

SUBJECT: Senior Social Worker Post in the Adult Disability Service, focussing on Continuing Health Care (CHC) Issues
MEETING: DMT/Single Member Report
DATE: 27 June 2017
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. **PURPOSE:** To inform senior management about progress made by the senior social worker who is focussing on Continuing Health Care issues in the Adult Disability Service. To propose the continuation of this role as a permanent post.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** To make the above post permanent

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

3.1 CHC (Continuing Health Care) is the name given to a package of care that is arranged and funded solely by the NHS for adults who are not in hospital and have been assessed as having a primary health need. The process for deciding which adults require CHC packages is complex and involves input from a range of professionals. If an adult meets the CHC criteria, then it is not legal for the local authority to be funding the care package. If an adult moves from being social care funded to NHS funded, or vice versa, then this has consequences for the budgets of both the local authority and local health board. Because of increasing budget pressures on the public sector, the funding consequences are becoming more critical for both organisations.

3.2 Current post is a temporary secondment. The current post holder has been performing the role of CHC Senior Social Worker for 6 months on a temporary secondment basis, as part of the Adult Disability Service. The post holder has used her knowledge of CHC processes to enable CHC decisions to be made for 12 people with significant care packages. The post holder has also upskilled a number of colleagues so that they understand and can contribute to the CHC process. The post holder is working with a further 20 adults for whom CHC decisions are needed. The majority of the cases so far have been held by the Adult Disability Service, although 3 cases are with the Children with Disabilities Team where the Continuing Care guidelines are different. Once all of the cases in the Adult Disability Service have been reviewed for CHC triggers, The post holder will be looking at other cases in Adult Services and Childrens Services where CHC triggers exist.

3.3 Progress and outcomes so far. The post holder's work has resulted in estimated budget savings of £390,000 so far. These are savings for the local authority if we compare our current position with a more 'laissez-faire' position where our staff don't have the knowledge to query and challenge the CHC status of adults who are being funded by adult social care. The post holder's input has also resulted in more staff being aware and knowledgeable about CHC processes.

3.4 Options.

a) If we cease using the post holder in this role, and allow her to return to her substantive social worker post, then we are likely to see the potential savings figures outlined in paragraph 3.3 being reduced. We would also find ourselves acting illegally in some cases, where we have not challenged the CHC status of individuals, and where we are providing a service that we should not be providing.

b) If we make this role permanent, then we are likely to see the savings figure continue to rise as more people are identified as having CHC triggers, across adults' and children's services.

c) A more long-term strategy is to find a better way of working with the Health Board and Welsh Government to make the CHC decision-making and funding processes work in ways that are less cumbersome and give better outcomes for individuals and families. The work that the post holder is doing in this post provides good evidence of the drawbacks of the current system and could help devise the long-term strategy. By making the post permanent, there is more chance that the post-holder will be able to help ABUHB and the 5 Gwent local authorities find a better way of dealing with CHC cases in the long-term.

3.5 Consequences:

In the short-term, deploying a social worker in this CHC role will continue to ensure that people who meet CHC criteria have their care packages funded correctly. In the longer term, the role should also allow MCC to explore better options for partnership working with the local health board. We will also see more social work staff building up their knowledge of CHC processes.

Making this Social Worker role permanent will allow the Adult Disability Service to consolidate its staffing with regard to this permanent post and the substantive post that the post holder has been temporarily seconded from.

If we decide not to make this post permanent, but continue to deploy the post holder on a secondment basis, we will be extending the period of time for which the substantive post of social worker is unfilled, which will reduce the capacity of the Adult Disability Service to perform its statutory functions.

If we decide to terminate the secondment, the post holder would return to her substantive post, and we are likely to see fewer adults being deemed to meet the CHC criteria, which will put more pressure on the adult social care budget.

3.6 Proposal:

DMT approve the creation of a permanent post of 'Senior Social Worker - CHC' in the Adult Disability Service. Although this post would be based in the Adult Disability Service, the role would support CHC decision-making in all areas of Social Services.

4. REASONS:

4.1 Case for making the post permanent:

We will be meeting the legal obligation to ensure that adults who need CHC care packages are funded correctly;

We will be upskilling social care staff to understand CHC processes;

We will achieve estimated savings of 390k per year. This figure may reduce over time, and will need to be kept under review.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 If agreed, the recommendation will cost £50k per year for the salary costs of this full-time post (top of J Band, with on-costs), but with predicted savings of £390k per year, which will be kept under review. The post would be created on an 'Invest to Save' basis.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment are summarised below for members' consideration:

This post affects the care package funding arrangements for a small number of people with complex health needs, ensuring that they have the correct funding for their circumstances. The equality impact is considered to be negligible, and could be seen as positive by ensuring that correct procedures are followed.

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every year and criteria for monitoring and review will include:

Regular updates to DMT on the CHC status of adults in Monmouthshire.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

The local authority has a responsibility/duty to ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded from abuse. This proposal does not have a significant impact on this role.

8. CONSULTEES:

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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS: none

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