



Social Care Services Board
4 March 2015

Surrey Choices Ltd

Purpose of the report: Performance Management

Surrey's Local Authority Trading Company, Surrey Choices, is reporting on its performance against its commissioned contract for Adult Social Care.

Introduction:

1. Surrey Choices is a Local Authority Trading Company owned wholly by Surrey County Council, which began trading on 18th August 2014.
2. Surrey Choices provides social care services formerly part of Adult Social Care. The company was originally commissioned to provide day and community support to adults with learning disabilities, the EmployAbility supported employment service, Shared Lives adult placement service, AboutUs accessible information and training, and the Personalisation Team of qualified social workers and Occupational Therapists. The annual value of the commissioned services contract to Surrey Choices is £11.8m covering the period 18th August 2014 to 31 March 2016.
3. The Surrey Choices 2015/16 Business Plan (Annexe 1) explains the breadth of services offered by the company, its strategic objectives, and its ambition for the future. The company is in the process of revising its business plan for 2016/17 for production in April 2016.
4. The company adheres to Council corporate governance arrangements for trading activities and reports to the Council's Shareholder Board quarterly on its commercial performance.
5. The company is a strategic supplier to the Council and reports monthly to Adult Social Care commissioners, Council Procurement and Finance, against contracted key performance indicators. The most recent quarter of those performance reports are included (Annexe 2) for consideration by the Scrutiny Board.

Successes:

6. Surrey Choices was originally commissioned to support 1063 active customers plus 300 customers on a Keep In Touch basis. The company successfully reassessed all of those customers between August and December 2014 as part of delivering our Customer Journey Points (see Annexe 1 Business Plan 2015/16 page 18). These Points underpin our strategy; every strategic decision we take as a business must demonstrate it adds value to the customer.
7. Between 1st April and 31st December 2016 the company has accepted 257 referrals from Adult Social Care, at no additional cost to the Council (Annexe 2 Surrey Choices Monthly Performance Reports). This volume has been absorbed by the company within its contract value. We now work with younger people, people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, older people, and people with long term conditions. The company was created for and continues to be there for the Council however it can assist with the challenge of increasing volume and cost pressures.
8. Surrey Choices is successfully developing a set of new customer focused products; a significant proportion of our staffing capacity has been redeployed from historical activities to where there is real need and demand. We have learnt from our first Customer Journey point (see Business Plan 2015/16 page 18) about what we should be offering and when. We are also talking to Adult Social Care, Clinical Commissioning Groups, boroughs/districts, and other providers to identify gaps.
9. Across our services, regardless of whether they perform regulated activity or not, we have put in place a quality framework based upon the Care Quality Commission core standards. We have invested in a Quality Assurance Team to make this framework a support not a hindrance for our staff and customers on a daily basis. We survey our customers quarterly to inform our strategic priorities (Annexe 3 Customer and Carer Surveys). We are performing well in the following areas: the effectiveness our staff to make time and talk to customers, how our staff support our customers, and promote independent decision-making. We have improved significantly in the areas of involvement of customers in decision-making and offering accessible information.
10. Customers, parents, carers and volunteers, representing all of our business units, are elected to our Involvement Board for 2-year cycles. The Involvement Board Chairman also sits on the Surrey Choices Board and attends the Council Shareholder Board annually to report independently on company performance. The Involvement Board will this year commence a Quality Checkers programme of inspections and audits across the company. This Board brings real change across the company and exerts influence over services, staff recruitment and training, and future service and product development. We have also restarted monthly local family and carers meetings at all of our business units.
11. We have no eligibility criteria; if we have the capacity and skills to support an individual or group, where there is a clear need or demand, we

will endeavour to respond positively. This demonstrates our commitment to deliver both social and economic value, moving down the preventative ladder to intervene earlier. A good example is our Tea and Memories services, combating loneliness and isolation, which started in Guildford and now has 8 locations across the county including High Street “pop-ups”. All of these customers pay privately to attend, the vast majority have no interface with social care services and live independently.

12. We have made significant progress in relation to the integration of distinct separate components of the services that transferred from the Council (i.e. EmployAbility and The Personalisation Team) into our general offer. Our ambition is to remove the stove piping of services and create a single value chain, parallel to our Customer Journey Points, that reacts at the right time, in the right places, to the ever changing needs of our customers and their families and carers.
13. Based on customer and family feedback we have ended long-standing closure periods across our services, which had been historically scheduled over parts of school holidays and after Bank Holidays. We continue to develop services that extend into evening and weekend opening hours, recognising that this is often where customers have the least amount of choice on offer from the market and can feel the most isolated.
14. We have successfully been appointed to Surrey County Council and Surrey’s six Clinical Commissioning Groups’ framework agreement to provide community opportunities for older people, including people with dementia. We recognise that a large part of what we do support not just our direct customers but also their family and carers, many of whom are ageing and look to Surrey Choices for a range of support.
15. We do not just focus on new services for new customers but balance that ambition with the need to better understand our long-term customers, their aspirations and ambitions. Since we began trading we have identified partner organisations across the country to help us make some of those aspirations come true. For example, 236 people regardless of their disability or long-term condition have been power boating at Wet-Wheels, 80 have been water skiing, we have achieved an international first with 4 people flying solo in light aircraft at Aerobility, and a team of people with learning disabilities have won the first Urban Golf challenge on BBC television.
16. We have renovated a County Council property in Banstead (empty for almost 3-years) to register a brand new short breaks service, offering 6 short breaks beds in a state of the art physical environment. This service has received exemplary feedback from customers, families and referrers. In particular, it is working specifically to support the Surrey Transitions Team to return young people from out of county placements and prevent them from happening in the first place. We are particularly proud of a bespoke service designed to support a high-need, high-cost individual who's needs have not be met to date by 4 other providers.

17. We have registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) a new team of Personal Assistants (PA), starting in January and launching in April, to further promote independent living, personalised support, and extend our reach into local communities.
18. We are developing a bespoke transition offer; beginning last summer 48 young people attended an entirely new range of activities, tailored toward work experiences, physical activity, technology and gaming; 31 of those young people continue to be supported in a range of our services across Surrey. We are now offering the first of our after school clubs at Woodlands School, Leatherhead, supporting families and their children earlier and remaining present in their lives throughout the transition phase however we are needed.
19. Our target operating model is very simple; to move away from the historical distribution channels and to extend our reach into local communities, getting closer to the people we support and their families and carers. This takes time; our three-year rescue plan and our next five annual business plans.
20. To date we have moved out of two old “hangar style” day centres (Frenches Lodge in Redhill and Fairways in Staines). This year we will move out of a further three. Our services are instead being provided from a variety of locations in local communities; smaller, more fit for purpose buildings, in partnership with other organisations across sectors, or in the community with far less use of our remaining sites as “hubs”.
21. We are in the process of creating a “design language” across our remaining sites, incorporating navigation aids, way finding, and intensive stimuli for customers with a wide range of support needs.
22. In addition, the buildings we use now and in the future are less exclusive than they once were; these are community resources for local communities and we have significantly improved the utilisation of our buildings as a result. For example, Mothers and Toddlers, Pilates, evening breaks, lectures, Girl Guides, all use of sites in partnership with us.
23. Technology is key to our target operating model. We have moved away from Council technology because of its limited ability to meet our customer needs. We now use mobile technology, interchangeable among both staff and customers, and interoperable systems allowing single sign-in access, with high speed WiFi across our sites to support our staff wherever they are. Within a week of the first customer receiving an iPad he had told his parents and emailed photographs to show, for the first time in 25 years, what he had done during the day.
24. We are in the early days of our partnership with Apple and Google and we derive significant benefit from both organisations in terms of hardware innovation, application interfaces, increasing accessibility, and enhanced communication opportunities with customers.

Challenges:

25. We have struggled to achieve our projected growth targets for Shared Lives. This is disappointing; the proven cost savings over the long-term and the placement stability across customer groups deserves better. We have put in place a new manager and we are reviewing processes for carer recruitment, carer training, the length of time to match potential customers with families (on average 6-months at present), and we are engaging with other Shared Lives schemes for peer support and to identify good practice.
26. The company gave notice on the Personalisation Team contract with Adult Social Care with effect 1st January 2016. This was due to a number of irreconcilable differences; interoperability of technology, process inconsistencies, and potential conflicts of interest raised by other providers in the market and the detrimental effect of that perception on future partnerships with the company. We have redeployed the staff from this team across the company to further professionalise our overall workforce and to develop a more integrated specialist support offer.
27. EmployAbility has historically been segregated from the rest of the services we offer but our analysis shows that a significant number of referrals to EmployAbility require care and support either at home or in the community prior to or in parallel to supported employment. Our challenge is to integrate our core supported employment offer within day and community services as a potential outcome that we believe should be available to all of our customers.
28. The company continues to invest significantly in both mandatory and additional training for staff. This is partly to increase the quality and skills of our staff team and to ensure there are no outstanding training requirements.
29. The company began trading with staff shortages in certain services combined with persistent dependence on high-cost agency staff. In response, our headcount has increased from 274 in April 2015 to 349 in December 2015. We have developed relationships with local agencies that understand our business and are more responsive to our needs, at lower cost. Our challenge now is to reduce that agency dependence and better manage our staffing capacity overall to deliver our target operating model. Like all providers in the sector we have to identify a strategy to recruit and retain quality staff that is affordable, and without the attraction of the public sector pension scheme and other associated benefits.
30. Across our services, regardless of whether they perform regulated activity or not, we have put in place a quality framework based upon the Care Quality Commission core standards. We survey our customers and their families and carers quarterly (Annexe 3 Customer and Carer Survey). We know that we need to improve the perception of customers regarding genuine choice of activities, the cleanliness and accessibility of buildings, and ensuring regular contact is made with parents and carers.

31. The cultural legacy of the past is an ever-present threat; effective communication and leadership at a local level continue to be challenges to our success. At times decisions taken by the company have been difficult for staff and local stakeholders to understand and the impact of those decisions is far quicker than in the Council. It has taken 12 months to assemble the current Business Unit Managers as local leaders, supported intensively by a small central team. This structure will deliver our target operating model, better network with all stakeholders on a local basis and engage in responsive, flexible and timely decision making as regards their services. In other words recover relationships and rebuild trust, particularly among parents and carers.
32. We have to continue to demonstrate significant and sustained improvement in service quality against a challenging market environment of reduced public sector funding, high fixed costs associated with legacy properties and staffing, and uncertainty over contractual terms with our single largest customer (Surrey County Council Adult Social Care) for 2016/17.
33. So far our focus has been on taking apart and analysing the services that transferred from the Council, with a view to learning about our behaviour as a business, our costs, our skills, our assets and our opportunities and risks. Over the next 12-24 months our challenge is to articulate that learning into services that are affordable to commissioners and other customers, and to develop targeted growth strategies in and outside Surrey.

Conclusions:

34. Surrey Choices has made progress against its 2015/16 business plan and is working with more referrals from Adult Social Care within the value of this contract:
 - a) The company is modernising its offer with new customer focused products (see Annexe 4 Case Studies highlighting some achievements of our Business Units)
 - b) The company is effectively reviewing and assessing everybody it supports on behalf of Adult Social Care
 - c) The quality of our services is improving overall
 - d) We are involving customers in the development of the business
 - e) We are assisting in the preventative agenda through the provision of services to a wider range of individuals, including those who do not meet the eligibility criteria
 - f) Our services are increasingly open longer with a broader range of offers, located in fit for purpose locations
 - g) Our priority is to grow and develop Shared Lives
 - h) Support more people into employment
 - i) Skill up and professionalise our workforce
 - j) Better manage our capacity and control costs
 - k) Support our staff to deliver our target operating model

Recommendations:

35. The Scrutiny Board is asked to note and consider the content of this report and recommend any areas for development or improvement.
36. Surrey Choices would like to take the opportunity to invite the Scrutiny Board, or delegates from it, to visit any of its services, speak with staff or visit its Involvement Board at a future date.

Next steps:

37. Surrey Choices will continue to report to Adult Social Care on its performance against its commissioned contract and will return to the Scrutiny Board when it is requested to do so.

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Sources/background papers:

Annexe 1 Surrey Choices 2015/16 Business Plan

Annexe 2 Surrey Choices Monthly Performance Reports Quarter 3 2015/16

Annexe 3 Customer and Carer Survey (July and October 2015)

Annexe 4 Case Studies highlighting some achievements of our Business Units.

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