Procurement Services

Relationship Management

Report to People and Families Scrutiny, November 2018

Essex County Council

Background

A project was initiated in 2016 to fully evaluate the relationship between ECC and it's adult social care supply base and to consider how matters could be improved. The reasons for this project were:

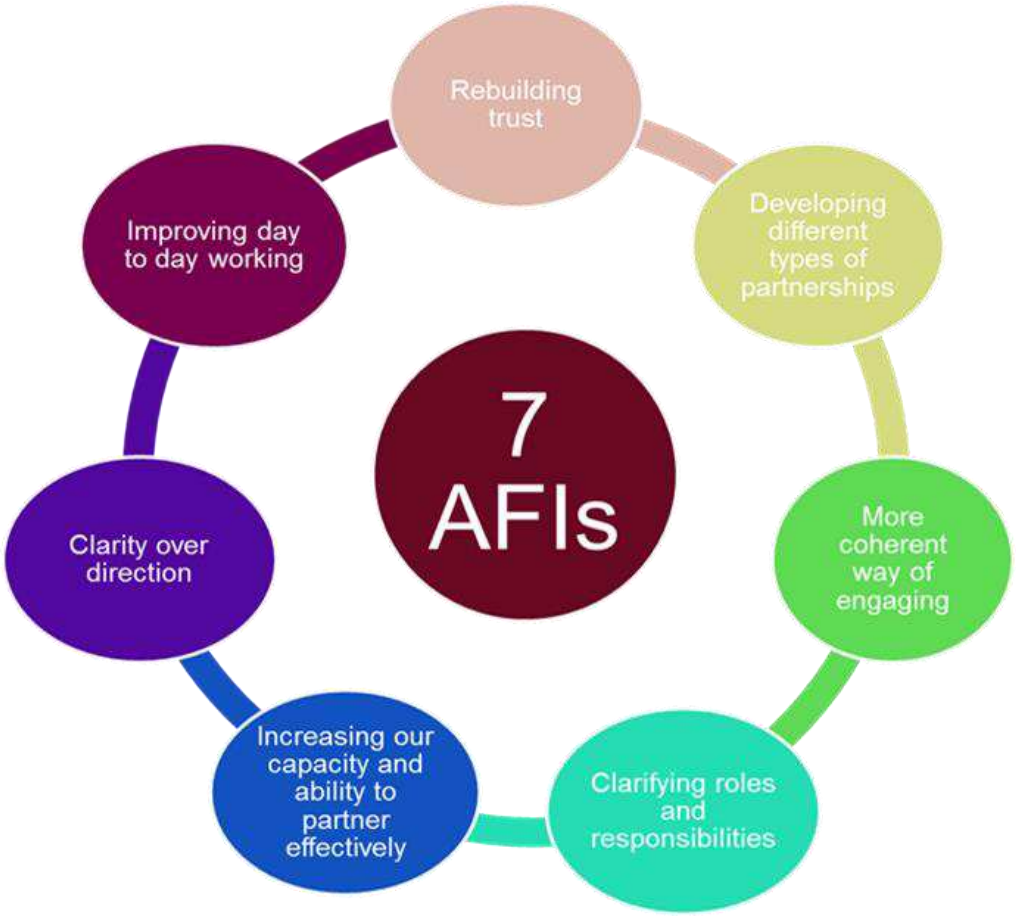
1. A perception that relationships between ECC and the care market were poor and getting worse.

2. Additional responsibilities imposed by the Care Act around market management and sustainability. ECC recognised that it could not meet these new duties without improving relationships with the care market.

The project produced the following report.

Recommendations

The November report identified 7 Areas For Improvement (AFIs):



Progress since June

Care Provider Information Hub - to improve ECC's communication and to be open and transparent the Council set up the hub to act as a 'one stop shop' for news, details of events, key documents, contact details, etc. Content has continued to be improved and updated.

Essex Care Association (ECA) - the Council has continued to improve its relationship with the ECA. Simon Harniess (seconded to the position of Development Director) has developed a strategy for them and ECC have agreed to support their growth ambitions. ECA will now play a leading role in developing our future contracting model for domiciliary care.

Strategic provider groups – these are now in place for learning disabilities and supported living, building on the approach piloted for domiciliary care. Health partners now attend all quadrant forums. Feedback from the market has been very positive. Additional forums we be deployed as new contracts are launched.

Progress since June (2)

Advisory Forum – this group has now met twice and has raised concerns which have already been incorporated into future contracting models.

Payment Issues - a project team has continued to target this complex area. Aged debt has reduced to around £0.6m (was £1.2m in June). 95% of non-residential providers are now using our Extranet to submit invoices which greatly improves efficiency. A recent survey of providers has given very positive feedback about the changes made.

Workforce – the Quality team have continued to provide training to providers. We have also had positive feedback about the training supplied by Adult Community Learning. We are exploring options for a joint workforce strategy with health partners and the potential for using the Apprenticeship Levy to fund training.

Integrated Residential and Nursing Framework - example of best practice engagement. Surveys, workshops on topics of interest, co-production of the solution, building trust.

Summary

- Good progress has been made, and there is a continued focus on relationships across ECC.

- Positive feedback from providers about our engagement – new forums for learning disabilities and supporting living providers; co-production of new contract for older peoples residential and nursing.

- Relationships continue to be difficult in some areas, not helped by our challenging financial position. There are also some operational frustrations which are being actively addressed.


Questions