



Audit & Governance Committee
1 December 2014

**Social Care Debt Audit
– Management Action Plan: Progress Update**

Purpose of the report:

To provide the committee with a progress update on the Management Action Plan in relation to the Review of Social Care Debt 2013/14 Audit Report that was published in June 2014

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

1. The progress against the Audit Management Action Plan is noted.

Introduction:

2. In June 2014 an audit report titled 'Review of Social Care Debt 2013-14' was issued.
3. This report outlines further progress on fulfilling the Management Action Plan and updated comments following the initial report to the Committee in August 2014.
4. In addition, Committee Members asked for:
 - Results of the SAP team looking into introducing a second direct debit date each month.
 - Information about best practice at the two local authorities which have a higher proportion of service users paying by direct debit than Surrey.
5. Since the last report, the process ownership has changed due to the previous process owner moving into a role outside of the Authority. The new process owner is currently being inducted, and consequently further activity will be required to satisfactorily complete all aspects of the MAP and the further items referenced by past committees.

Progress on fulfilling the Management Action Plan

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6. A Management Action Plan was provided as Annex B to the original Audit Report in June 2014. An update in the progress in fulfilling this MAP is included as Annex A to this report.
 7. Much of delivering the improvements within the MAP has been reported as being contingent upon the final details of the forthcoming Care Act. These details are expected before the end of the calendar year.
 8. A further update on the issues raised in the Audit Report will be made to the Adults Select Committee early in the new calendar year. This report will include an updated MAP with any further clarification on the finer details of the Care Act.
 9. This report can be shared with members of the Audit and Governance Committee, with a further update following at future Audit and Governance meetings.

Additional information requested by Audit and Governance Committee

10. In addition to the Management Action Plan, Committee asked for additional information regarding:
 - Results of the SAP team looking into introducing a second direct debit date each month.
 - Information about best practice at the two local authorities which have a higher proportion of service users paying by direct debit than Surrey.
11. As outlined in the appended Management Action Plan, the process for instigating a second Direct Debit date has been investigated and this has identified that a second collection date would have to be controlled by a change to the SWIFT interface to indicate specific collection group. This could be combined with the update work to comply with the Care Act. Alternatively new payment terms can be set up in SAP. However, this will not be possible at present as there is a change freeze on all new development work until the latest upgrade of the system upgrade has been completed. It is recommended therefore that the process for a second Direct Debit date is revisited early in 2015 once the full regulations of the Care Act are clear and the latest AIS upgrade has been completed.
12. The latest benchmarking information from CIPFA indicates that there are two Local Authorities that have reported a higher take up of Direct Debits than Surrey presently achieves. These Local Authorities have been contacted; however have yet to agree to sharing information and process. For context these Local Authorities are unitary authorities who collect Council Tax alongside care debt. It is possible that the ongoing relationship of collecting Council Tax by instalments by Direct Debit contributes to the willingness for residents to opt for care debt collection by Direct Debit.

Conclusions:

13. Progress has been made in delivering against the MAP. Final changes and implementation of new processes are pending confirmation of the Care Act regulations, feedback from the two local authorities that who have a higher proportion of Direct Debit uptake and completion of the latest upgrade to the Adults Integrated System (due to be taking place in November).

Financial and value for money implications

14. None unless particular change proposals are made.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

15. The charging regime stems from Government rules, for which Equality Impacts are assessed at a national level.

Risk Management Implications

16. This report makes no substantive recommendations, so any assessment of risk will stem from any proposals made by the Committee.

Next steps:

17. Adult Select Committee have requested an update early in the calendar year. This updated report will contain any further changes arising from the published regulations of the Care Act and will be shared with the Audit and Governance Committee.
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