

Local Investment Programme

Norfolk County Council - **Pilot of
Norfolk Community Advice
Network's electronic referral system**

CASE STUDY

April 2018

Local Investment Programme

Local Investment Programme is overseen by the Local Government Association on behalf of the funders NHS Digital

OPM Group and the Bayswater Institute were commissioned to evaluate the Local Investment Programme producing an interim evaluation report and case studies.

Norfolk County Council was one of 19 local authorities to be funded in 2017/18 under the theme – **sharing information and integrating services**

The Local Investment Programme full interim evaluation can be found at www.local.gov.uk/scdip



Synopsis

Challenge & solution

The impact

Sustainability

Lessons learned

Project Summary: Customer service client referral system to generate, track and follow-up social care client referrals to local organisations

Partners: Norfolk Community Advice Network

Outcomes: Improving the quality of information and advice, improved customer experience, and helping users remain independent for longer

Projected Savings: Projected to keep 52 people independent for longer and achieve savings of £238,000

- Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN) have developed an electronic client referral system, which Norfolk County Council (NCC) aims to pilot in their customer service centre.
- This would allow those working social care teams within the customer service centre to make instant online referrals (for clients) to local voluntary and statutory organisations that are members of the scheme.
- This would improve signposting to services for clients overall, as referrals could be made to multiple services, progress and outcomes could be tracked through the tool, and clients would not need to repeat their story each time.
- This could offer support for early intervention services, preventing or reducing the need for more formal interventions.
- This project fits in with the Adult Social Services' Promoting Independence strategy and the Norfolk and Waveney's STP.
- This is a collaborative project between NCC and NCAN

The Challenge

- There is a need to target those who could benefit from early help from VCSE and statutory services where they could help maintain client independence and promote wellbeing and could prevent, reduce or delay the need for formal services.
- NCC currently receives over 86,000 enquiries through the Customer Service Centre and Social Care Centre of Expertise (SCCE) combined. Of these many are resolved through provision of information and advice, which includes signposting to such services.
- Clients are then expected to contact the organisations they are signposted to themselves, repeating their story each time, which makes for a disjointed and inconsistent service.

The Solution

- Improving the signposting process so that it is streamlined through an online tool. This would mean that referrals could be made for the client, rather than leaving onus on client to make appointment and not knowing whether this has been actioned.
- It would mean that the progress and outcome of the referral could be monitored.

Impact for clients:

- Improved customer experience
- Greater independence for longer
- More targeted information and support

Impact for professionals:

- Strengthened collaborative working with key VCSE partners.
- Ability to check on the outcome of signposting

Cost savings:

- Reduction in cost of formal packages of support.
- Assuming that improved support leads to a delay in receiving a home support package of 6 months. This could generate a saving of £4595 per person in a year.

- As part of the project, NCC and NCAN are committed to working together to identify additional local organisations that we feel would be useful to have on the scheme and encourage sign up, thereby extending and enhancing the network.
- Further work will be undertaken during the course of the pilot to explore how the system could be incorporated into planned work around social prescribing.
- The system will be piloted in two major libraries in Norfolk to see if a face to face setting offers greater opportunities to use the system
- As the referral system is web based, there is significant potential for a similar model to be developed and implemented in other areas without major IT infrastructure implications and change.
- Norfolk County Council will consider future funding for the scheme in light of the outcomes of the pilot and funding available for the roll-out of social prescribing.

Anticipated lessons:

- The system would provide rich statistical data such as: type of advice that the client is seeking, what is being referred, the number of referrals on the scheme, client data. This will make information sources more relevant, e.g. information on the website.
- Measures will be agreed to determine the impact of the intervention on peoples' wellbeing, the length of time from referral through the scheme and any subsequent contact with the NCC and formal care received.
- Measures to show that collaborative working to meet people's information, advice and low-level support needs improves wellbeing.

Learning to date:

- The nature of the calls coming into the front door teams appears to have changed, which may reflect the impact of other initiatives such as 3 Conversations and channel shift for information and advice, and are more complex with fewer opportunities to signpost elsewhere
- Implementation across different sites would enable comparison of impact in different settings

Challenges to delivery:

- To date 87 staff in Norfolk County Council's front door teams have been trained to use the referral system however the number of referrals made has been lower than anticipated and some referrals are being made to the wrong organisations
- The existing Money Matters separate referral form needs to be incorporated into the NCAN system to avoid there being two separate systems.
- Practitioners in the front door teams identified organisations that they refer to that would be useful to be on the system, however many of those have not wanted to join the network when approached by NCAN



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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Report authors: Dr Adam Hoare (Bayswater Institute), Perla Rembiszewski (OPM) and Dr Pete Welsh (OPM)

The final evaluation report will be published by March 2019

