



London Borough of Hammersmith &
Fulham

Cabinet

11 JANUARY 2010

**CABINET MEMBER
FOR CHILDREN'S
SERVICES**

Councillor Sarah Gore

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES – INTEGRATED
CHILDREN'S SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

This report seeks approval for the ICS Improvement Project and the funding for the Frameworki Development, Training and Support Team.

**Wards:
All**

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Frost
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ALDS
DFCS

Recommendations:

- 1. That the scope of the project be approved with one off project funding of £639,169.**
- 2. That ongoing funding is approved for the Frameworki Development and Support Team at £335,340 per annum.**

<p>HAS A PEIA BEEN COMPLETED? YES</p>
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek funding for the Children's Services ICS Improvement Project and permanent funding for the Frameworki development and support team.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT.

- 2.1. The Integrated Children's System (ICS), is a Government-led recording and information system designed to offer a single approach to the key processes of assessment, planning, intervention and reviews of services provided to vulnerable children. It was developed to enable local authorities to meet both the complex data requirements for performance assessment and to improve the standards and coherence of the records required to support the delivery of services to children. It is viewed by central Government as key to delivery of the "Every Child Matters" agenda in terms of improving outcomes and, in particular, safeguarding the most vulnerable children.
- 2.2. It is important to distinguish between ICS, which is the overarching conceptual framework, and the IT operating system designed to support it. In Hammersmith & Fulham this system is Frameworki, developed by Corelogic, which, of those systems commercially available, is the one most widely, used by local authorities.
- 2.3. There have been a number of clear benefits in terms of the implementation of ICS and the operating system Frameworki. In particular:
 - The quality assurance system embedded within it provides many opportunities for casework scrutiny and quality assurance.
 - There have been 16,500 cases handled within Frameworki since the system went live in 2006. Currently there are 2000 open cases comprising of approximately 55, 000 episodes (pieces of work) in progress on the system.

However, its implementation continues to be problematic in a number of areas. This was highlighted nationally in the Laming Review¹ which was commissioned following the tragic death of Baby Peter in Haringey to undertake a national review of safeguarding arrangements for children at risk and which raised a number of significant concerns about the ICS system. Specifically:

"Professional practice and judgement are being compromised by an over-complicated, lengthy and tick-box assessment and recording system. The direct interaction and engagement with children and their families, which is at the core of social work, is at risk as the needs of a work management tool overtake those of evidence-based assessment, sound analysis and professional judgement about risk of harm."

¹ The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report

2.3. Our own experience in Hammersmith & Fulham mirrors these concerns. In particular,

- Workflows are cumbersome; the forms (exemplars) are complex, overly-prescriptive and repetitive. Compliance with the Government's requirements did not, until recently, allow any significant modification of the exemplars. Their prescriptive nature requires social workers to work through a set of fields and assessments domains which allow for little variation. The completion of the form can therefore become the main task, rather than the understanding of the family dynamic and circumstances in terms of its impact on the child.
- The exemplars are very time-consuming to complete, particularly in relation to child protection and looked after children, and while the original intention was that information would flow through the electronic process and help practitioners populate the exemplars, this has been difficult to deliver and most ICS systems have not had the ability to do this.
- Reflective thinking and analysis has been undermined by the needs of data processing with excessive amounts of social work time being spent on data entry.
- Risk assessment is not embedded within the design of the exemplars therefore social workers are not being encouraged to undertake one of the core roles they are required and trained to do.
- There are too many management "sign-offs" within the workflow. Ideally, a manager should be able to assign a piece of work and then be notified of its completion. In reality, managers are required to authorise numerous "sub-tasks" which when considering the complexity of some social work activity results in them being overwhelmed by administrative process which contribute little to their core role of ensuring safe practice.
- The collection and scrutiny of performance management data is seen to dominate the working lives of social workers and their managers at the cost of the more traditional social work tasks.
- It is hard to use the outputs to engage with children and families as the exemplars are too complex. Each child has its own set of records; therefore families who have a number of siblings are often confronted by large numbers of forms, which are difficult to understand without a high degree of comprehension and language skill.

2.4. In December 2008, the Government established the Social Work Task Force to conduct a comprehensive review of the social work profession and to look at how frontline social work practice needs to be improved. 'The Task Force was asked to advise on Lord Laming's recommendations, including those on ICS. Broadly, their conclusions were in agreement with those of Lord Laming's report in response to which the government has said that it will take immediate action to:

- Free up national requirements in relation to ICS, authorising local authorities and suppliers, in discussion with professionals, to remove 'forms' and 'exemplars' in local systems giving them more flexibility to use their professional judgement in deciding how they will comply with statutory requirements.
 - Improve support to local authorities through carrying out a usability review of each ICS product, providing procurement support and issuing guidance on how the ICS can be used to support practice.
- 2.5. In June and again in July 2009, Baroness Morgan wrote to all Directors of Children's Services in order to clarify the situation with respect to local IT systems and ICS compliance. In essence, her letter indicated that IT systems that support children's social care services should be locally owned and implemented within a simplified national framework of guidance. Specifically, it stated that local authorities will not be required to comply with the published specifications for ICS in order to receive capital funding for IT systems in children's social care.
- 2.6. In response to the reports and recommendations, the Children's Social Care Division mandated a review of social work practice, process and supporting systems that was social work-led. Initial work focussed on the exemplars within the system and improvements have already been made to these within the current project funding. A full review of practice, process and supporting systems began in July and was completed in October. The output is a report detailing process, system usability, reporting and training issues. This report has informed the development of a business case (attached) for a project to address the issues identified.
- 2.7. Since its original introduction in 2006, the DCSF has introduced a number of new phases to ICS as it has sought to revise the processes and forms and extend the scope of the areas of work covered, resulting increased complexity and data capture requirements. This had led to 2 to 3 software releases each year requiring development, testing, support and training. This work has been carried out by the Framework Development, Training and Support team in conjunction with HFBP, and this work has been in the main funded by DCSF ICS grants. Following the DCSF decision to relax the requirement for Local Authorities to remain ICS compliant the funding has been withdrawn, leaving a funding gap in relation to ongoing development, training and support requirements.

3. DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

- 3.1. In discussion with the Social Work Task Force, the Government has identified a number of key principles and expectations in relation to ICS.² These are:
- Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that their children's social care services improve outcomes for children and that social workers are supported to practice effectively: this entails provision of effective IT systems.

² Local Authority Circular 22 June 2009: "ICS: Changes to policy principles and measures to support local accountability and improvements within a simplified national framework"

- ICT systems should enable social workers and their managers to record information that they need in order to do their jobs effectively and to demonstrate that they are meeting statutory requirements in ways that are consistent with statutory guidance.
- Systems should enable the extraction of data to support the collection of local and nationally required statistical collections.
- Systems will need to be capable with modification if necessary, of meeting future national specifications for interoperability, e.g. between individual local authorities local case management systems.
- Systems should take into account international usability standards, drawing on best practice in relation to web-based IT tools and be supportive of effective social work practice.

3.2. Within this context, the Children's Social Care Division require an IT system that supports Social work practice in order to:

- Meet statutory reporting requirements
- Identify trends in relation to effective interventions to further improve outcomes for children within the borough in line with the Every Child Matters agenda.
- Evidence good social work practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Undertake efficient processing of administration tasks and report production

3.3. Frameworki is one of eleven IT systems that support ICS and through contacts with other authorities, through DCSF forums and site visits undertaken at Wandsworth, Lambeth and Tower Hamlets as part of the review it is recognised that Frameworki is one of the best systems available. It is in this context that CHS management have made a decision not to replace the system.

3.4. The review undertaken within the Division has identified many of the same issues as highlighted within the Laming Report and Social Work Task Force in relation to systems and processes. This is not surprising given that LBHF have been compliant with ICS and are using an IT system designed to meet the requirements of ICS.

3.5. Broadly, these concerns can be categorised as follows:

- System Usability – there are issues in relation to presentation, form design, and the need to complete multiple records (with the same information) for children within the same family.
- Complex Processes – there are issues with complexity of finance/procurement processes and more generally with the number of sign off points within workflows.

- Training - There are issues with the scope and delivery of training provided in relation to the system, both in relation to new starters and existing staff
- Management Information - there are issues with the current reporting capabilities in relation to availability, quality and accessibility to managers
- Recording practice – there are no standard recording practices for Frameworki across the department.

3.6. The impact of these are:

- Compliance. Use of the system by staff within the Children’s Social Care Division is good overall; however small areas have been identified where this is an issue. In these areas there is an increased reputational risk in not being able to readily evidence the good social work practice that exists within these areas. In addition, in Hammersmith & Fulham, unlike in our neighbouring boroughs, the functionality of the system has been developed to support the finance/procurement of care packages for children. While this is clearly of benefit, failures in compliance may present an increased budgetary risk in that services may have been purchased that are not apparent to the budget holder through Frameworki. While compliance is a management issue, it is reasonable to assume that there is a higher risk of non-compliance if the system is perceived as complex and cumbersome and failing to deliver the practice benefits.
- Information and Data Quality. There is an increased safeguarding and reputational risk if key information is missing/not accessible. Front-line staff and managers will have an incentive to improve data quality if the outputs and reports are seen to be of real benefit in terms of the task.
- Use of Social Workers’ and Managers’ time. It is recognised by Laming that the key elements of Social Work practice that have the biggest impact on safeguarding are:

Direct contact with children and families

Robust risk analysis and assessment

Formulation of appropriate plans and interventions

Reducing the amount of time spent on processing/administration will provide more time for these key activities and reduce the risk to safeguarding.

4. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

4.1. To Improve Safeguarding by:

- Freeing up of 15% to 20% on average of time currently spent using Frameworki and undertaking administrative tasks, in order to enable social workers to spend more time:

In direct contact with children and families

Undertaking risk analysis and assessment

In supervision with managers in order to formulate appropriate plans and interventions.

This time saving is equivalent to estimated annual savings (non cashable) of £291,492

- Freeing up managers' time in order to:
 - Spend more time with social workers to formulate appropriate plans and interventions
 - Improve oversight to better monitor the quality of assessment and risk analysis
 - Identify and manage staff performance issues
- Improve data quality as evidenced by the elimination of started and unfinished or non started episodes, and the inclusion of fields for the capture of assessments and risk analysis. This will:
 - Improve the reliability of information in order to allow for better decision making
 - Enable evidence of good social work practice to be recorded in all cases within Frameworki.
- Improve accessibility and reliability of data for managers in order to:
 - At an individual child level, make timely changes to interventions that are not working
 - Use trend data to identify the services that have interventions that are working for different groups of children to enable the formulation of better intervention strategies.
- Improve the presentation of data by the introduction and family view, the ability to cross reference on screen to different records within a family

4.2. Improve acceptance of the system by Managers and Social workers by demonstrating an improvement in the "usability" rating from an average 40 to an average of 70 as measured by the DCSF ICS usability questionnaire.

4.3. Improve Training provision to ensure:

- All existing Complex Needs Staff have attended "applied Hammersmith and Fulham" ICS and Frameworki training.

- All new starters have received an introduction to Frameworki and “applied Hammersmith and Fulham” ICS and Frameworki training within 2 weeks of their start date.
- All Social workers and managers have a good standard of proficiency in the use of basic office applications.

4.4 To achieve savings of £80k in annual staffing costs within performance and planning and within children’s social care division as identified within the Departmental MTFS plan from September 2010. These will be as a result of improvements in provision of reports and the introduction of Corelogic’s Digital Dashboard a real time report presentation tool. In addition, in the longer-term it may be possible to release additional savings in terms of social work posts (through improving and more efficient workflow management); however at this point in time this is difficult to quantify.

5. PROJECT COSTS

5.1. The key cost elements to this project identified in the table in Appendix 1 are as follows

- 5.2. Development and Support - based on plans that have been defined for the development work identified during the scoping stage of the project. They include all elements of improvements in terms of usability and workflow that can be undertaken by the project team. It does not include key elements such as the “family view” that will be developed by Corelogic (Frameworki software supplier) to be included within software releases during 2010/11. These will be implemented by the Frameworki Development, Training and Support Team.
- 5.3. Social Work Practice Work stream – This will consist of 1 social work team manager and 2 principal social workers. Key elements of their work will be to undertake further process reviews, develop a consistent set of recording standards across the Children’s Social care teams, assist with the development of training as well as having a role in change management activity both during the life of the project and beyond.
- 5.4. Training - The project will address style, content and delivery of training and provide tailored training to all workers depending on level of need. Additionally, the project will put in place a more robust induction programme in relation to Frameworki and ICS as well as developing computer based training with the aim of reducing costs in the longer term. The project will also seek to address a wider training requirement in relation to issues with the general use of IT for a small number of identified staff.
- 5.5. Management Information - The project costs include allowances for requirements definition, development of reports and one- off licence and implementation cost for Corelogic’s Digital Dashboard. The costs are based on assumption that CSD will not be implementing the Digital Dashboard. Some of the costs will be shared if they decide to do so. The Digital Dashboard is a new tool provided by Corelogic which will enable managers at all levels to monitor key performance and budgetary

information in real time. This will enable improved performance management capability and budgetary responsibility at middle management level. York are undertaking the first implementation of the tool and it is also being taken up by both Brent and Wandsworth. Key drivers for Wandsworth are investing in the tool are to enable improvements in performance management, budgetary control and to provide efficiency savings within their performance and planning/development and support teams. Camden have recently introduced the business objects reporting tool with infoview (already present in LBHF) and have no current plans to purchase the Digital Dashboard.

- 5.6 Change Management Support - The project includes provision for change management support from the Organisational Development team. Support will be provided to the Social Workers seconded to the project and for Children's Social Care Management team in communicating and implementing changes to process and practice within the department.
- 5.7. EDMS - The corporate EDMS project has covered the original cost of back scanning, migration of documents from Frameworki and ongoing development costs for the integration to Frameworki. Additional are to be incurred for further back scanning as a result of the delayed implementation and to address Safeguarding issues in relation the current visibility of documents within EDMS to the users outside of Children's Social Care .

6. ONGOING FRAMEWORKI DEVELOPMENT TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- 6.1 CHS are seeking the inclusion of ongoing costs including staffing, HFBP and licence support costs within the MTFS. These costs are a result of the need to undertake continuing development, training and support in relation to ICS and the Frameworki system and reporting tools that supports it. The costs arise at this time as a result of a withdrawal of funding from the DCSF. The make up and costs of the team are detailed in Appendix 1
- 6.2 The requirement is driven by the following:
 - There will be at least 2 major software upgrades during 2010/11 as DCSF compliance requirements are relaxed and further improvements to usability are delivered by Corelogic. These will require development, testing, support and staff training.
 - There is a 40% staff turnover within Children's social care, giving rise to a continual demand for training and support.
 - The need to ensure data quality is maintained once it has been addressed as part of the project.
- 6.3 The LBHF team requirements compare favourably with Wandsworth and Camden. Wandsworth have for the last 2 years run a team of 5 to undertake development, training and support. Wandsworth have not remained ICS compliant (therefore self funded) over the last two years and are in advance of LBHF in terms of usability,

data quality, compliance and training. They have also not developed the system as broadly and LBHF are leading the way in terms of finance and procurement. Key differences are:

- Wandsworth have a user base of 200 as opposed 500 in Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Wandsworth have not developed the system as broadly, for example they do not use Frameworki for finance/procurement processes
- No significant data quality or reporting issues.
- In team support provided by business support team (10 people).
- Used ICS exemplars as delivered (Hammersmith and Fulham's have been tailored to fit with social work practice)

Camden has a team of similar size structure for development training and Support and have remained ICS compliant throughout. They advise that there is a good level of buy-in from the service and that staff are well trained and compliant in using the system. Again, they have also not developed the system as broadly and LBHF are leading the way in terms of finance and procurement. Key differences are:

- User base - around 800 with approximately 200 of these relating to CAF - Hammersmith and Fulham currently have 500 users, expected to rise to around 700 with CAF.
- System not as broadly developed. e.g. limited use of finance/procurement capability.
- No significant data quality or reporting issues.

7. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES

- 7.1 The Director is aware of the business imperative for carrying out this programme and has been consulted regarding both the one-off budget required for the programme itself and the ongoing budget requirement to support the work of the Frameworki development team following the Government's withdrawal of direct grant funding to support this.
- 7.2. The Director is also aware that whilst this programme identifies very little in direct cashable savings, the work carried out within the programme will enable CHS to deliver a number of the savings targets already outlined in their MTFS documentation.
- 7.3. On completion of the programme, a service review will be carried out by the Efficiency Team to identify whether further savings can be delivered either from the Frameworki development team, the CHS performance team or by reducing the number of social work practitioners.

8. COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES)

8.1 There are no direct legal implications for the purposes of this report.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 2000)
BACKGROUND PAPERS

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext. of Holder of File/Copy	Department/ Location
1.	CHS ICS Safeguarding Business Case	Richard Frost 2872	CHS Resources
2.	Social Work Practise Workstream Report	Georgina Rose 3621	CHS Looked After Children

Appendix 1: Detailed Costing

Project Cost Breakdown

Item	Cost
Programme/project management, and support	£62000
LBHF Development and Support	£176694
Social Work Practice Work stream	£84043
Training	£92411
Change Management Support and Communications	£45000
Management Information	£146339
EDMS	£32,682
Total	£639169

CHS Frameworki Development Support and Training Team Annual Costs

These are projected annual costs for the team and will in the main be incurred regardless of the project. Historically these have been funded by DCSF grants. There are at least two significant releases planned for the coming financial year.

Item	Cost
Development Manager	£59,681
Developer	£46,308
Trainer	£42,975
Support 1	£34,687
Support 2	£34,687
Support 3	£0 – Internal Transfer
HFBP	£117002*
Total	£335340

* Includes £42323 annual license costs incurred as a result of the project

Appendix 2: Detailed Costing ex Digital Dashboard

Notes on the Digital Dashboard

Currently managers have access to reports in 2 ways

1. Through Frameworki standard reports
2. From Business objects through a tool called infoview.

The reports are run can be run periodically and printed for use by managers.

The digital dashboard is a presentation tool that sits on top of the current Frameworki reporting capability, it can also sit over business objects reports that are also utilised within performance and planning, although this additional development has not been budgeted for.

The tool provides a desktop graphical display of realtime information for a predefined set of Frameworki reports relating to performance and budget. It will enable managers at all levels to monitor key performance and budgetary information in real time. This will enable improved performance management capability and budgetary responsibility at middle management level.

York MBC are undertaking the first implementation of the tool and it is also being taken up by both Brent and Wandsworth. Key drivers for Wandsworth investing in the tool are to enable improvements in performance management, budgetary control and to provide efficiency savings within their performance and planning/development and support teams. Camden have recently introduced the business objects reporting tool with infoview (already present in LBHF) and have no current plans to purchase the digital dashboard.

Estimated savings in relation to the tool are identified in section 4.4

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HFBP	£74679
Total	£293017

