

**Audit and Select Committee**  
**December 2015**  
**All Age Disability & Independent Futures Update**

**Background:**

1. The Committee reviewed Independent Futures (IF) on 24 March 2015 and asked for a progress report in six months or sooner if necessary.
2. The All Age Disability Strategy “Living My Life My Way” is to ensure that all disabled children, young people and adults are able to live healthy, full and fulfilling lives. It means mobilising all partners to work together to ensure that disabled people and their families are able to access the wide ranging opportunities that are available to all within their communities.
3. This brief document provides a summary of progress made in the delivery of the IF change programme.
4. Significant progress has been made over the past six months in all aspects of the business. However, it is recognised that there is still a long way to go before IF reaches its full potential.

**Structure:**

5. 2015/2016 has been a year in which, so far to date, IF have stabilised in terms of structure, workforce, performance and finance.
6. As part of IF review of staffing and management structure, detailed demand analysis was undertaken between Jan and Mar 2015.
7. Following this review the service is now operating a 4 x dual district model and each district has a mix of qualified and un qualified staff, advanced practitioners, locality manager and operational manager.
8. As at 19/11/2015 teams are fully staffed and have no agency workers across the service.
9. Average caseloads for an Adult SW is 34 and a Children’s SW is 22. Whilst still high, a forensic analysis of cases is currently ongoing in the teams to identify cases that can be closed or transferred to a reviewing officer.
10. There is confidence within the service that capacity is now sufficient to meet demand however there remains ongoing dialogue with other stakeholders to ensure everyone takes their fair share of responsibility, particularly around safeguarding, MH and PD.
11. For the first time in 4 years the OT service had a dedicated professional lead, a fully staffed workforce and no agency or temporary staff and a challenging OT plan.

### **Early Intervention and Prevention:**

12. We have introduced a Supporting Independence Service (SIS) within IF which focuses on prevention and early intervention which has released capacity on our operational teams.
13. Since its introduction in July it has received 143 new referrals of which only 18 have gone into operational teams for full assessment.
14. The early success of SIS has led to further development of the service to support transition, assistive technology and current users who have enablement potential.

### **Workforce:**

15. All IF managers are taking part in a Future Foundations Leadership programme and a robust workforce development plan has been established.
16. Sickness absence has reduced month on month since April (from 19.04 to 14.29 average days lost) and turnover of staff has also reduced in 2015.
17. All vacant posts have been recruited to and all vacancies since April have attracted good quality candidates from both within the County and out of County.
18. Staff engagement is a high priority and the Head of Service conducts regular business briefings with all teams.
19. A staff survey was carried out in September and analysis of results fed into IF planning processes.

### **Planning and Performance:**

20. The service have refreshed the vision and key objectives, has a business plan, risk plan and workforce development plan and the governance arrangements are rigorously applied.
21. As part of the governance framework operational challenge is being applied to operational managers through accountability meetings, outcomes of which include a robust action plan and report.
22. There are weekly operational, finance and contracts meetings held which include representation from one council partners, monthly senior management team meetings and quarterly site visits by Head of Service who delivers a business briefing which includes question and answer session.
23. IF have faced significant challenge since April from external factors including changes to EU procurement regs, withdrawal of supporting people funding, cessation of ILF and an aggressive approach from our

health partners regarding discharging complex patients from hospital settings into the community.

24. The key risks identified from these pressures were around performance and finance, both of which have been mitigated through excellent planning and a positive, can do approach from operational teams.
25. Financially, IF began the year with a forecasted overspend of £3.5m. Latest budget statement presents the current forecasted overspend to be £2.625m which represents a significant achievement against a backdrop of constant external pressure.
26. Performance against IF KPI's has been maintained at 2014/15 levels and in some cases slightly above. This again represents a positive step forward for IF as the majority of qualified staff have been consumed by the external pressures and priorities.

**Quality:**

27. The introduction of advanced practitioners has enabled IF to embed the quality assurance framework and in particular, concentrate the focus on reflective practice and peer observation and supervision.
28. A revised version of the practice audit toolkit has encouraged a more qualitative approach to carrying out audits and quality circles are now routinely used to address trends identified through analysis of results.
29. A customer survey has been introduced and early results are encouraging with customers reporting a high level of satisfaction around choice and control, health and wellbeing, contact and quality of life.
30. Whilst there is still more work to do around fully demonstrating a commitment to continual quality improvement the next stages in IF's development and maturity will be around self-assessment.
31. IF now has a suite of internal processes, procedures and protocols which are stored on the intranet and monitored through audit as part of the accountability meetings