

Home Care Optimisation

Dorset Council

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BACKGROUND

Capacity constraints are commonly known to Local Authorities, and finding a solution to these problems in a systematic way is often easier said than done.

Dorset Council recognised that there are a high number of individuals who are recognised as needing homecare support but unfortunately unable to receive a package due to constraints in capacity.

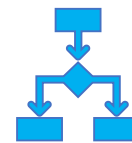
To combat this issue as consistently as possible the Home Care Optimisation programme was designed to combat prioritised key areas such as:

- Need to build capacity resilience for winter pressures and future demand. Dorset has one of the faster growing number of older people in the country
- Need for reduction in cost or transition to Dorset Care Framework rates.
- Improved brokerage process to decrease time to place package of care
- Zonal Optimisation of journeys and care rounds between homecare providers.
- Recent economic challenges make business sustainability tougher
- To reduce the outstanding number of individuals who had not had an annual review of their care needs.

WHAT IS THE INNOVATION

The Home Care Optimisation programme was designed to covered 4 project areas:

Brokerage Process – Identifying and developing improvements of the brokerage process to reduce the time taken to arrange care for a person



Zonal Optimisation – Providers working collectively to make best use of capacity in a whole area



Technology Enabled Care – Allowing some care visits to be done virtually rather than a physical visit to reduce travel time and promote independence



Trusted Practice – Providers completing annual reviews on the Council's behalf through delegation of authority to reduce the outstanding number of overdue annual reviews





ADOPTION JOURNEY

In promoting partnership and collaborative Dorset Council took a partnership approach to delivering this piece of work with the Dorset Care Association (DCA), Partners in Care and home care providers to improve use of Home Care resources. The work is part of the wider reform programme.



As Dorset is a rural area considerations were made through the design of the programme to combat the national challenge of recruitment in rural and aim to reduce travel time and environmental impact through optimisation opportunities.

The collaboration between both Dorset Council, the Dorset Care Association, Partners in Care and the Homecare providers within Dorset allow for open discussions around financial barriers and the adaptation of Dorset Care Framework (DCF) rates.

With a combination of providers moving from non DCF to DCF and the reorganisation of packages to reduce travel time the programme has currently delivered a net benefit of circa 750k.



HOW HAS IT SCALED AND WHAT WERE THE ENABLERS

Through partnership working with the Dorset Care association and online workshop activities to introduce this scope of work there was access to a wide range of external homecare stakeholders who provide services to Dorset's residents.

Homecare Providers were given the option to approach Dorset Council if they were interested in the work being undertaken and a high number of providers approached this work and took a positive collaborative approach in trailing solutions.



Further enablers to the success of the programme include:

- Culture – an open way of working and communication with homecare providers allowed for a positive working culture to be built.
- Leadership capacity – Clear leadership and pace of delivery allowed for clear direction to be showcased and timescales to be completed.
- External support – Positive response and collaborative approach towards external stakeholders allowed for completion of required objectives.

Project Area 1: Brokerage Process

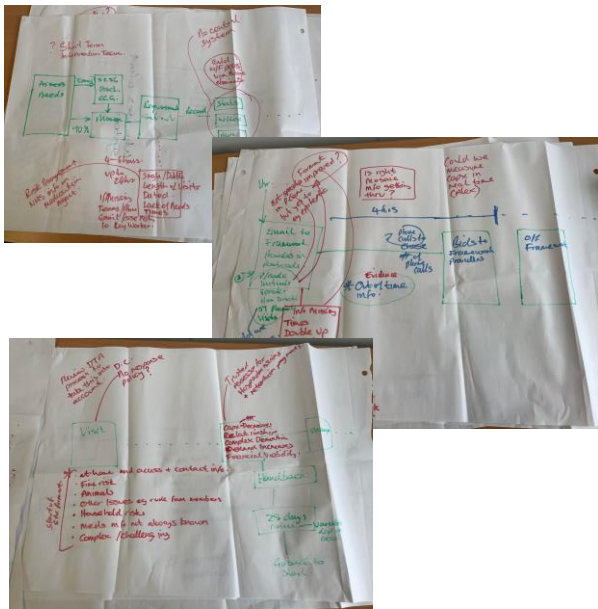


ADOPTION JOURNEY

Analysis of the existing brokerage process allowed for identification of what works well and what could be improved. This was hosted in person via a workshop involving Dorset Council, DCA and providers

The workshop held on 20 February 2023 identified key areas for change. This exercise allowed for an open flow of communication and allowed collaboration between stakeholders and Dorset Council to take place.

Whilst it was extremely beneficial for the programme to have a range of stakeholders in the workshops, it was recognised and reflected of individual difference in opinion.



WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

Reduction in the time to place a package of care

The project achieved a reduction of 86% from an average of 29 days to an average of 4 days.



Reduced information requests

Improved brokerage referral form coproduced with the market and internal stakeholders allowed for improved consistency and completeness of information required by providers to make decisions and ensure care packages started smoothly. Providers also report reduced burden in chasing additional information



Improved reporting

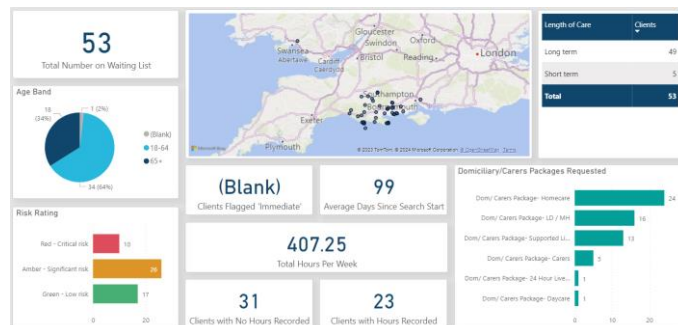
Improved performance reporting through a direct Mosaic feed of data to performance dashboard, reducing administrative burden and improving performance reporting.



KEY CHALLENGES & LEARNING

Areas for improvement included:

- Better information at the front end
- Elimination of separate spreadsheets
- Increasing time before seeking support off framework and reduction of unnecessary process steps.
- By using a direct Mosaic feed, we get better data consistency and enable improved performance reporting.



Project Area 2: Zonal Optimisation

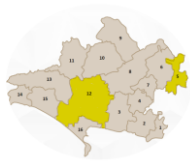


ADOPTION JOURNEY

Analysis of existing packages of care currently being provided by Dorset Care Framework providers needed partnership, openness and trust between providers and Dorset Council. This resulted in changes in how packages are delivered, including package swaps and time changes.

Zonal Optimisation was conducted in a variety of areas in Dorset using a GIS map which allows for identification of

- Unmet demand
- Waiting list demand
- Met demand through reablement or off framework providers.



KEY CHALLENGES & LEARNING

Areas for learning from the Zonal Optimisation:

- GDPR Policies for enabling sharing to stakeholders to promote further Optimisation
- Home care providers work collaboratively to provide solutions to optimise homecare capacity.
- Ability to transition into BAU activities



WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

Care and Support package optimisation

This resulted in changes in how packages are delivered, including package swaps and time changes.

Capacity increase

In addition, this has freed up capacity to allow support for those who otherwise remained on the waiting list and has an environmental benefit of reducing carbon admissions.

Waiting List elimination

Waiting list demand eliminated in zones 5 & 12 allowing individuals waiting for a package of care and support to retain the support they need.

Increase of Dorset Care Framework Providers

15 Providers have joined the Dorset Care Framework (a 50% increase). Packages off framework reduced from 28% to 16%

21 packages off framework move to framework providers – current success rate 72%

Project Area 3: Technology Enabled Care



ADOPTION JOURNEY

The Technology Enabled Care trials aimed to explore how the use of technology can free up home care capacity by replacing an in person visit with a virtual visit.

This trial was for an 8-week period with existing homecare clients in zones 5 & 12 trialling the product 'ethel'.

Homecare providers identified the people with support needs, and these were validated by Dorset Council. Clients have signed a consent form.



KEY CHALLENGES & LEARNING

- Difficulties in the instillation of equipment with individuals that have a previously established package of care.
- Push pack from family members on use of equipment

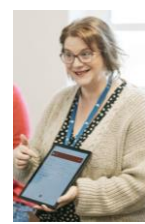


WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

Target clients shifted from existing older adults to those with short term interventions that require ongoing support, plus working age adults with increased TEC equipment and increased interest in Dorset Councils TEC Lounge.

Knowledge to providers supporting other project areas such as RCR and Admission avoidance exposure to TEC Opportunities showcasing possibilities and trialling TEC Equipment in clients' homes.

There are currently 21 clients involved in trials plus 5 whole service reviews. Current indications is that financial savings will be achieved.



Project Area 4: Trusted Practice



ADOPTION JOURNEY

Dorset Council retains responsibility for ensuring that the annual care and support reviews of individuals are undertaken, and that any revision required are made to the individuals Care and Support/Support plan to allow for eligible needs to continue to be met.

As outlined in Dorset Councils' commissioning strategies the development of Trusted Practice as a standard (Provider led reviews) – Dorset Adults and Housing – 2 Commissioning for A Better Life for Older People (Page 25), a codesigned process with Providers.

The aim of this work is to make a material difference in the reduction of overdue annual care and support reviews to homecare and learning disabilities clients to obtain compliance with the Care Act 2014.

As of Early 2023 around 1500 annual care and support reviews were not completed at 12 months, this is not Care Act compliant and is an issue which must be tackled



KEY CHALLENGES & LEARNING

Feedback from the initial trial phase in Weymouth and Portland identified a number of learning areas and opportunity for development of the process and expansion opportunities from the success of the trial.

- Understanding of process flow (internal/external) : Development of process flow mapping including in-depth guidance document for trial purposes and BAU.
- Further understanding requirement for trusted reviews of strengths-based practice and legal literacy and the care act 2014. : Development of training materials
- Requirement for Mosaic professional portal: Ongoing/Unresolved



WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

Net reduction in care hours

During the trials there was a circa £10k per annum saving through a reduction of care and support.

Assessment time reduction

The average time spend in undertaking a review was reduced from 1.5 hours to 1 hour on average.

Robust Training programme

Dorset Council have developed a robust training programme to train homecare providers in strengths-based practice and legal literacy and the care act (2014).



Improved decision making to care packages

- Necessary changes to made where required to packages of homecare including elements such as visit swaps and change in carers.
- Majority of reviews were highlighted as no issues to be reviewed next year providing a reduction in the number of outstanding care and support reviews.
- Evidence of strengths-based practice being applied
- Customer voice is evident in documentation
- Quality assurance step is less time than required for Dorset Council to undertake the review directly



WHAT WAS THE IMPACT

Through a combination of providers moving from non DCF to DCF and the reorganisation of packages to reduce travel time the programme has currently delivered a net benefit of circa 750k.

The programme has also achieved a reduction of 42 overdue annual care and support reviews.

Home Care Optimisation programme has provided improved service user experience and provider stability.

Lead Project Officer – Partners in Care

"The Home Care Optimisation project is an excellent example of how Dorset Council have reassessed the way they work with the adult social care sector and made significant improvements in order to develop co-produced solutions to ongoing challenges. The engagement with the sector has been wide ranging and executed with a genuine willingness to support a stretched sector which will benefit all stakeholders and ultimately lead to a more stable adult social care market in the Dorset Council area."

Regional Manager – Eleanor Care

"My experience so far has been impressive, the level of communication with providers by yourself, and the Dorset team has been very effective and positive."

Registered Manager - Agincare

"My experience of working on the Optimization project has been positive."

The first meeting that I attended gave me a good oversight as to the scope of the project and the expected outcomes. It was good to be asked to be involved as a provider. This seemed to be a different approach to placing packages and looking at provider capacity than I have ever been involved in before. The discussion was very open and aimed at an appropriate level for those at the meeting."

Dorset Care Association Development Lead

"DCA have been involved in the home care optimisation pilot and have worked closely with Derek, his team and the providers involved in the pilot."

We have been able to keep non-pilot providers up to date with the pilot development and outcomes and have been impressed with the communication, collaboration and information sharing. We are highly supportive of this project and the projected and confirmed outcomes that have already been delivered. I have been regularly updated with pilot data and have also been able to understand the approach, the reasoning and the autonomy that it is able to give to providers to make appropriate and safe decisions relating to the delivery of hours to clients."

Director – Care South

"This new partnership approach undertaken by Dorset Council bodes well for the future of domiciliary care provision in the county. Working collaboratively with trusted providers on the HCO Project, encouraging provider collaboration to optimise provision and TEC solutions. Derek and Di's approach to working closely and in detail with providers is creating a framework for collaboration."

I also think that the work to improve and make more efficient and effective the brokerage function is to be welcomed. Certainly, from a Care South perspective, it is giving strategic confidence to grow and develop our public sector offering and partnership in the area. Keep up the great work!"

Director – Nayberle Home Care

"From my perspective I have always had a good relationship with Dorset council and it's great to see a more partnership approach where we all have the same aim, and it finally feels like other providers agree with this approach too."

I can say that this project is definitely working well, and the service users will see a difference too! Communication is great and everyone is kept in the loop, so it feels more like partnership working!"



NEXT STEPS

Homecare Optimisation Expansion – Working Age Adults

Building on the success of the HCO programme work and expansion into the Learning Disabilities services working in partnership with the Dorset Care Association, Partners in Care and home care providers to improve use of Home Care resources. The work is part of the wider reform programme.

The LDO programme covers 4 project areas:

Process Improvements – Making improvements to the end-to-end process from identification of eligible need to package of care input

Zonal Opportunities – Providers working collectively to make best use of capacity including transport, shared nights etc.

Technology Enabled Care – Identification of bespoke packages creating reduction in staff hours for supported living environments

Trusted Practice – Providers completing annual reviews on the Council's behalf



REFERENCES

- Darwin Care: Technology Enabled Care: Use of Abilia - <https://youtu.be/Dr3FgYF9NBY>
- Dorset Council Adult Social Care Preparation for Assurance Peer Challenge Report - Partnerships and communities: Home Care Optimisation programme has provided improved service user experience and provider stability.
- [Dorset Council applies GIS to optimising home care | UKAuthority](#)
- [Dorset Council slash waiting times for care packages | Dorset Echo](#)
- [Dorset Council slash waiting times for care packages | Bournemouth Echo](#)