

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY PANEL

CAREFIRST STATEMENT

9 SEPTEMBER 2010

Upon approval from CMT and Cabinet, the CareFirst Transformation Programme has been kicked off with much progress having been made within the last 6 months. The foundations have been laid and we are now just about to begin a new and exciting phase of the programme.

Work until now has focussed on building the team, upgrading technology. This has seen recruitment of new employees, with the technical and business support skill sets required to take this programme of work forward, and the purchase of new equipment and software toolsets that are now in the final stages of installation. This includes:

- upgrade of application servers to provide the users with a more stable technical platform. Completion of the upgrade is expected by the end of September;
- installation of updated reporting tools in the form of Business Objects XI and Fibonacci. These will enable us to supply management information and client outputs (letters, pre-filled documents based on the information input to CareFirst for sharing with the clients) in formats that can be easily used by the business. These tools have only been installed in the last couple of weeks but we can already see where these will bring business benefits both in terms of ease of use and efficiencies within the business processes; this will start to see the reduction in the amount of time workers spend re-entering data and see an increase in the amount of time they have available for the clients. The roll out of these services will be ongoing over the coming years with work being prioritised dependent on benefit;
- upgrade of the CareFirst software itself to provide enhanced tools for the social workers through new functionality that will reduce the data entry time for sibling groups. Whilst this only provides the beginnings of the functionality, it also enables us to build solutions to make the system easier for the end user to operate. Version 6.9 is to be installed on the 9th of September and will be rolled out over the next 6 months from basic functionality to Care Planning enhancements and on screen workflow for the users to follow.

Meanwhile, we have also been working on a number of other work streams including:

- we are currently doing some detailed work to anticipate all the financial and quality benefits of the CareFirst system and assess changes;
- review of processes within the Fostering service with the aim to making the process simpler and easier for the user as well as more efficient. Removing the need to undertake several process reviews, the first two focussing on Foster Carer Reviews and Recruitment of Foster Carers, are set to go live w/c 6th September;

- generating management information for all service areas. Work has gone into producing reports that can be run on a regular basis to allow managers to monitor throughput of cases and adherence to legislative processes and timescales;
- review of processes across a number of business areas to determine where efficiencies and changes can be made to support the workforce;
- changes to the security surrounding the system, monitoring access to the system, review of user profiles on a regular basis and resetting passwords on a regular basis;
- work has begun on the EDRMS (electronic document and record management system) to enable safe storage and retrieval of documents;
- ability to generate statutory returns directly from CareFirst to eliminate the amount of manual collation and manipulation required to complete a return such as the Child In Need Census each year. Although the system has been capable of doing this, we have not upgraded the system or our processes for this for 10 years and therefore there is a significant amount of effort required to enable automatic generation. However, when this work is complete, this significantly reduces staff time required to compile returns;

In addition, there are a number of work streams relating to the governance, learning and communications aspects of the programme. All of these are well underway but will need to be continued over the lifetime of the programme. These include:

- review tools available to improve financial process supporting social care/service packages;
- improving and building on the relationship with supplier and other CareFirst Users;
- communications throughout the programme to inform users, managers, service leads, directors and members about the changes being made;
- development of a Training Strategy to ensure that users have the knowledge they require to use the CareFirst system;
- ongoing work to ensure Audit Compliance.