



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
	<u>Public</u>

Direct Payments Audit Response Children with a Disability

Responsible Officer

e-mail: Steve.ladd@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 250160

Fax:

1. Summary

As part of the approved internal audit plan for 2018/19 Audit Services undertook a review of Direct Payments Children. The audit work was undertaken to give assurance on the extent to which management control objectives were being achieved. The final report of the audit activity (over July and October 2018) and its findings was issued in March 2019.

It concluded that the level of assurance was limited having previously been good and the audit report made a number of recommendations where control weaknesses, risks or areas for improvement were identified which required attention from the service area.

There were 17 recommendations set out in the internal audit report of which 9 were significant and 8 required attention. The managers responsible for the Disabled Children Team have been addressing the recommendations that they are responsible for and continue to review progress of implemented audit recommendations on a quarterly basis, the last Review took place on the 19th June 2019, ensuring that the recommendations deemed to have most significance are prioritised.

The attached action plan (appendix 1) demonstrates the progress that has been made. 3/9 significant recommendations have been evaluated as having been sufficiently attended to and rated green following a management review

in June 2019. 5/8 requires attention recommendations have been evaluated as having been sufficiently attended to and rated green following a management review in June 2019

2. Recommendations

That Committee members note the review that took place on the 19th June in relation to the recommendations made from the audit.

That Committee members note the progress that has been made to address the recommendations in the 12th March 2019 Audit Report to ensure that all improvements are effectively implemented and monitored via the management responses.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

System control weaknesses identified in the audit report are being addressed with quarterly reviews taking place and the action plan being updated following the review.

A vacancy in the key post of Short Break Reviewing Officer contributed to some of the system weaknesses identified within the audit report. As this post was recruited to and the post holder commenced in December 2018 (after the audit activity took place); the systems control weaknesses have been strengthened.

The build, introduction and implementation of Liquid Logic as the replacement for Care First has enabled more effective controls and processes to be implemented.

Children Social Care and Adult Social Care have been engaged in discussion and planning in relation to the development of an all age direct payment service. A strategic board has been established, which is chaired by the Assistant Director for Adult Social Care and three meetings of this board has taken place to date to oversee the progress of this work through an implementation group.

4. Financial Implications

The improvements outlined above (and in appendix 1) and the management action that has taken place to date will ensure that costs associated with

direct payments are identified, processed, reviewed and reconciled in a timely manner.

5. Background

Direct Payments, Children with a Disability

A Direct Payment is money given to children aged 16 years or over who have a disability and to parents or carers, aged 16 or over of young people who have a disability, by the authority to enable them to buy in support that is assessed as being needed, instead of the authority providing that support through their own services.

Children who have been assessed as meeting the criteria for disabled children's services aged 16 or over. Children and young people who have Education, Health and Care Plans and their parents have the right to request a Personal Budget, which may contain elements of education, social care and health funding, and may be delivered by way of Direct Payments. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, this covers those aged 0-25 having special educational needs and disabilities. Direct Payments are available if a child or young person is disabled and aged 16 or over or is a carer or parent aged 16 or over for a child with disabilities. No-one can be forced to have a Direct Payment.

Direct Payments can also be made to a willing and appropriate person on a disabled person's behalf if they lack the mental capacity to agree to and manage Direct Payments themselves.

Direct Payments generally cannot be used to pay for services from a spouse, partner or a close relative living in the household unless the local authority consider it is necessary to do so.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Local Member

Appendices

Appendix 1 Action Plan Children Direct Payment