

Classification	Item No.
Open	

Meeting:	HR & Appeals
Meeting date:	25 February 2021
Title of report:	Establishment and Extension – Review Team
Report by:	Amanda Symes – Head of Adult Safeguarding
Decision Type:	Non Key Decision
Ward(s) to which report relates	All wards in Bury

Executive Summary:

Following the introduction of the Care Act (2014) the process of preparing and reviewing care and support plans for eligible adults was clarified. Statutory Care Act guidance also introduced an expectation that local authorities would ensure the review of these support plans “no later than every 12 months¹”. In 2017 in order to alleviate some of this demand, meet legislative compliance and address a backlog of a specific cohort of overdue reviews the Review Team were established as a pilot project.

It is now proposed that the existing Review Team is permanently established and expanded through the creation of six additional posts. Permanent establishment of the Review Team will allow Bury Council to retain and build on the expertise of the current interim team. Expansion will consolidate the completion of the majority of

¹ Department and Health and Social Care, Care and support Statutory Guidance, section 10.42

local authority reviews by bringing them under one dedicated team ; releasing needed capacity within social care teams and reducing the financial impact created by unnecessary/inefficient support provision. In addition development of the Team will improve the offer to customers by enabling concentration on the development of links with key stakeholders in order to identify opportunities around innovative assistive technology and non-statutory community based services/resources.

The objectives of the Team are to:

- Ensure that reviews are completed in line with Care Act statutory guidance expectation;
- Improve the quality of existing Adult Care Assessments and Support Plans in line with the Care Act;
- Further develop social prescribing, universal and community services when looking at meeting an individual's need, thus developing community assets whilst reducing the cost of commissioned and direct payment packages;
- Drive forward best practice in relation to support plan design;
- Reduce demand on social care teams;
- Reduce customer reliance on commissioned service for an unidentified need as outlined within GM Transformation proposals;
- Reduce spend appropriately by redirecting to more cost effective services.

The Team is predicated on a proven invest to save model with staffing costs being off-set by the savings made by the completion of strength-based, timely support plan reviews. More detail with regard to staffing costs and realised and projected savings is available in the appended consultation proposal document.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to support the proposed establishment and expansion of the Team in order to enable Bury Council to complete its support plan review duty in a more efficient and effective manner.

Key considerations

Background

The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance set out local authority obligations in relation to ensuring the wellbeing of adults with care and support needs. It also aims to bring about the personalisation of an offer of care by putting the adult at the centre of the process. Local authorities are required to undertake a needs assessment for anyone who they believe might have need of care and support. Where an adult is in receipt of a support plan there is a statutory expectation that the local authority will complete a review of the support plan within 12 months of its creation.

In April 2017 in order to meet this demand the Review Team was initially established as a six month pilot and was funded through the Improved Better Care Fund. Prior to start of the pilot, social care teams struggled to carry out this work within the expected time frame due to case volume and competing priorities creating a significant backlog of overdue reviews. The purpose of the Review Team at this time was to undertake a proportion of these reviews including:

- Annual Support Plan Reviews of commissioned and Direct Payment Domiciliary Care Packages
- 6-8 week hospital discharge reviews
- 6-8 week reablement input reviews.

Unhindered by the complexities of case management faced by the social care teams the Review Team were able to complete thorough, asset and strength based customer support plans. The Team also significantly reduced the backlog and the financial impact on Bury Council by the timely removal or reduction unnecessary provision. This equated to an overall cost reduction circa £620k in years 2 and 3². These savings when calculated against the cost of the Team equated to an approximate clear saving to the Council of £465k. Due to the continued success of the pilot, the need to retain the knowledge and experience of the staff, and the need to reduce unnecessary cost to the Council in order to meet budget reduction targets

² Refers table 2 of Consultation Proposal Document, years 2018-2019 and 2019/2020

it was agreed by adult social care senior management that the proposal to permanently establish and expand the project should be pursued.

The proposal

It is proposed that a permanent extended Review Team is established.

It is proposed that the existing Team slot into the established posts under revised job descriptions.

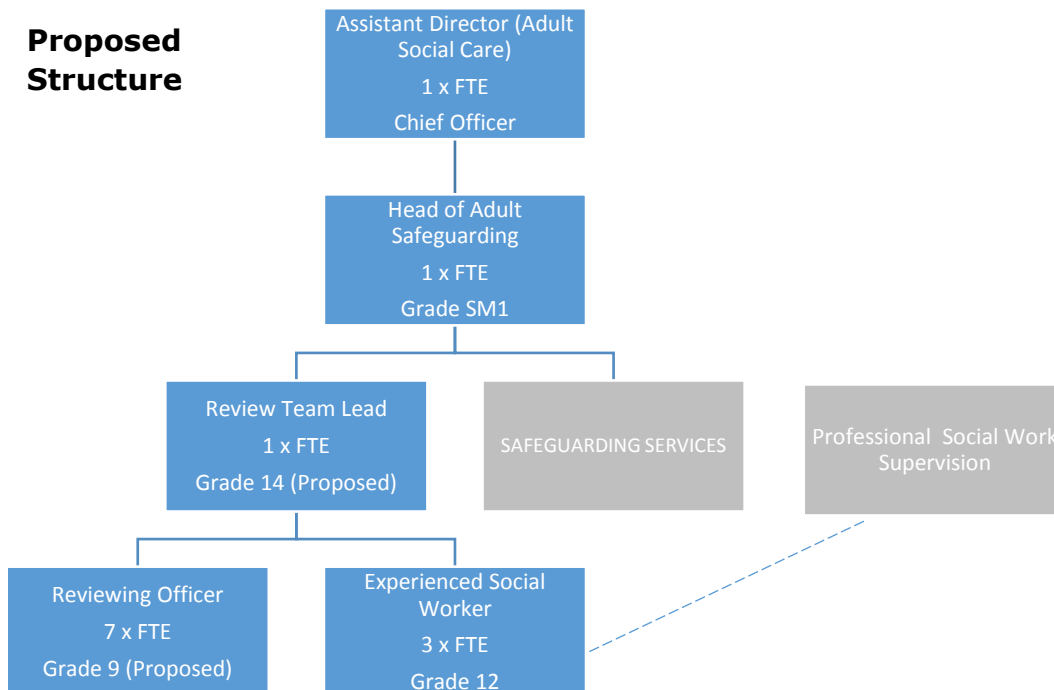
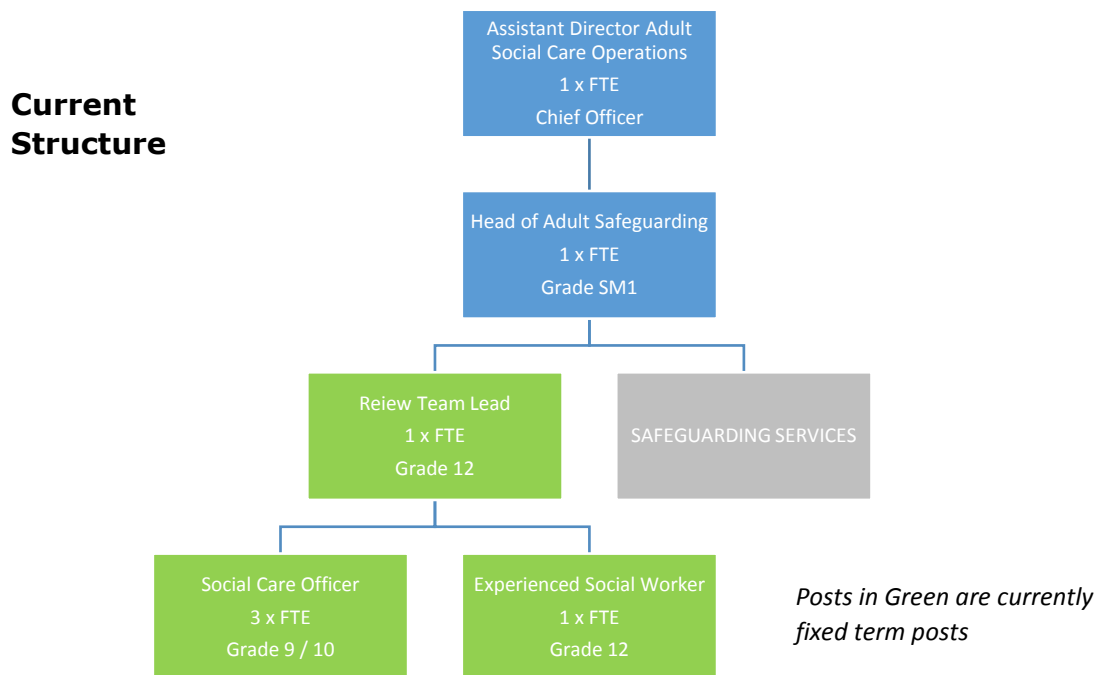
The current Team Manager is proposed to slot in to the Review Team manager to post, paid at the revised higher salary scale which reflects the increased responsibility brought about by the proposed Team expansion. The current Manager is currently assessed as performing over 60% of the revised role and has been in the temporary post for over 4 years on a fixed term contract.

The three current Reviewing Officers to also proposed to slot into the revised proposed Review Officer posts. The officers are all currently assessed as performing over 60% over the revised role and have either been in post for over 4 years on a fixed term contract or appointed to post via open recruitment.

The current vacant Social Worker post will be filled through an open recruitment process.

It is proposed the Team will be increased by 4 x FTE Reviewing Officer posts and 2 x FTE Experience Social Worker posts appointed through an open recruitment process. This will create additional efficiencies within the department and, based on invest to save predictive modelling, will realise a saving of circa £280 to £300k after staffing cost deduction.

The current and proposed Team structure are as illustrated below:



It is proposed that the Team will continue to be funded via an invest to save model with staffing costs being met by the savings made as a result of timely reviews. More detail with regard to staffing costs and realised and projected savings is available in the appended consultation proposal document. The below table illustrates in summary how the expected projected savings off-set staffing costs and also contribute towards the overall departmental savings programme.

Financial Year	Projected Full Year Cost Reduction on packages of care	Staffing Costs ³	Projected Savings (cost reduction – Staffing cost)
2020/2021	£566,812	£258,223	£308,589
2021/2022	£552,644	£258,223	£294,421
2022/2023	£538,830	£258,223	£280,607

Other alternative options considered

Three alternative options which have been considered:

1 No change to the current arrangements

This is not a preferred option. The pilot scheme has proven to be successful and financially sustainable. Not changing the arrangements will mean that the current in-post officers will not be afforded job security in turn creating a risk of expertise loss to the Council. This Team are also closely involved in supporting the planned departmental savings programme and without their input it is unlikely that these targets will be met. There remains a notable case backlog for cohorts of customers who are not covered by the interim Team which goes against statutory guidance – extending the service will allow for the majority of reviews to be brought under one dedicated team; service modelling indicates that an expanded team can meet the current and predicted demand.

³ Figures are inclusive on on-costs and are reflective of the top scale point on the current corporate salary scale; the figures shown here are the additional costs regarding new posts; existing posts are funded through the staffing budget of £196,900

2 Permanent establishment of the current Team footprint

Establishing the team without extending team numbers would be the second choice option. This option has not been chosen is for the reasons given above in that social work teams are struggling to cope with the number of required reviews and, due to the complexity of their existing workload are also struggling to build up the necessary specialist knowledge to step customers down from the initial more formal packages of care.

3 Move the review function back into the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (adult social care)

This is not a preferred option. There have been two considered versions of this option:

a) Disbanding of the Team and progressing with redundancy arrangements for the affected officers. Whilst it will mean a financial saving to the Council in relation to the reduction in staffing costs the pilot has proven that statutory expectations cannot be met with current staffing levels. This option could also risk losing the expertise built during the course of the pilot.

b) Disbanding the Team but re-assigning them to sit within the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. This will avoid staff redundancy and retain expertise but moves back to a historical model which has proved ineffective. Whilst it is acknowledged that capacity to complete the necessary reviews will be increased within the neighbourhood Teams, organisational experience has shown that due to the complex and demanding workload of the social care staff competing priorities can erode officer capacity to complete timely reviews.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy**Equality Impact and considerations:**

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Equality Analysis	<i>Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.</i>
<p>An Equality Impact assessment has been conducted and stability of setting the review function with an established and expanded team will impact positively on eliminating the potential for discrimination by ensuring that adults with care and support needs are able to access appropriate support in order to promote their wellbeing and access to universal services.</p> <p>Reviewing Officers will be able to explore and resolve inequality of provision for their customer cohort. Establishing a dedicated team will also ensure parity of customer provision and offer within the Council.</p>	

**Please note: Approval of a cabinet report is paused when the 'Equality/Diversity implications' section is left blank and approval will only be considered when this section is completed.*

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Invest to Save failure – staffing costs are not covered by projected savings. (risk)	It is recognised that there is a potential risk with invest to save services. However, predictive financial modelling, based on experience taken from the pilot project, strongly indicates that this model is financially sustainable. Budgetary information and progression against budget spend is currently monitored via a weekly finance meeting therefore issues can be recognised early. The projected savings are also based on a salary model set at the top of each salary grade therefore it is likely that savings will be greater than predicted.
Unable to recruit to additional posts (risk)	This is an attractive role as it allows staff to work within a dynamic team who will have a clear and focussed direction and will be able to extend their existing knowledge by working within an area who will be testing new and innovative ways of supporting vulnerable customers.
Opportunity to improve the offer to vulnerable adults.	Staff within this service will be skilled in this type of case work, will be solution focussed and will have the expertise to provide a holistic support model
Opportunity to work within an area which is developing new ways of working.	This is a great opportunity to work in an area that is developing new ways of working with customers both from a customer-strength based view and from and IT and technology perspective. The Team will be leading the way on behalf of the local authority in designing person-centred packages of care.

Consultation:

The proposal has been discussed informally with staff and trade unions. Subject to approval by the Human Resource & Appeals committee, and in accordance with Council policy, it is proposed to enter a 30 day period of formal consultation prior to the implementation of any changes.

Legal Implications:

The proposals must be undertaken in accordance with the Council's HR policies and its equality duties.

Financial Implications:

The cost of the proposals will be met from the savings achieved. Careful monitoring will be required to ensure that the savings are sufficient to cover the costs and in the event that this is not the case, the financial impact will need to be managed by the service. To support effective financial management, the budgets will be adjusted to increase the staffing budget to reflect the new staffing structure and reduce the service provision budget from which the savings are to be made.

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Background papers:

None

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
None used	