

Case Study: Homecare Re-ablement New way of working

Derbyshire County Council

Derbyshire County Council's Homecare Service provides support to around 4,700 service users across its seven areas and includes all service user groups. By the end of September 2009 the Council will have completed a re-ablement project within its Homecare Service to provide a more person-centred package of support. All new referrals for Homecare are now part of this process.

Background

Homecare re-ablement provides support to people in their own homes to enable them to learn or re-learn skills necessary for daily living. This is achieved through use of short term support packages that:

- Maximise independence, choice and quality of life
- Minimise ongoing support required

The approach focuses on re-abling people so that they optimise their potential in terms of a stable level of independence with the lowest appropriate level of ongoing support.

As part of Derbyshire's Making Care Personal: Your Choice; Your Life programme the role of the existing homecare re-ablement teams is being expanded to provide a short term assessment and re-ablement service for all new referrals for home care.

Key drivers

The development of a universal Homecare re-ablement service in Derbyshire is a key component of the 'Putting People First' approach to social care provision and comes within the overarching policy on self directed support, sharing the same goal of promoting independence health and wellbeing, while improving service users' choice and control over the care and support they receive.

The Council has a large in-house Homecare service comprising of approximately 1,500 internal home care staff as well as contracting with external agencies. There are a large number of service users who have been receiving the same level of care for a number of years therefore a need to review how services are delivered and managed was a priority.

Aims of the service

The aims of the service are to maximise individuals' independence thereby:

- Prevent/delay the need for domiciliary care
- Reduce the level of domiciliary care required by those service users who need ongoing support
- Reduce the number of admissions to hospital/care homes
- Facilitate timely hospital discharge
- Provide a rapid response to those in crisis.

Project timescale

Some areas in the County have been providing re-ablement services for a period of time albeit under different titles, therefore these areas were better equipped than others to handle the transfer to the new service.

The actual focus across the County began in September 2008.

A lot of work was carried out on what was already in existence and, to promote consistency training was put in place including all Homecare staff undertaking 'promoting independence' as part of their NVQ level 2. Other Council re-ablement projects (e.g. Leicestershire) were used to help model the Derbyshire service.

"We should be promoting people's independence; we shouldn't be taking that away from people. We're there to support individuals in their own homes not to do everything for them."

Jane Parke, Derbyshire County Council

Service Model

The service will embody an approach or philosophy which aims to help people do things for themselves rather than having things done for them, in order to promote independence.

All new referrals assessed as needing and being eligible for personal/practical assistance to support them at home will be passed to the teams for a period of assessment and re-ablement as appropriate unless they:

- Are under eighteen years of age.
- Are not suitable because of care needs.

Benefits and outcomes of the project

- Can prevent hospital admission or post hospital transfer to long term care.
- More people will be supported to improve their independence and quality of life.
- Minimises the whole life cost of care.
- More people will be able to have choice and control over the services they need.
- The needs of those who require ongoing care will be more accurately identified prior to making decisions about longer term care needs.
- Create efficiency savings for the Council that can be put back into the social care service.
- Better training for staff and increased job satisfaction as staff see outcomes for service users and build better relationships.
- Improved working relationship with the PCT.

Management of risk

- The perceived change in job roles may result in staff leaving but where this has occurred new staff have been recruited into the service.
- There has been some dispute with Trade Unions but this is being worked through.
- As the outcomes reduce the need for longer term services this will create capacity within service but as the ageing population places more demand on care services this will need to be reviewed.

- There is a need to monitor the delivery of the service to make sure staff do not revert back to old ways of working.

Challenges

Main challenges related to the cultural changes within the organisation, and the mind shift required to re-focus the service. This was addressed by training, briefings and support from operational managers.

It was also important to differentiate re-ablement from intermediate care and ensure that the service fitted with existing care pathways. A lot of work was required with health colleagues re definitions and service boundaries.

What would you do differently?

As the service is still going through the re-ablement process any areas of improvement have yet to be identified. Derbyshire is such a large County with very individual ways of working across its various sub regions so a more consistent approach would have been preferred but, on balance, different regions are suited to different ways of working and all are working to the same aims and objectives.

Key issues for success

- Managing the change process by taking people along with you and keeping people informed.
- Building on what is already in existence rather than starting from scratch.
- Working with the managers of the service to develop how the service should work.
- Providing training relevant to the post so people have the skills and confidence to deliver the service.

Future developments

- A pilot project for the re-ablement of the night service is currently being carried out in North East Derbyshire.
- A job description and person specification is being developed for a 'Flexible Care Worker' role. This person would work across a number of care settings e.g. home for older people, community, day centre.
- Setting up of re-ablement beds in care homes for those service users who are not confident at being at home during the night.

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