

Self-Directed Support

Service users and families welcome new approach to social care

Service users and their carers have welcomed a proposed change to the way that adult social care services in Cambridgeshire are to be delivered.

Self-Directed Support is a way of putting adults assessed as eligible for social care support more in control of the services they receive. It means they can choose to manage their own support, and involves identifying a Personal Budget to meet their social care needs and planning, with help if needed, how to use it.

A two-month consultation on the introduction of Self-Directed Support across adult social care services in Cambridgeshire took place between September and November last year. It found that 61% of service users and carers agreed that the introduction of Self-Directed Support, and the wider choice of life experiences that a Personal Budget would enable, will give them more choice and control over their support needs. A further 30% said they were unsure and needed more information, whilst only 8.7% disagreed with the proposed changes.

A report on the consultation process and results was presented to Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet in December and agreement was received to implement Self-Directed Support for eligible adults living in Cambridgeshire. Roll-out of the new approach to social care will begin from April.

Commenting on this work, Claire Bruin, Director of Adult Support Services at Cambridgeshire County Council said, *"I was really pleased to see the support for this new approach in the consultation responses and with the approval from Cabinet we can move forward to implement this change, which will empower people needing social care support to improve their quality of life."*

Who took part in the consultation?

The consultation principally targeted service users and family carers although anyone was free to respond. Through the consultation process, the aim was to reach a wide spread of people across Cambridgeshire to raise awareness about Self-Directed Support as well as capturing initial responses to the proposals for change.

During the consultation period, over 1,000 service users, family carers and representatives from the social care workforce were directly engaged through a series of visits and presentations. In addition, nearly 2,000 copies of the consultation document were distributed, and the Self-Directed Support page on the County Council's website, which included downloadable and online versions of the consultation document, received nearly 1,000 visits.

In all 177 completed consultation documents were returned, and 56 people – including service users, family carers, members of the public, and service providers - asked to be kept involved in the development and introduction of Self-Directed Support in Cambridgeshire.

What happens next?

The key messages resulting from the consultation are in line with the national picture for Self-Directed Support. They include the need for continuing awareness raising and provision of information to develop understanding of Self-Directed Support and Personal Budgets. In response to this, a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) informed by the consultation process has been produced and an ongoing communications programme is in place to ensure continued engagement with social care staff, service providers, and service users and their families.

A phased roll-out of Self-Directed Support in Cambridgeshire is being implemented through the 'in Control Total' Project. For more information, or to add your details to the list of people to be kept involved in the development and implementation of Self-Directed Support, please contact Amanda Davies, 'in Control Total' Communications Officer on 01223 699650 or at in.controltotal@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

For anyone interested a copy of the full report of the consultation presented to Cabinet is available on the Council's website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk