Better Security, Better Care

Evaluation of the Better Security, Better Care Programme 2023-24

Executive Summary

November 2024

CordisBright

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Summary of findings and recommendations

The evaluation of the BSBC programme between 2021 and 2024 shows a highly effective implementation of a decentralised model that has led to significant increases in DSPT take-up at a relatively low cost.

There have been significant wider benefits to the programme, which has seen local support organisations (LSOs) contact a significant proportion of the 27,000 social care locations in England to improve their understanding of the importance of data security and protection for their service users and their businesses. A significant proportion of these (75% as of August 2024) have gone onto publish the complete the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT), compared to 15% in April 2021.

Engagement with social care providers is challenging and the programme has been very successful in achieving this, even with the hardest to reach small domiciliary care agencies. This has led to benefits in the wider health and care system, with many local authorities and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) recognising the value of local delivery partners through care associations and LSOs.

The development of the Digital Care Hub is happening at a time when there are two significant opportunities to shape digital developments in social care. The new Labour government's early proposals on data and digital developments align well with the Digital Care Hub's experience and aspirations. At the same time, the potential re-shaping of the operation of the CQC provides an opportunity for the Digital Care Hub and LSOs to shape the future of digital initiatives and data security in social care services.

The rest of this report provides a review of the programme since 2021. This is presented in the form of an overview report, with a data appendix, which provides a detailed breakdown of changes in DSPT compliance in different geographical areas and different social care provider types.

1.2 Summary of recommendations

1.2.1 Recommendation 1 – Engaging small providers (section 3.1.3)

Several LSOs have had success in engaging small providers over the last year, including Bradford Care, Care & Support West, SE and SW London and Dorset PIC. Further work should be undertaken to understand what has driven this success and the extent to which it is due to the actions of the LSO or other factors (such as local authority commissioning practices) and the learning disseminated to other LSOs.

1.2.2 Recommendation 2 – Regional providers (section 3.1.3)

Regional providers, that is those that operate within several local authorities within a single region, should be identified and a plan for engagement developed. There are concentrations of these providers in a relatively small number of areas in the country, including Tyneside, Cumbria, West Yorkshire and Bristol.

1.2.3 Recommendation 3 – DSPT completion targets (section 3.1.3)

DSPT completion targets should be set for organisation sizes, with a recommendation that the target for large national organisations should be 100%, medium-sized and regional providers should be 95% and small providers 75%.

1.2.4 Recommendation 4 – Providers publishing at DSPT Standards Exceeded target (section 4.4)

There should be a new target for the percentage of providers achieving Standards Exceeded. We suggest a target of 15-20% initially (currently 7% of providers exceed standards). The programme would require additional resources to support this recommendation so an initial step would be to quantify the cost of the resources required.

1.2.5 Recommendation 5 – LSO outcome measures (Section 3.2.5)

LSO performance should be measured on outcomes as well as activity. We recommend that the number and names of providers engaged each month should be recorded. These data would enable the central team to measure the percentage of engaged providers that subsequently achieve Approaching Standards, Standards Met or Standards Exceeded.

1.2.6 Recommendation 6 – Action Research Fund projects (section 3.4.2)

There are several recommendations related to future Action Research Fund projects which we have grouped under one overall recommendation:

- The initial specification of projects should clearly set out the expected outputs, specifically in terms of actionable findings

- There should be additional support for organisations that have limited research experience.

- There should be regular ongoing support for projects consisting of both 1:1 sessions and group sessions with other projects to share experiences and support.

- There should be a clear report template which sets out how findings and recommendations are to be identified and the benefits of these.

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