



Mayor and Cabinet

Adult Social Care response to recommendations of the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

Date: 6 July 2022

Key decision: Yes

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Executive Director for Community Services

Outline and recommendations

In February 2022, the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities Scrutiny Task & finish group published its report and recommendations to tackle digital exclusion for adults with a learning disability in the borough. This report is the response to those recommendations from Lewisham Adult Social Care

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

The subject of the Task and Finish Group was proposed by Cllr Jacq Paschoud.

The subject and membership of the Group were agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2021.

The scope and key lines of enquiry for the review were agreed on 8 July 2021.

Between July 2021 and February 2022, the Group carried out a range of evidence gathering and engagement sessions.

The Group met on 3 February and agreed its final report and recommendations

1. Summary

1.1 In February 2022, the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities scrutiny task & Finish group published its report and recommendations to tackle digital exclusion for adults with learning disabilities in the borough. This report is the response to those recommendations from Lewisham Adult Social Care.

2. Recommendations (from the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities scrutiny task & finish group)

Recommendation 1

During social need care assessments and at other key assessment stages such as during transition assessments for children's to adults social care services, or for Carer Assessments; digital needs should be considered. This could include consideration of access to suitable devices and data and to any on-going skills or support needed. Questions on assistive technology should routinely and consistently be completed as part of the assessment process.

Officer Response 1

Adult Social Care will continue to work alongside the Children with Complex Needs Team to develop preparing for adulthood outcomes and goals for young people aged 16 and above that take into account current and future digital needs and on-going skills or support that may be needed.

Adult Social Care will review including digital needs and access to suitable devices and data and any ongoing skills or support needed within its carer and service user assessment processes.

Adult Social Care now routinely includes representatives from the Assistive Technology Team in MDTs for new service plans and reviews in Neighbourhoods 1 and 2 and is looking to roll this out to the other neighbourhood teams during 2022/23.

Recommendation 2

Any work carried out by the Council on digital inclusion should be monitored for Equalities purposes to help build up a better picture of where there is greatest need and to understand intersectional needs to a greater extent. The importance of the socio-economic context should be considered, as data poverty, access to devices and stability of housing are all key determiners of digital exclusion.

Officer response 2

Where Adult Social Care is carrying out work on digital inclusion, we will monitor the equalities and socio-economic data, where it is available to enable positive change and monitor outcomes

Recommendation 3

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Resources such as the Digital Exclusion Risk Index tool and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation as well as other local data and insight should be used routinely by the Council and partners to help target those most in need when considering locations of In-person support. Data should be collected routinely to build up an increasingly accurate picture of where the greatest needs are.

Officer response 3

Adult Social Care will use the Digital Exclusion Risk Index Tool and the indices of Multiple Deprivation as well as other available local data, with our partners to target those most in need when we are considering locations of in-person support.

Data is being collected routinely to establish better insights into demographics and need.

Recommendation 4

The Council should work with partner organisations to increase understanding of those Adults with a learning disability who are most at danger of digital exclusion and who would most benefit from additional support. For example those that live with family members as oppose to those who live in supported living. Support should be targeted to individuals and groups focussing on specific interests as this has been proven to be a successful approach in ensuring motivation.

Officer response 4

Adult Social Care do not currently have the resources or budget to increase understanding of those adults who are most in danger of digital exclusion, or to offer additional support to those most in danger of digital exclusion.

Recommendation 5

All of day service provision should have access to Wi-Fi for their service users. In particular, the Council should urgently work with Ladywell Day Care Centre to ensure Wi-Fi is installed as soon as possible to benefit their service users.

Officer response 5

The Wifi and connectivity business case for Ladywell and Mulberry Day Centres was approved at EMT w/c 20 June 2022. An engineer visit is planned for each site to provide more updated estimates for when they will have full connectivity with an estimated timeline being October 2022.

Recommendation 6

The Task and Finish Group recognise the need for support to be provided to family carers, helping address concerns such as safety which can be a barrier to digital inclusion. This could be through training or through additional software/safety controls etc.

Officer response 6

Adult Social Care does not currently have the resource or budget to provide training or additional software/safety control etc. support to family carers. However, commissioners will work with provider partners, including clinical partners, to develop a fact sheet/ how to guide to be made available to families and people who can use digital tools more independently.

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Recommendation 7

The Council should ensure it maintains a permanent role in providing continuity of digital support to those in need. This could be through a dedicated resource or programme that is consistent and accessible to all partner organisations.

Officer response 7

The Council will explore the the resource and budget needed to ensure a permanent role in providing continuity of digital support to those in need through a dedicated resource or programme accessible to all partner organisations.

Recommendation 8

The Council should work with partner organisations and commissioned services that work with people with learning disabilities to better understand where there are gaps in the provision and pro-actively assess where they can support

Officer response 8

Adult Social Care has worked with partner organisations and commissioned services that work with people with learning disabilities to better understand where there are gaps, and has actively looked to support where resource and budget has allowed e.g. trialling multi-media with adults with Learning disabilities in partnership with day service and supported living providers. We will also explore self-help apps which can assist as part of people's personal behaviour/ anxiety management plans, and which can supplement staff specific support.

Recommendation 9

When services are being commissioned for people with learning disabilities, weight should be given to organisations that commit to on-going IT training to ensure staff have the relevant skills to support people who use their service with digital inclusion. As part of securing social value in our procurement processes going forward the Council should ensure contractors meet standards around accessibility of digital services.

Officer response 9

Adult Social Care will incorporate standards around improving knowledge and accessibility of digital services, where appropriate, within the procurement process as part of securing social value as detailed in the Social Value Monitoring Tool 2020. Additionally, we will ensure that basic IT skills are included in staff competency requirements in all Learning Disability service specifications.

Recommendation 10

Council online services must be accessible. The Resident Experience Programme should include consideration of people with Learning Disabilities. Specific areas of the Council's website such as pages related to the Local Offer should be worked and tested with key user groups such as those with learning disabilities and should be targeted to reach higher standards of accessibility than the general website. There should be more emphasis corporately to ensure that throughout the Council,

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all those who design and input information on the website have a strong focus on ensuring information is as accessible as possible

Officer response 10

Adult Social Care are supporting this recommendation as part of the wider corporate Resident Experience programme to ensure that it includes consideration of people with Learning Disabilities. When the recommended changes and updates are being made to the website as part of this programme, we will support the inclusion of key user groups to test accessibility and endeavour to ensure that the website is as accessible as possible for those with a learning disability. Moreover we will work with Lewisham Council's communication team to explore what more we can do moving forward.

Recommendation 11

As a local authority we hold a vast amount of historical and current information in PDF format. The adoption of a framework and standards for accessible PDF production should be developed and adopted by the organisation for this information going forward.

Officer response 11

The Council have created standards for accessibility for PDFs (and new content generally). For existing PDFs, the Council have undertaken audits of particularly inaccessible files and Services are in the process of improving or removing them. As part of a joint Digital & Comms proposal, we have agreement to recruit a Content Editor to lead improved engaged and content strategy with services.

Recommendation 12

The council should work with partners to develop a directory of proven digital activities and tools for partners to share. This could include information on access to affordable devices and internet connection such as social tariffs. This could also include an FAQ of key issues that can be shared with family carers. This should be kept up to date, readily available to providers, and signposted to any new providers. Sharing knowledge on online risks for example safeguarding and scamming is particularly important and helps build confidence in individuals and carers on what the risks are and how they can protect themselves and those they care for.

Officer response 12

The Council does not have the resources or budget to work with partners to develop a directory of proven digital activities and tools for partners to share, or to keep this up to date. Should resources become available, the Council will explore how a directory could be established and maintained.

3. Policy Context

3.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy (2018-2022) outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents over the next four years. Delivering this strategy includes the following priority outcomes that relate to digital inclusion for people with learning disabilities

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- a. Delivering and defending: health, social care and support - Ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need.
- b. Building an inclusive local economy - Everyone can access high-quality job opportunities, with decent pay and security in our thriving and inclusive local economy.

4. Background

The subject of the Task and Finish Group was proposed by Councillor Jacq Paschoud and agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May 2021. Task and Finish Group members agreed the final report and recommendations at a meeting on 3 February 2022. This report is the response to those recommendations from Lewisham education service.

5. Financial implications

In responding to the recommendations of the Digital Inclusion for Adults with Learning Disabilities scrutiny task & finish group, the council will seek to maximise and not duplicate existing national, regional and local resources.

The financial implications of plans and projects going forward will be assessed and reported.

6. Report author(s) and contact

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