

Case Study

Gloucestershire County Council Productivity Expert – learning Disabilities

‘Gloucestershire County Council has used the learning from the LGA Productivity Programme to better understand its current challenges, to consider new opportunities presented and is setting a new course for disability services within the county.’

Christopher Haynes, Lead Commissioner, Learning Disability Services
Gloucestershire.

Background

As part of the LGA’s Productivity Expert Programme Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) received support from Process Matrix to carry out a diagnostic to help challenge existing savings plans and identify potential efficiencies in learning disabilities care.

Like other local authorities Gloucestershire have faced significant financial pressures resulting in a reducing social care budget. At the same time, the authority is pursuing a number of initiatives to improve and deliver excellent quality services and outcomes for people with Learning Disabilities.

Nationally, GCC is in the top quartile in terms of the local population of service users with a learning disability. The number of clients with learning Disabilities within Gloucestershire is continually growing. In 2011/12 there were 80 new clients per annum under the age 25 entering the Learning Disability service for the first time. These consisted of the transition of young adults transferring from Children Services to Adults Services, as well as those who become ordinarily resident in the borough.

This level of new cases into the service has created a gross pressure year on year of up to £5.5m per annum onto the Learning Disability service. In this context, GCC welcomed working with the LGA Productivity Expert to provide an independent view of where it could make efficiencies.

Support Requested

At the start of the programme the Expert aimed to identify an additional 1% (£400,000) in savings in addition to Gloucestershire's projected savings package on learning disabilities of £5million.

The company Process Matrix acted as the Productivity Expert for Gloucestershire, and were requested to provide support to:

- Review the current efficiency savings, targets and planning for learning disability services in Gloucestershire.
- To test the robustness of the forecast, planned efficiencies and to make comment on the risks and issues involved.
- To look at particular barriers to efficiency and give advice on particular courses of action open to the authority to overcome them.
- To provide best practice examples from other authorities as suggestions for potential improvements.

The key deliverables set out at the start were:

- To produce a report and analysis on the current level of scenario planning for the fiscal year 2012/2013 for the learning disability budget of Gloucestershire
- Hold discussions with key partners who are party to the implications of the budget both in terms of planning and knock on consequences (e.g. health)
- To comment on key areas of efficiency barriers and to make recommendations on the best ways to overcome them.

Expert Activity

The approach taken by Process Matrix to complete the diagnostic included:

- Direct face to face meeting with managers to discuss service delivery and future delivery intentions
- Meeting with commissioners to understand GCC's future commissioning intentions
- Data collection using a tailored made model which used information from GCC's Medium Term Financial Strategy and demographic data.
- Meeting with finance personnel to understand the Learning Disability current and future budget strategy
- Using the above information, the development of a financial model to identify potential efficiencies
- Challenge workshop in October 2012 which presented the findings and challenges to GCC. This report summarises the findings and areas that GCC are now implementing.

The Model developed by the Productivity Expert exceeded the £400,000 originally targeted and identified £10.7million of savings. Savings were identified in the following areas:

- Block Contract Provision
- Day care
- Residential and Nursing Provider market
- Home care

Block Contract Provision – GCC's block contract valued at £11.2m was identified as having:

- Up to £1.1m in voids per annum
- Annual care package costs for a current number of individuals in placement is £67.7k per annum
- Average weekly costs of £1,303 per person.

It was found that there is the potential to achieve efficiencies in the region of £4.4m through a new contract. This could be achieved through the renegotiation of the contract and use of Personal Budgets for those more suited to Supported Accommodation.

Day care - GCC still offered internal in-house day centre provision that was not working at maximum capacity and was relatively inflexible to the changing market. GCC offers day care to a wide range of service users, many of whom might benefit from a personal budget to make their own choices about their care and support. The review of in-house provision and the extension of personal budgets found the potential to achieve efficiencies in the region of £1.3m per year.

Shaping the Residential and Nursing Provider market - There were potential efficiencies that could be achieved through better negotiation and commissioning with providers. Process Matrix estimates that this could achieve £4M efficiencies.

Home care - The Expert found that introducing Electronic Call Monitoring (ECM) pilots would enable the service to ensure that payments are only made for delivery of directly provided homecare or community based services. The estimated saving based on their current budget were found to be £1m of a £16.9m budget.

Impact and Outcomes

Working with the expert confirmed to the council that they were required to take a fresh approach to generate efficiencies in learning disabilities, resulting in the following progress so far:

- Starting to renegotiate the councils block contract for care provision (June 2013 onwards). A training course for managers on contract renegotiation skills has taken place to ensure that the service has these skills in house to deliver the renegotiations.
- Developing a framework for outcomes based commissioning.
- Gloucestershire have launched two Electronic Monitoring Pilots to monitor homecare/community service provision and avoid mis-payments.
- Piloting the use of GPS Location Safety Devices-enablement support - an assistive technology that uses location tracking to support residents and reduce costs.
- Day centres have close and modernised to 'drop in centres' that have helped improve the customer journey through a cultural shift to enablement and community base services.

Overall impact

- A move towards a single joined up disability delivery system that promotes independence, inclusion and personal choice for all children and adults with a disability.
- A system based on strategic investments in community capacity and resilience building and provides evidence based funding.
- Shared responsibility with community, family, carers and individuals to deliver a person centred response to people's needs as they progress their own journey through life.
- Produced an all age Ordinary Lives policy which spells out the councils approach
- Greater reliance on peer support and self-help skills by/for people with a disability
- Move from paid carers to volunteer networks of support.

Cost Savings

The expert identified a potential £10.7m saving across the following:

Name of Saving	FULL YEAR EFFECT	Summary
Block Contract Re-provision	£4.4M	Voids and Costs reduction
Day-care Review	£1.3M	External offer via Individual Budget
Shaping the Market (Residential and Homecare)	£5.0M	Effective Brokerage and market competition
Total	£10.7M	

Savings of £3.35m have been already been achieved since 2011/12 as a result of:

- Two Electronic Monitoring Pilots are on track to save £2.5million.
- Modernised Drop In Centre’s have led to £500,000 savings to date.
- Assistive technology GPS pilots have led to £350,000 savings

Further savings estimated at £6.85m will be met through contract renegotiation and improved commissioning practices.

Next Steps

The Productivity Expert programme and project matrix report has provided a clearer picture of how to meet efficiencies and improve outcomes in the learning disability service in the future. The next steps include:

- Develop a single disability pathway. This means developing a unified, joined up, all-age and integrated disability resource. This includes children with a disability and links with SEN reforms.
- To adopt an Ordinary Lives policy which delineates very clearly what part the council will play, what is expected of the service user and what is expected of the family and community.
- Paid employment at the front door. People with a disability may have more barriers but once employed their route to independence is much more assured.
- Enablement (Find, Seek and Divert) will play a higher role in facilitating change than in other areas of people services.
- Outcome focused: In a future integrated service delivery model outcomes will play a more significant role than they do now. Providers will need to demonstrate they are assisting in achieving independence for people with a disability or they will face the consequences through decommissioned contracts.

Current System		Future System	
Find, seek + divert Less than 0.1%	Responsive 68%	Find, seek +divert 25%	Responsive 40%
QA/workforce and monitoring 0.5%	Interventions 31%	QA/workforce and monitoring 5%	Interventions 30%

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