

Social Care Digital Innovation Programme 19-21

Discovery Phase Review Report

January 2020

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“We’ve developed new transferable skills through the workshops and other processes, which we can then translate into other project areas.”

Southwark Council

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Executive summary

“The discovery findings helped with delivering a prototype that meets people’s needs.”

Kirklees Council

Executive Summary

The Local Government Association (LGA) has commissioned RSM Consulting LLP to conduct an evaluation of the 2019-21 Social Care Digital Innovation Programme (SCDIP). This report provides a consolidated programme overview of the Discovery phase, including the benefits and challenges experienced by councils, as well as case studies for all 12 projects. This report is based on findings from each council's Discovery reports and Implementation applications, as well as one-to-one evaluation interviews with project leads conducted in October 2019.

In 2019, 12 councils were selected for the third wave of SCDIP funding. The Discovery phase ran from April to September 2019, with the aim of enabling councils to fully explore the needs of users, the nature of the social care problem and cost benefits, and develop a clear vision for implementation.

All 12 councils stated that they had either met or exceeded their original aims during the Discovery phase. The majority of councils suggested that the same pace of progress would have been unlikely in the absence of SCDIP, and some councils would have not considered including a digital element in their solution.

Some of the potential impacts of the projects include:

- tailored support to service users
- greater independence
- increased workforce satisfaction
- cost savings
- improved information services.

High level benefits experienced by councils during the Discovery phase include:

- working with partner organisations
- engaging with service users
- identifying the target population
- prototyping and testing
- working collaboratively across council teams.

“It’s helped me to push my management to think about innovation and care and digital solutions. It’s helped us look at other projects as well- connecting care and things.” (benefits of the Discovery phase)

Introduction and overview of the 2019-21 SCDIP programme

“External scrutiny was tremendously helpful. It gave us different ways to consider addressing the problem...It was refreshing to see this being carried out from a public sector point of view.”

Derbyshire Council

Summary of previous programmes and previous evaluation learnings

Since 2017 the LGA, in collaboration with NHS Digital, has grant funded 43 projects in digital innovation in social care. These projects have been wide-ranging; from new assistive technology to data analytics to predict demand. In 2017/18, the three focuses of the projects were: data across boundaries, personalised care and support planning, and sharing records. In 2018/19, these focuses were: efficiency and strength based approaches, managing markets and commissioning and sustainable and integrated care and health systems. Two evaluations of the previous programmes were undertaken by Traverse and the Bayswater Institute, and highlighted the following learnings:

Learnings from the 2017/18 period: (<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/25.115%20CHIP%20LIP%20WEB.pdf>)

- inclusion of a Discovery phase prior to implementation, to better research and navigate IG issues
- guidance and monitoring should be more prescriptive
- standardise start dates to enable better monitoring and evaluation of project outcomes
- more peer-to-peer support and contact built into the programme design.

Learnings from the 2018/19 period:

(<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SCDIP%20Discovery%20Phase%20Evaluation%20report%202018.pdf>)

- greater use of structured individual calls and emails to councils, as opposed to just peer learning calls
- more time devoted to the Discovery phase, to iterate findings
- a consistent framework for benefits realisation across all councils.

Introduction and overview of the 2019-21 SCDIP programme

In 2019, 12 councils were selected for the third wave of SCDIP funding. Up to £150,000 of funding for each council was split into two phases: a £30,000 Discovery phase (April to September 2019) and an Implementation phase (December 2019 to December 2020) for those councils who proceed to implementation.

The 2019-21 programme aims to:

- use principles of service design to address social care problems differently
- develop collaborative, innovative and person-led solutions to social care problems
- measure the benefits, share learning and practice to encourage wider action.

Overview of the Discovery phase

A Discovery phase is a key step in the development of any digital project. The purpose of the SCDIP Discovery phase is for councils to research and understand:

- the needs, behaviours and experiences of users
- the nature of the problem and its context
- the cost and user benefits arising from a digital intervention
- a clear vision for implementation and prototyping.

As part of the Discovery phase, councils undertook stakeholder engagement, horizon scanning, prototyping, testing of potential ideas and user research activities. Councils also completed an application for the implementation phase, and a Discovery phase review, with associated report.

SCDIP project summaries

SCDIP project summaries

| Council | |
|--|--|
| <p>Cambridgeshire County Council</p>  | <p>Enhancing the independence of those with learning disabilities in the community during their transition to adult social care.</p> |
| <p>Derbyshire County Council</p>  | <p>Designing and testing a remote assessment process for some adaptations in domestic environments</p> |
| <p>Essex County Council</p>  | <p>Exploring real-time prediction and/or monitoring of falls testing technology used in other fields</p> |
| <p>Kirklees Council</p>  | <p>Providing direct citizen access to real-time information held about care needs and services</p> |
| <p>Leeds City Council</p>  | <p>Digitally integrating care homes into the health and care system to ensure personalised, joined up care</p> |
| <p>London Borough of Camden</p>  | <p>Using technology to provide travel assistance and establish long term independent travel</p> |

SCDIP project summaries

| Council | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| London Borough of Southwark |  | Exploring better management and prevention of falls |
| Newcastle City Council |  | Exploring how community equipment provided at the right time to maximise independence |
| Norfolk County Council |  | A new process for booking and allocating appointments for social workers, care managers and therapists |
| North East Lincolnshire Council |  | Improving home care communications, rostering, tracking of visits, outcomes and costs |
| North Somerset Council |  | Using technology to support identifying and proactively managing hydration in care homes |
| Richmond and Wandsworth Councils |  | Identifying informal carers and developing awareness of the local offer of support and services |

Benefits experienced by SCDIP projects

“I think that everybody that works in public service (if they’re not in a public-facing role) should do some [research], it’s hugely important in understanding the perspective of those you are serving.”

Southwark council

Benefits of engagement and research partnerships

Engagement with service users during research

In **North Somerset**, the project team organised a range of engagement activities in a 78-bed care home to gain user input in their dehydration prevention solution. These activities included 16 interviews, a reminiscence café and a craft session, in which residents created crafts for a hydration trolley, which generated interest in the project.



Hydration trolley and crafts created by care home residents in North Somerset to increase awareness of hydration

Involvement of partner organisations in research

In **Southwark**, the project team involved Southwark Carers and Age UK in their initial research activities. This allowed the team to engage with lower risk individuals, who can often be overlooked in falls prevention research. Involving partner organisations was beneficial as it created buy-in from the third sector for the project (an app preventing older people from falls) and enabled input from a wider range of stakeholders.

Engagement with service users during research

In **Cambridgeshire**, the project team held research sprints in May and June, to gather insights from potential users and engage with professionals. The first five workshops attracted over 50 attendees, and the process ensured that the interests of service users and staff were at the heart of the project's design. For example, the project took into consideration concerns staff had about the accessibility of information on available local resources for adults with learning disabilities.

Benefits of prototyping and managing change

Managing a change in project scope

During the Discovery phase, **Newcastle** identified a number of solutions, including the use of sensors to monitor the use of pieces of equipment. On further investigation, it became apparent that the technology would be quite costly and the data science needed would be quite complex. Instead they decided to look at other ways that equipment use could be monitored, and decided upon a multi-layered platform covering user experience, workflow management, knowledge base, asset management and reporting.

Prototyping and testing

Camden sought to design their solution to cater to a wide group of stakeholders. Through this extensive consultation they found that stakeholders were looking for information on planning required for travel and what happens when things go wrong, rather than the mode of transport itself. From this feedback, they developed three prototypes (two digital and one non-digital), which were then tested and iterated further for a show and tell session with internal and external stakeholders. The prototypes were then tested in focus groups and one-to-one sessions with service user groups and the preferred prototype was selected.

Prototyping and testing

Derbyshire used extensive prototyping with both Occupational Therapists (OTs) and carers to scope out the suitability of using photos and Skype assessments to cut down on the need for travel and repeat assessments for equipment and minor modifications. Based on this prototyping the OTs have received very good feedback from carers and savings of both time and money.



Benefits of baselining and project potential

Potential of project and scalability

In **Kirklees**, the Discovery phase indicated that there were 150 other local authorities using the Firmstep platform for resident accounts (e.g. for self-service management of Council Tax). Through conversations with five of these local authorities, they discovered that there was a shared appetite for the development of a self-service offer for adult social care service users.



Potential of project and scalability

Scaling up **Camden council's** 'My World My Community' app across London boroughs would be relatively straightforward as the app uses Transport for London data, which applies to all boroughs.

Measuring benefits and baselining

Derbyshire council identified that 30% of current referrals came from internal staff. With this baseline data, the council were able to simplify this process by enabling staff to take pictures and videos on smartphones as part of the referral decision process. This has helped to speed up the referral process for both staff and service users.

Identifying the target population

North East Lincolnshire conducted a baseline review which 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.

Benefits of horizon scanning and collaboration

Horizon scanning potential technologies

During **Norfolk's** Discovery Phase, they completed a preliminary procurement process to understand whether there is existing technology that could achieve their solution. This enabled them to identify a number of potential commercial off-the-shelf solutions that could be suitable.

Networking across projects

The project team in **Leeds City Council** linked with Sutton Council, who were taking part in the Social Care Digital Pathfinders Programme, to discuss their findings on the digital red bag scheme. This avoided some duplication of effort, and strengthened research findings.

Working/ sharing across Council teams

Strong collaborative working was required by the **London Boroughs of Richmond and Wandsworth**, as their project spanned two boroughs. This meant that the team were required to develop a partnership style of working to navigate different ways of working and increased numbers of stakeholders.

Working/ sharing across Council teams

The **Cambridgeshire** project team included members from the Cambridgeshire County Council Learning Disability Partnership and Local Government Shared Services. When the team received feedback that materials used at their engagement event were not accessible to people with learning disabilities, they sought advice from the Council's Adult Learning team and attended the Government Digital Service Accessibility Training. As a result, the team now have a strong awareness of accessibility needs for all future projects



Horizon scanning new potential technologies

When exploring a potential solution **Essex Council** looked into other sectors and prototyped smart sock technology, which is normally associated with sports science.

Scalability and replicability

Councils suggested that their projects had the following scalability and replicability:

Scalability

- **Camden My World Community Map:** as the app uses Transport for London data, scaling up the map for use across other London boroughs would be relatively straightforward.
- **North East Lincolnshire Support at Home:** the app could be extended beyond home carers for use with community nursing, social work teams and statutory service providers.
- **North Somerset Hydration Innovation:** following an initial roll-out in the North Somerset area, the app could be rolled out throughout the wider BNSSG area.

Replicability

- **Camden My World Community Map:** the council are adopting a standard video conferencing software so best practice guidance can enable adoption in other localities
- **Kirklees Online Care Record:** as other councils currently use the Firmstep platform for resident accounts, this could be extended for adult social care.
- **Southwark Fall Prevention and Management:** the council is currently working with Lambeth and hoping to replicate the project in south London.

Potential challenges to scalability and replicability noted by councils include:

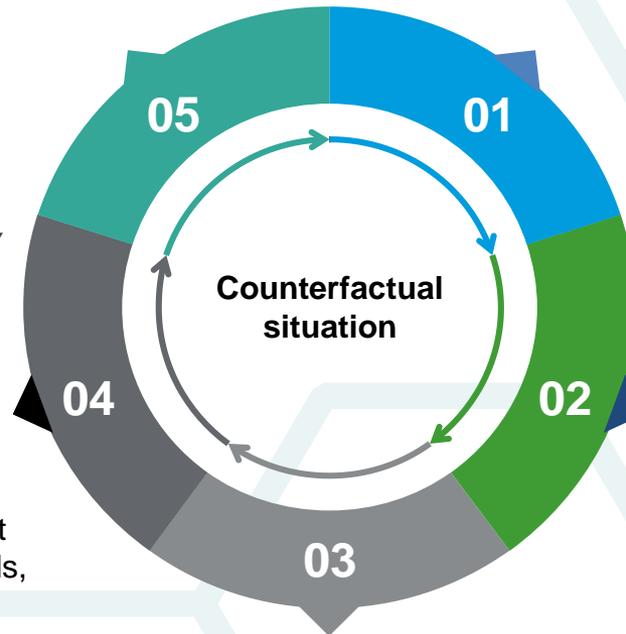
- ensuring buy-in from other councils
- costs
- reluctance of the workforce to adopt digital technology
- digital capacity of other councils to adapt/maintain digital solutions
- ensuring that solutions are tailored appropriately to the local health and social care needs.

Progress in the absence of SCDIP

Councils were asked about potential project development in the absence of their involvement in the SCDIP Discovery phase:

The majority of councils felt that the same pace of progress would have been unlikely without SCDIP, due to limited team capacity, budgetary constraints and other competing priorities: *“you know you have to deliver- otherwise it would have remained as something that was only “nice to do” and aspirational as we wouldn’t have had the time or capacity to do it”.*

Due to competing commitments in adult social care, it would have been unlikely that learnings would have been shared with other teams without SCDIP funding – for example in Leeds, the team were able to share their findings on care homes and felt that this research made a positive contribution to the development of the red bag scheme: *“we were able to give them something they wouldn’t have had”.*



Some councils would not have considered a digital element without SCDIP

Many councils suggested that they would not have conducted as extensive research without SCDIP; *“We’d have pulled people together into a steering group, and got some ideas from that and done a bit of analysis but not proper discovery work. We wouldn’t have went out to carers and service users and staff. We’d have leapt in with loads of assumptions”*

There might have been less structure and milestones without the funding; *“If you give a project a deadline and funding, it will be finished. Otherwise it’d have been an idea that probably would have happened eventually but perhaps would have been overridden by about 100 other things”*

Discovery phase outcomes

All 12 councils stated that they had either met or exceeded their original aims during the Discovery phase. In terms of any changes from their original aims and problem statement, councils noted:

- less budget was spent on hosting stakeholder events than anticipated
- more time was allocated to tendering than was anticipated
- more time was allocated to user research – “We thought we had the answer at the start, when really we didn’t quite have the right answer – it expanded it and gave us more ideas to consider”
- some organised additional activities, such as surveys.

Unintended effects and/or benefits

Councils identified the following as unintended effects of the Discovery phase:

- networking opportunities with other councils;
- greater awareness of the digital literacy of service users – “*most people are more IT literate than we gave them credit*”
- identification of other issues within social care (e.g. limited/inaccessible information for service users)
- cross-team working
- greater consideration of creativity in service design
- skills development (e.g. prototyping, stakeholder engagement).

Challenges experienced by SCDIP projects

Challenges

Across all 12 councils, there were some common challenges experienced during the Discovery phase:

Timescales

- **Time of the year** had an impact on stakeholder engagement. Some councils, such as Leeds, were required to rationalise the number of workshops that could be held due to attendance during the summer holidays.
- Where councils were keen to engage with as many stakeholders as possible, these engagement activities could take **longer than anticipated** (e.g. Camden).
- Using a **third party research organisation** could be challenging in terms of meeting reporting timeframes (Kirklees).

Willingness of clients / partners to engage

- **Certain groups were more challenging to engage** – for example, in Camden, contacting those who were socially isolated was a challenge, while in Southwark, identifying older people who were at a lower risk of falls was more difficult as those who were at the greatest risk were often already known to the council. In addition, in Richmond and Wandsworth, many carers do not define themselves as such, so engaging with this group was a barrier.
- Some councils experienced challenges in **engaging staff to use digital technology** (e.g. Derbyshire).
- Many highlighted that it would be useful to **start dialogue with stakeholders earlier** in the process, to develop a common understanding from the offset and have more time to develop relationships (e.g. Newcastle, Camden).

Challenges

Capacity

- Where there were wider **ongoing council initiatives**, staff could often be working on a range of different projects, reducing their availability for the Discovery phase activities (e.g. in Richmond and Wandsworth, staff were often involved in another project focussed on carers).
- Where councils worked with **voluntary organisations** (e.g. Richmond and Wandsworth worked with Carer Centres which were staffed by small teams/volunteers) the council needed to be mindful of their capacity to engage.

Logic model / getting baseline data

- Many councils highlighted challenges around **collecting quantitative data** (e.g. Cambridgeshire), and correspondingly were required to collect more qualitative data.
- Where councils had a **broad geographical spread**, data gathering could be more complex – e.g. Derbyshire Council encompasses eight districts, each of which has their own ways of data capture.
- Where councils had **broader problem statements** (e.g. North East Lincolnshire, Southwark) this could mean that research took longer to undertake and they were required to sharpen their focus as the Discovery phase went on.

As a result of these challenges, councils identified the following solutions:

- begin data review as soon as possible in the process
- assemble the team as soon as possible
- share challenges at workshops and on calls to problem solve as a group
- conduct as much stakeholder engagement activities in-house as possible to understand the context.

Feedback on the SCDIP programme application approach

“[SCDIP] brings strategic added value. It’s helped me to push my management to think about innovation and care and digital solutions outside of the box and what is out there and what we could be using.”

North Somerset

Feedback on the SCDIP programme approach

Councils were asked about the Discovery phase application process, and if they had experienced any challenges with the process.

The majority of councils **did not report any challenges**; instead describing it as “*remarkably straightforward*” and “*incredibly easy*”. Some noted good levels of feedback on their application from the LGA, as well as helpful pointers from RSM and Snook. Others found the accompanying guidance to be clear, and welcomed the brevity of the application form. This was particularly important as this was the **first experience for many councils** of applying for LGA funding.

The three key challenges of the Discovery phase application process identified by councils were as follows:

- **Word count:** keeping within the word count was a challenge, particularly where councils were keen to include additional information/research findings “*you had to be really frugal with what you’re saying*”.
- **Identifying innovation:** one council found it a challenge to identify from their research if others had undertaken similar work and therefore identify if they were indeed unique and innovative.
- **Repetition of answers:** one council considered that application questions to be slightly repetitive.

Feedback on the SCDIP programme approach

Councils suggested that the following changes could be made to the Discovery Phase process:

Timescale changes

- Certain councils believe that the **first workshop could have been held earlier** on in the process, which would have provided councils with direction at an earlier point: *“We were waiting on that for the next stage and expectations, when we should have probably kicked off ourselves straight away.”*
- However, others thought that more time should be built in between the awarding of funding and the project kick-off to enable councils to go through the process of **recruiting staff**.
- Build in time for councils to **better prepare for calls and workshops**.
- Consider changing **the timing of the evaluation workshop** as some councils were still in the process of engagement: *“We weren't really in the right headspace – it was important and we were glad we went but we didn't properly understand it until later.”*

Other changes

- Consider having a **discretionary travel fund** available to enable those councils travelling further to attend all events without eating into their project budgets.
- Consider organising **more workshops** as opposed to webinars, as some councils considered face-to-face meetings to be more beneficial for sharing ideas and discussion.

Conclusion

“This whole process has empowered us to use our tools and skills to do what we need.”

North Somerset

Conclusions

In 2019, 12 councils were selected for the third wave of SCDIP funding:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cambridgeshire County Council | London Borough of Southwark |
| Derbyshire County Council | Newcastle City Council |
| Essex County Council | Norfolk County Council |
| Kirklees Council | North East Lincolnshire Council |
| Leeds City Council | North Somerset Council |
| London Borough of Camden | Richmond and Wandsworth Councils |

“This whole process has empowered us to use our tools and skills to do what we need.”

The Discovery phase ran from April to September 2019, and enabled councils to scope out the needs of users, the nature of the problem and develop a clear vision for implementation. All 12 councils stated that they had either met or exceeded their original aims during the Discovery phase. The majority of councils felt that the same pace of progress would have been unlikely without SCDIP, due to limited team capacity, budgetary constraints and other competing priorities.

Benefits of the Discovery phase

Councils experienced a range of benefits during the Discovery phase, which included partnership working (both with other council teams and partner organisations), really engaging with service users; and prototyping.

“Putting heavy emphasis on research/hypothesising/prototyping has probably been the greatest part of this process for me. My instincts were completely wrong [at the start].”

Conclusions

Common challenges of the Discovery phase

Across all 12 councils, there were some **common challenges** experienced during the Discovery phase around **timescales, the willingness of partners to engage, team capacity and collecting baseline data**. In order to mitigate these challenges, councils suggested that future projects begin the processes of data review and team-building as soon as possible and use workshops as opportunities to problem solve and conduct as much stakeholder engagement in-house as possible.

Feedback on the SCDIP programme approach

The majority of councils **did not report any challenges or difficulties with the Discovery phase application**. This was a positive aspect, given that this was the first experience for many councils applying for NHS Digital funding.

Councils suggested that changes could be made to the timescales of the Discovery phase process as part of their **feedback on the SCDIP programme approach**. For some councils, this would include building in more time between the awarding of funding and the phase kick-off, to allow for recruitment, and holding the initial workshop slightly later in the process.

Case studies



Case study summaries and full report links

Cambridgeshire County Council

TECHknow is an online resource that allows adults with learning disabilities, or those who care for them, to find out more about the technology that can help them.

See [Cambridgeshire's discovery case study](#).

Camden Council

The My World Community Map provides easy to read and personalised maps. The solution will allow users to feel confident to travel and join new activities along their favourite routes.

See [Camden's discovery case study](#).

Derbyshire County Council

Derbyshire County Council aims to explore the potential for smartphone technology to support rapid assessments for adaptations of client's homes.

See [Derbyshire's discovery case study](#).

Essex County Council

The team plans to utilise 'smart socks', worn during virtual strength and balance classes. The socks collect feedback on the user's balance and gait which is sent to the app and reports data to the user, instructor, service providers and others.

See [Essex's discovery case study](#).

Case study summaries and full report links

Kirklees Council

This project explored providing service users and carers with access to online care accounts, enabling them to complete tasks such as updating adult social care information or downloading care plans.

See [Kirklees' discovery case study](#).

Leeds City Council

The team have considered the development of software accessed through a handheld device which supports care home staff and health partners in handling urgent health issues in the event a resident needs to be transferred to hospital.

See [Leeds' discovery case study](#).

Newcastle City Council

Newcastle City Council's project helps people to maximise their independence by accessing the right equipment at the right time.

See [Newcastle's discovery case study](#).

Norfolk County Council

The project aims to reduce overheads by introducing a digital system for booking appointments for social care practitioners.

See [Norfolk's discovery case study](#).

Case study summaries and full report links

North East Lincolnshire Council

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

See [North East Lincolnshire's discovery case study](#).

North Somerset Council

Preventing dehydration in care homes for older people is a pressing concern, as it can lead to unnecessary hospital admissions and functional decline. The project seeks a way to prevent dehydration, rather than treating the effects.

See [North Somerset's discovery case study](#).

Richmond and Wandsworth Councils

The Richmond and Wandsworth Councils team aims to improve the provision of information, advice and support to carers to improve their wellbeing across these two London Boroughs.

See [Richmond and Wandsworth's discovery case study](#).

Southwark Council

Falls can have a devastating impact on an older person's life, causing physical injury and a loss of confidence and independence. This project aims to improve prevention and management of falls to reduce the impact on older residents and the health and social care system.

See [Southwark's discovery case study](#).



Local Government Association
Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000
Fax 020 7664 3030
Email info@local.gov.uk
www.local.gov.uk

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