

## Wirral Council – Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme

The Wirral Council has offered their full savings programme as learning for this programme.

The gross spend on Adult Social Care for the last three years has been:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
£120.262 million	£120.080 million	£123.000 million

Savings delivered – mostly to balance the budget from previous deficit:

£16.857 million	£2.643 million	£5.967 million
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The main challenges facing Wirral were the combination of a history of a failing adult social care service alongside a serious level of overspend in the council allocated budget. The council has prioritised addressing both of these challenges over the last three years.

Wirral has embarked on a series of reviews in adult care which include: all in-house day opportunity programmes; use of assistive technology and equipment; charges for non-residential care; NHS investment in reablement services; review of voluntary sector funding; review of NHS continuing health care funding; review of in-house residential and respite services; and retendering contracts for extra-care housing.

There has been a positive look at the culture of adult social care in Wirral with a clear move away from a **benevolent, protective and risk-averse model of social care to one which delivers a 'just-enough support model'**. This model is aimed at helping people to get enough support to meet their needs and to assist them in looking to regain more personal independence. There has been a focus on reducing admissions to residential care for older people and a review of spend in learning disability services. Both approaches have relied on better use of telecare – including the use of 'just-checking' (a software package designed to help assess the needs of older people with dementia) to help reduce the need for night staff in supported housing for adults with learning disabilities.

Wirral has **re-procured their supply of domiciliary care by** reducing from over 70 providers down to contracts with four main providers with two back-up providers who all operate within the localities of the borough. They have a very tight contract which requires a same-day response from providers and this is backed up by an 'ethical charter' for the employment of workers within the providers to which they have all signed-up. This approach has not reduced the price but sustained the price at the same level of £12.20 an hour (it was on average £12.28 previously but within a wide range of costs). The new providers are already responding well and there is already feedback that better outcomes are being delivered.

Wirral has worked closely with providers of learning disability services where a strong local partnership with the Wirral Autistic Society has accepted that there has been overprovision of services in the past. Closer partnership working is now addressing this in a constructive way.

There has been a small reduction in admissions to residential care for older people – down from over 60 a month to 54 per month. A target of 37 new admissions a month has been set and signed up to by the local health partners as well as the council. This has assisted in ensuring that everyone understands what outcomes are being sought. Wirral points to the success of their panel system in helping to address the challenges.

Wirral has a first-contact service which diverts some customers away from formal care and into community and voluntary services as appropriate and a reablement service which is delivered by the independent sector with the in-house service offering guidance and support to the external providers (a coaching role). Wirral is looking to set up a trading company into which the current remaining in-house provided services are expected to transfer in the future. Wirral is developing an assessment system which is focused on the 'asset approach' (what are the skills and positive contributions that people, their families and communities can bring to their care package?).

The council has a £46 million savings programme to deliver over the next three years and adult social care will be expected to deliver its contribution. There are council-wide reviews taking place to look how to address this. The main approach will be to further develop the council as a 'commissioning body' with a strong focus on making the arrangements for the right services rather than delivering them. The 'asset-based assessments' across the Families and Well-being Directorate will be one pillar for this. There are now discussions taking place with health about how an integrated set of services might support this approach. There is an aim to bring together health primary and community services with social care teams.

Wirral state that the Better Care Fund has brought all the partners closer together and they are having very constructive conversations. They have agreed a target of a 5 per cent reduction in admissions to hospitals for each of the next three years. There is a challenge that collectively the public sector between the council and the NHS will have to reduce their spending by £107 million by 2018.

**Extract taken from:**

Adult Social Care Efficiency Programme Final Report: Annex:  
<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11779/Adult+Social+Care+Efficiency+Programme+Final+Report+-+Annex+2014/7952391e-a043-4f16-bebd-644780d1eb77>

ASCE programme website: [http://www.local.gov.uk/productivity/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/3371097?\\_56\\_INSTANCE\\_0000\\_templateId=ARTICLE](http://www.local.gov.uk/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10180/3371097?_56_INSTANCE_0000_templateId=ARTICLE)