Support at Home market engagement event and attended an NHS Getting Better Together Event
- **workshops:** the team conducted two workshops, with approximately 30 attendees. The first was held to understand what systems providers require or would consider using going forward. The second workshop was held for providers to look at technological solutions to the problems identified in the blueprint
- **a “Dragon’s Den Day”:** the team held discussions with four IT providers to explore potential software solutions, before exploring other local authority providers and systems.

User research was essential in helping the team understand service user viewpoints. For example, it led to a change in the name of their service from Domiciliary Care to Support at Home as this was preferred by users. They also discovered that people are more IT literate than they had anticipated, despite there being little use of technology in the service currently.

Benefits of the proposed solution

The council has identified the following benefits as having results from the discovery phase (note that most of the benefits at this stage have been non-financial/non-quantifiable):

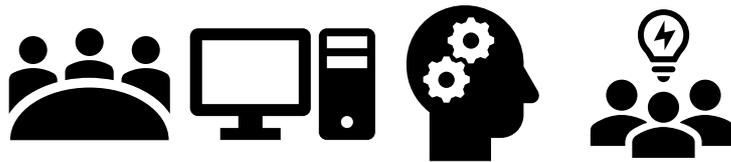
- the issue has been clearly identified with quantifiable metrics, which will support the measurement of outcomes (e.g. improvement in satisfaction and reduction in complaints)
- the team have developed their understanding and skills using of digital tools.

In the implementation phase, the council proposes to achieve the following benefits:

- more flexibility in service delivery to meet needs
- increased capacity within support at home provider systems
- increased control for service users
- increased stability of workforce within home care provider system
- a more personalised approach for service users that leaves them more satisfied
- fewer complaints from service users and their families
- less time spent on mediation/reviewing by micro-commissioners
- improved information sharing – reduced duplication, errors and risk
- greater autonomy for support workers.

Key strengths of the project

1. **Flexible user research:** the team approached user research without a set list of questions. This enabled them to gain a more in depth understanding of the user's viewpoint.
2. **Reduced stress amongst service users:** the solution has the potential to improve the health and wellbeing of its users by reducing stress. Many service users are uncomfortable letting strangers into their house when they have little information about them. Similarly, unknown or unanticipated delays can cause stress for service users.
3. **Collaboration:** The team have worked well together even though they are working across organisations. They were able to build upon collaboration fostered during the Adult Services Review.
4. **Improved communication:** the team have improved their communication and information sharing processes. They will apply these processes and their fresh understanding in the implementation phase and other future projects.
5. **Improved skills:** The team have developed their digital skills. Thanks to the discovery phase of his project, they have begun to use Doodle, online conferencing and Trello.



The potential impact

The team feel that the discovery phase has been successful as they have developed and prototyped a viable solution. During the discovery phase, the council developed a logic model to guide the implementation phase and to help in quantifying the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts which are likely to result from the delivery of this project. From this, a number of key outcomes and measures of impact have been identified as follows:

- reduction in the number of complaints received and improved satisfaction
- an increase in flexible support.

These will be measured using feedback from the solution itself. The prototype will provide the baseline data and live data will be used throughout the implementation phase.

The team would also like to capture feedback from support givers as it vital to continue developing the solution. Currently they have no way of capturing this, but the team plan to develop a measure that can be used with those who engage in the pilot.

Challenges to delivery and lessons learned

- it is important to be clear about the problem statement from the beginning of the project as it drives the activities that are undertaken
- logic models can be useful as they keep focus on the key aspects of the project
- timescales for the discovery phase were tight, and additional time for research and prototyping/testing would have been helpful.

Next steps, including sustainability and spread

Within North East Lincolnshire, the team believe that the app which they have started to develop could be used in a variety of settings, not just Support at Home. Other potential areas that they have identified are community nursing, social work teams and statutory service providers.

The team also hope that the project could be replicated elsewhere. That said, they have identified a number of potential barriers:

- buy in is necessary from a range of regional strategic stakeholders
- there is a significant capital cost associated with providing smartphones to care providers
- the time and capacity needed to replicate the project could put off other local authorities, however this could be mitigated as the wider benefits that the solution will provide will easily outweigh the resource needed.

Going forward, the team anticipate appointing a digital provider in the coming weeks before developing and testing prototypes throughout 2020. They aim to have a workable solution by October 2020.



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Link to relevant documents

North East Lincolnshire Discovery Phase review report:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/North%20East%20Lincolnshire%20Discovery%20Phase%20Review.PDF>