5.3 Appropriate Access to Care Records

Improvement Project Title: Appropriate Access to Care Records
Executive Sponsor: Rob Polkinghorne (ICS Board Chair)
Project Lead: Gaynor Clarke, ACC, Programme Manager (GClarke@aberdeencity.gov.uk)
Increase the % of children, young people and adults who report that they feel supported when accessing their records by 2022
Link to Local Outcome Improvement Plan: **Stretch Outcome 5:** 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026

Why is this important

National Context - Drivers for Change
The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry (SCAI) is investigating institutions and enabling people to share their experiences of being in care in Scotland. The recommendations, to be published, will take cognisance of these investigations and of those who have articulated their lived experience to the inquiry; many of whom have accessed their social work records. The Independent Care Review is coming to the end of its third phase and has clearly identified that records make a significant contribution to people's experiences of their care. Historically this has not been positive.

ACC is using both the SCAI and The Independent Care Review, as vehicles to influence the transformation of services. Local discoveries made during research for the Inquiry, people's lived experience's and care experienced voices are influential to the transformation. Lessons learned at a local level are being applied to the National context to compel change.

Failure to take this opportunity increases the risk of harmful practice in relation to record keeping thus impacting when people access their records. There is also an increased likelihood of complaints as people develop a higher expectation of services.

Background
Recording is a crucial part of day to day practice, and for care experienced people, records hold deep meaning, and represent their life history and identity. An individual's decision to access their records is not taken lightly, and each person deserves the sensitive, person centred support they require to access and make sense of their records. For many though, this is not the reality, with bureaucratic, process driven, and insensitive procedures experienced as the norm.
By radicalising how records are written, co-produced, accessible throughout life, with appropriate support, to access at any age or stage will improve outcomes, experience and impact for care experienced people.

Benefit Realisation
There will be a single point of entry (Access to Information Team) and dedicated teams to support the person through the access journey (SCAI Team) for all care experienced people accessing their records, including those who have experience of the adoption process. The intention is to reduce bureaucracy in the system taking cognisance of each person's wants

and needs during the process. It will be a strength based; customer centric approach. As an organisation it is within our power to take account of the moral and ethical responsibilities owed to both care experienced people and the staff carrying out the function. Education, training and development for all professionals involved in the transformation of practice will result in workers who have the tools and skills to ensure those accessing their records have a positive experience when doing so. Over time due to the transformation in how records are written and produced will reduce the formal requests to access records.

Cost Implications

The new model will have a negative cost impact due to the increase in people accessing their records, the demand and pressure on services cannot be ignored, there is a requirement for the staffing quota to be increased to respond timeously. Cost associated with training to support people to access their records and for counselling for those carrying out the function must be considered.

Measures:

- **Outcome measures**
  Feedback survey to discover whether the service provided has met the needs of the individual, this will be quantitative and qualitative
  No. of people being signposted/referred to support agencies
  No. of people who confirm the process was a positive experience

- **Process measures**
  Increase in number of requests to the access team
  Number of people contacted within one working week
  Completion of a co-produced support plan
  Number of support plans complete
  Number of people being offered support at initial contact; this includes referral/signposting to services
  Number of feedback forms sent and returned

- **Balancing measures**
  Increase in number of people accessing their records
  Self reporting of confidence in process

Change Ideas

- One stop shop to access records across the Partnership

- Improve current process for all stakeholders; stakeholder development of process based on staff survey results

- Each person accessing their records to have a support plan co-produced with them which clearly explains their wishes and support needs during the process

- Review and provide specialised training to all staff responsible for the pathway

- Recording conversations and providing written assurance of person centred plans specific to the unique journey for each person accessing their records

- Removing the holding letter process

- Standardised redaction processes and procedures

- Develop a rational and proportionate approach to redaction with best practice standards and procedures

Potential risks and/or barriers to success & actions to address these

Infrastructure
- Risk to transformation projects due to resource pressures and not having human resource to carry out the function's therefore continuing to provide a negative experience to people accessing their records; review of human resource
- Time taken to co-produce records; the correct technology with capacity to co-produce and input 24/7
- Technical interdependencies of systems and processes across services and agencies; master data management and development of multi-agency systems
- GDPR impact on agencies; data/information sharing protocols to support the function (ISP at sign off stage (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray))

Process
- Right to Access, Subject access Requests concluding out with Information Commissioner (ICO) timeframe resulting in complaints; person centred/centric support plan and keeping the ICO abreast of any risks alongside business continuity and risk reporting

Project Team:

Gaynor Clarke, Programme Manager	
Write, Right About Me! Future Proofing - Records	**Right to Access; Subject Access (Multiagency) Model Including Support to Access Records**
CHAIR Miriam Smith, Aberdeen City Council **VICE CHAIR** Peter Melrose, Who Cares? Scotland **MEMBERSHIP** Susannah Balducci, SCAI, Research Assistant Renee Bertram, Childrens Rights Development Officer David Humphrey/ Clare Hancock Fraser, Robert Gordons University Jackie Swan and Jenny Murray, Foster Carers, Aberdeen City Chris Fox and Linda Gray, NHS Kathleen Malcolm, Includem James Maitland and Eve Whyte, ACC Senior Project Manager - Replacement for careFirst	**CHAIR** Lucy McKenzie, Senior customer Experience Officer, Aberdeen City Council **VICE CHAIR** Chris Morton, Team Manager, Adoption and Fostering, Social Work, Aberdeen City Council Elizabeth Templeton, SCAI Research Assistant Sharon Fraser, SCAI Research Assistant Helen Cannings, Data Protection Officer, Aberdeen City Council Soo Ferries, Aberlour Child Care Trust *Please note membership of this board is under review due to the rationalising of project streams

Larissa Gordon, Virtual Headteacher
Gillian Robertson, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA)
Fiona Topping / Sheila McDerment, Police Scotland
Lorraine Cran, Barnardo's
Jennifer Allen, Residential Childcare worker
Cathy Buchan / Melanie Jack , Alternative Family Care
Donna Simpson, Childrens Rights Officer
Carol Simmers, Adult Protection, ACHSCP
Leanne Green, Youth Team

Outline Project Plan - Set out your initial plan about the timeline for your project. (This should be reviewed regularly)

Project Stage	Actions	Timescale
Getting Started (Project Score 1-3)	Three leads and project teams identified, canvases and plans developed: Right to Access, Subject Access Request (RTA-SAR) Multi Agency Model and reviewed processes; Record Keeping for Life (future proofing records), Write; Right About Me! Developing a customer centric approach to supporting people access their SW records (potentially multi-agency child records). Membership of each project board is representative of the multi-agency and evidences effective partnership working. Care experienced representation is imperative to support an open and transparent demonstration of our corporate parenting role and the importance placed on the experiences of those care for across the City. The current customer experience is being improved taking cognisance of and ensuring adverse risk practice is avoided to ensure people have the best experience when accessing their records. Write; Right About Me! (What's working? What's not? What can be improved?). Review of current recording and report writing processes	Complete* *Please note a review is underway of current project teams with the potential of rationalising from three to two

	based on learning from historic records and feedback from people accessing their records. National networks representative of care experienced people implemented to better understand the impact records have on those being written about and when records are accessed. It is recognised there is limited academic research on this subject area. Review of current support offered to those accessing their records. Identifying to people the impact accessing their records may have on them and includes signposting and supporting those throughout their access journey.	
Designing and Testing Changes (Project Score 4-7)	Survey of those completing SAR's to ascertain baseline knowledge, skill and understanding and how people are supporting and being supported during the journey. Analysis of feedback from those who have accessed their records and are at the end of this journey. SAR experience feedback loop not functional. New process live April 2019. To be developed further to ensure the voice of the customer is heard and further impact on the customer experience. Engagement and collaboration with Care Experienced people to understand issues and risks; WhoCares? Scotland, Information Commissioners Office and CELCIS to gain insight to lived experience of accessing records and impact on those accessing their records.	Complete
Implementing and sustaining changes that demonstrate improvement (Project Score 7-10)	Human resource to respond to SAR demand Training and support programme for employees who are responsible for social work right to access, subject access requests Clear support pathway (including person centred support and counselling) for those accessing their records and those carrying out this function	2020

	Services to provide support and counselling to those accessing their records and those carrying out this function	
	Time and motion study to better understand the timeframe and resource to support the transformed pathway	
	Development and review of policy/procedure/guidance to support the portfolio	
	Development of portfolio of tools to support professionals	
	Training and development programme for professionals across the partnership	
	Education institutes to review current curriculums	

Spreading Changes (Project Score 9-10)	Whole systems review:
	• Single point of access for all RTA-SAR/Schedule 2 (Police Scotland Requests)
	• Records and report writing
	• Support to access records
	• Multi-agency collaboration and accomplishment
	• Impact on education of social workers (RGU)
	
	National influence:
	• ACC best practice model to impel National change
	• SWS HA practice network membership – 32 LA's + ICO, NRS, Future Pathways, WhoCares? Scotland, SCRA, Care Inspectorate, IRISS – short term working parties to develop products to establish best practice
	• Capitalising on memberships and relationships to influence the National perspective:
	  - Development of RTA SAR Codes of Conduct in collaboration with ICO
	  - MIRRA campaign, collaboration with NRS
	SG change in statute for those accessing their records and for those responding to requests
		2022