



REPORT TO: MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ON 25 JANUARY 2024

SUBJECT: CAREFIRST REPLACEMENT

BY: CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of the requirement for a replacement Social Work services client based recording system.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB):

- i) note the requirement for a replacement Social Work services client based recording system; and**
- ii) agree the initiation of a process to begin scoping a replacement system.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 A report submitted to Audit, Performance and Risk Committee on 24 November 2022 providing an update on Internal Audit Completed Projects which included reference to a review of the Carefirst System undertaken and asked the Committee to note the recommendation to replace Carefirst (para 7 of minute refers).

3.2 Carefirst 5 was implemented in 1998 and upgraded to Carefirst 6 in 2010. The last update took place in 2017.

3.3 There are around 450 users of Carefirst with the majority being frontline social workers and social care workers, the system supports the following functions;

- Adult & Childrens Social Work and Social Care Services
- Justice Services
- Finance
- Local Authority Occupational Therapy

3.4 The system currently supports around 10,000 live cases.

3.5 The current contract is due to expire on 31 March 2024 and a year long extension to this will be sought, to allow the full procurement process for a replacement system.

4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The current Carefirst System is now a legacy system and cannot be upgraded as the supplier has developed a new platform and product. It is possible that the current provider will stop offering support and no further developments of the system may be possible. It is outdated and does not align with other programmes in order to create required performance reporting.
- 4.2 The system is not cloud based which means users must be logged into the Council Network. This means that currently only users with a Moray Council log in and device can have access to Carefirst.
- 4.3 Carefirst does not allow documents to be uploaded meaning that documents are stored in various places including paper and electronic files. Collating information regarding cases can be very time consuming. A single system for all information would provide a more secure means of holding sensitive information and would allow for staff to access templates and completed documents in one secure place.
- 4.4 Reports for Statutory Returns, Freedom of Information and team performance are produced from a different system due to the restrictions of the Carefirst system. It currently is not possible to pull performance reports from the system. Replacing the system would allow for a more streamlined approach, saving Officer time.
- 4.5 As part of the scoping, consideration would be given as to how enhanced financial monitoring of social care spend can be incorporated into any new system.
- 4.6 There has been significant growth in Social Work and Social Care activity and related need to record information about individuals coming into contact with services. The system is time consuming for staff working with an outdated system. A more technologically advanced system would free up social work and social care time to allow more time to be spent with individuals and families coming into contact with services. It would also allow for smarter reporting, better governance and oversight with reports being able to be produced in real time.
- 4.7 Interfaces between Carefirst and other systems can be considered but would be costly and will require a lot of time to build, there is also a possibility that software will not support the process. There will also be a risk of increased human errors to information that requires to be accurate.
- 4.8 Initiating the process now would allow for the new system to be procured and work beginning for the transfer to a new system. It would take the minimum of a year to finalise the process.

- 4.9 A project manager would require to be appointed to lead this process with a dedicated multi-agency team and resources.
- 4.10 There are a variety of systems used across Scotland and Grampian. An opportunity to do some scoping would help inform the position for Moray and learn from other local authorities who have recently replaced their case management systems.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan “Partners in Care 2022 – 2032”

This scoping work would ensure that our systems are as simple and efficient as possible, and, is in line with the strategic context of the aforementioned documents.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Financial implications

There will be a cost to recruiting a team and replacing the system which will be brought back to committee when there scoping work has been initiated.

(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation

There are risks to remaining with the current system in that it is not subject to any new updates or developments, with the developer having created a new system. To continue with Carefirst would risk problems developing that cannot be resolved. Every single case open to social work is recorded on Carefirst and staff rely on this to be able to pull together information pertaining to individuals open to services. It is also where managers have oversight of the work being undertaken by staff.

Carefirst is not adequately supported by OLM, the system provider. The support currently in place from OLM is significantly limited and will eventually cease, as OLM have rolled out a new product. Further to this, Carefirst will not be updated. This means that any changes to legislation and regulation with associated reporting, will need manual data retrieval and report writing as OLM cannot create new reporting scripts.

We are mitigating these risks by starting a procurement process.

(e) Staffing Implications

Project manager and team to progress the procurement of a new system.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

(i) Directions

There are no directions arising from this report.

(j) Consultations

Chief Officer; Interim Chief Financial Officer; IT; Service Managers;
Information Systems Officer; Senior Auditor Corporate Services.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report provides an update regarding the Carefirst Social Work services client based recording system and the intention to begin the procurement process for a replacement.

Author of Report: Tracy Stephen

Background Papers:

Ref: