

Cheshire East Council - Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme

Cheshire East has contributed its entire saving programme as the learning for this programme.

The gross spend on adult social care for the last three years has been:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
£160 million	£154 million	not available

Cheshire East has delivered savings in order to bring in a balanced budget where there had been an overspend in the preceding years. The reductions above are where the spending has been above the budget (was £10 million overspent). Associated with this, there has been a lack of stability in the leadership of adult social care until recently and the task set has been to ensure a stable budget for the future.

At the outset to the programme, the council commissioned an external consultancy to review their spending and recommend savings. The report that was produced made recommendations on which the council has looked to deliver savings. These include: looking to reduce the costs of high packages of care for those with learning disabilities; seeking to understand why older people were staying longer than average in residential care (admitted earlier and staying longer than average as well as making higher usage of nursing care); considering some generous packages of care for both younger adults and older people in the community and reviewing the higher costs of in-house services run by the council.

The council used one of the Care Funding calculator models to deliver £800,000 of savings, which are expected to rise to £2 million when all the reviews are completed.

Cheshire East has used a pre-paid card facility to assist those who have taken their care funding in the form of a Direct Payment. This has enabled them to track exactly on what the money for care has been spent. They found a significant number of customers were not using all the monies that were made available to them and they have now taken action both to recover the monies that were not used and also to ensure that reviews are undertaken to reset the amount that is necessary to meet eligible needs.

There has been a redesign of the front-of-house approach to social care – with a focus on getting the assessment right for people but also assisting them to use local resources, their own resources and those from their families to contribute to meeting eligible care needs. There has been the development of an 'innovation fund' to encourage community activities to support this approach. There is a common target that has been developed with the Clinical Commissioning Group to address social isolation, the needs of carers and community activities to support adults with learning disabilities. A community organisation can qualify for a £10,000 grant if they can show how they will ensure the service is self-sufficient (in relation to funding) for subsequent years. The programme includes supporting the development of Village Agents. Alongside this approach at the 'front door' is a new assessment tool which looks at the potential value of assistive technology as a universal service to help people who are not eligible for care.

Cheshire East has adopted an 'open-book accounting' approach to fee levels with their residential care providers.

One of the successful programmes which Cheshire East has completed is a review of the transport arrangements for adults with disabilities. The costs of transport are now fully included in the personal budget after other allowances and eligibility criteria are taken into account. Customers who attend day opportunities are expected to make their own arrangements and this is currently working well. This approach has also delivered a saving for the council.

The council has had a strong focus on collecting debts which has reaped a reward in increased income. The council, which reports very good relationships with the Clinical Commissioning Group, also reports that they have taken a robust approach to ensuring that appropriate costs fall on the right party – that has meant an increase in the numbers of Cheshire East residents who are eligible for continuing health care funding.

There will be requirements to deliver modest savings in Adult Social Care over the next few years - £2 million in 2014/15; £2 million in 2015/16 and £4 million in 2016/17. There are positive relationships with health – as shown in the Cheshire West report – where, as a pioneer for integration, there is work to bring Cheshire together for a whole-system delivery of care and health. The Better Care Fund will assist the council in its discussions for the future.

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Extract taken from:

Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme Final Report: Annex:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11779/Adult+Social+Care+Efficiency+Programme+Final+Report+-+Annex+2014/7952391e-a043-4f16-bebd-644780d1eb77>

ASCE programme website: http://www.local.gov.uk/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10180/3371097?_56_INSTANCE_0000_templateId=ARTICLE