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Inform
Briefing

Share Cambridge conference, Cambourne, 25 April 2019

June 2019

Socitm inform

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Introduction

Share Cambridge took place in Cambourne, a town a few miles west of the university city, which has been built from scratch over the last two decades. The first residents moved here in 1999 and development continues on its eastern side. One of those attracted here is South Cambridgeshire District Council, which moved from offices in the south of Cambridge to Cambourne's business park a few years ago.

Appropriately for a new town, Share Cambridge saw Socitm taking new approaches in how it runs events. The day, which focused on health and wellbeing, included several collaborative discussion sessions and, in a particular innovation, it ended with sessions designed to help attendees improve their own wellbeing.

Social care IT needs to step up says NHS Digital

Mark Nicholas, NHS Digital's Chief Social Worker and Senior Clinical Lead for Social Care, opened the event by outlining the scale of adult social care (ASC) provision in England: around 21,200 organisations, made up of 8,700 providing residential services and 12,500 non-residential ones, employing 1.6 million people. "That's slightly more than the NHS," Nicholas said.

Unlike the health service, most of this work takes place outside the public sector and is often paid for directly by clients. More than 75% of care homes and more than 80% of care beds in England are run privately, with just 112,200 people employed in this area by English local authorities. Across the UK 41% of social care clients are entirely self-funded, compared with 37% funded publicly.

Nicholas said that these numerous private sector organisations struggle to deal with information governance and often lack specialist staff. NHS organisations collect extensive data, which is collated by NHS Digital, but this is not the case for ASC providers. As a result, the Department of Health and Social Care "is not sighted on what's happening" in ASC.

As part of compliance with the NHS Long Term Plan, NHS Digital is considering digital maturity assessments of ASC providers, similar to those already used for NHS organisations. Nicholas said that many have poor digital maturity: "I have seen people discharged from hospital going into a residential home clutching a brown envelope on their stretcher containing medical records," he said.

The organisation is also looking at how the plan's ban on NHS organisations using fax machines to communicate from 2020 could apply to ASC providers, although Norfolk County Council's Director of ICT and former Socitm president Geoff Connell said that the only reason his organisation has a fax machine is to communicate with a few local GP surgeries. Connell added that the area's NHS sustainability and transformation partnership, which includes the council, is working on removing these.

More generally, Nicholas contrasted the software used by GP surgeries and ASC providers. GP software has to meet standards covering areas including interoperability, but "it's the Wild West in terms of care provider systems". NHS Digital is looking at whether it could apply similar standards to ASC providers' software, but he added that many providers also have poor standards of data and cyber security, as well as lacking the smartcard-based staff authentication systems used by the NHS.

He added that while local authorities do not cause IT maturity headaches, almost all use case record software from the same supplier, giving it a near-monopoly. Software used in the NHS is usually designed and implemented with significant levels of involvement from healthcare professionals, but that is not the case in ASC: "We have to step up," he said. "I still get social workers saying to me, 'we don't do data'. I say, you bloody well should do."

"I have seen people discharged from hospital going into a residential home clutching a brown envelope on their stretcher"

Delegates' plans for sharing data

In two workshop sessions, groups of delegates were asked how they could improve the sharing of their organisations' data. Their responses included the following comments.

How would you start a data-sharing project?

> Get partners around the table to understand the issues, identity the problems and boost co-operation.

> Develop trust with other organisations. Norfolk County Council created a system to track bed availability, used by care providers and hospitals. Director of ICT Geoff Connell said that the first step had been to build a collaborative understanding of what questions had to be asked.

> Consider the data issues in moving to a new system. One attendee said that his council has just moved to a new social care system, but some financial reports will have to be produced using the old system as well. Instead of running the same reports on the old and the new systems then combining them, the council is looking at producing a combined set of data to use while the two systems are in use.

> Get the partners involved to agree a memorandum of understanding to provide a collective statement of what is important at the start of the project, to avoid repeated discussions of what data can be shared.

What gets in the way of joining up ASC data?

› Governance and ownership of data.

› Legal compliance.

› Technical issues.

› Proving the right to access data.

› Not having the right people involved.

› Lacking agreement from senior leaders.

› Issues with datasets.

› A lack of funding.

› An organisation's risk-averse approach.

What ASC data-sharing would you set up if there were no boundaries?

› Adopt the Estonian model of using individual smartcards to track individuals' interactions and use the resulting data for the common good, the citizen and the public sector.

› Appoint an account manager for every citizen, who could see all their data and help them deal with government, or allow individuals to do this themselves.

Delegates added that innovation in ASC was hindered by fears of losing funding when loosening control of a process, making organisations wary of doing this. They also said that ASC suppliers often fail to innovate as they feel they have public sector customers locked in, given that a council would need to spend large sums retraining thousands of social care staff if it changed its software.

Suffolk pilots tablets to connect the elderly

Councils in Suffolk are giving easy-to-use tablet computers to older ASC clients, letting them use approved apps to improve their well-being.

Participants receive a Lenovo tablet computer with an eight-inch screen along with a secure wi-fi router, with fewer than 10 so far of a planned total 200. All the equipment to date has been installed and implemented by a social worker working in Haverhill in the south-west corner of Suffolk.

The Connected Together pilot project, whose partners include West Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council, University of Suffolk and GDS Digital, is funded by the government's Innovate UK agency.

Kevin Taylor, IT service manager for West Suffolk Council, told the event that the whole county has about 20,000 people living in social isolation. "The objective of the project is to improve wellbeing, reduce social isolation and ideally to stop people moving or slow the process of moving from tier one to tier two to tier three within social care," he said, referring to increasingly intensive and expensive levels of ASC provision.

Lee Godfrey, chief digital officer of GDS Digital, added that the project aims to let its users self-serve as much as possible, reducing their reliance on council staff. It has four key aims:

› Provide secure wi-fi in the home

› Provide digital access to social care and home appointments

› Improve access to digital resources

› Grant access to support services and local information

The apps are chosen and installed for each user. They may include Elefriends, an online community service run by mental health charity Mind, and Medisafe, a medication reminder app. Godfrey added that the tablet can also support video calls, which could enable fewer face-to-face visits.

He added that the project has greatly benefitted from the work of Michaela, a Haverhill-based social worker, who has deployed the necessary IT equipment including secure routers: "We have no IT engineers who go out and do this. She has done every single install and they all work," said Godfrey.

The tablet uses a simplified interface showing only a small number of icons. The project has commissioned usability testing to check it can be used by people with arthritis, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, as well as those with poor eyesight or reduced movement.

"We have no IT engineers who go out and do this. She has done every single install and they all work."

Elefriends: **www.elefriends.org.uk**
Medisafe: **www.medisafe.com**

Being happier and healthier in work

Share Cambridge tried something new in the second half of the afternoon. The 'Healthy is the new happy' section of the day – held under the banner of Socitm's Women in IT campaign, although open to everyone – built on the morning's theme of the conference but focused more specifically on the health and well-being of attendees by sharing experiences and lessons learnt, providing advice and running exercises.

Lisa Harrington talked about how she has become more resilient in handling career challenges while caring for both children and parents. Harrington, now the managing director of Socitm's training partner QA, worked for 10 years at BT including as chief information officer and group chief customer officer, the latter an executive board position. She described four key things that helped her:

01 "You've got to find your tribe": she said that a support group for professional life has many benefits, not least because friends can provide early warnings of when things are getting difficult. Harrington advised people to set aside time to set up and maintain such a group.

02 "I am extraordinarily good at saying no": Harrington said she learnt this the hard way by taking on too much, something which may be more common for women than men – she noted that it is unusual for fathers to act as class representatives for schools, although her husband now does this. Saying no can mean turning down new jobs that are either unwanted or come along at the wrong time, but she also sets smaller-scale rules, limiting meetings to 30 minutes and aiming to keep work commitments within her 'tramlines' of 7am and 4pm.

03 Looking after physical and mental health: both are equally important, and it is vital to find time for exercise and adequate sleep.

04 "I've learnt to pace myself": many people will work for decades, making professional life a marathon rather than a sprint, she said, meaning it makes sense to ask for time off when this is needed. Harrington said she was concerned about asking BT's then-chief executive Gavin Patterson for a sabbatical from her board duties when her father was suffering from Alzheimer's disease: "I didn't trust myself to ask, until I asked," she said. Patterson allowed her to take two months off, allowing her to spend time with her father before he died.

Harrington said it is also helpful to pick your bosses, as well as remembering that you will be successful if your team is successful. She recommended taking calculated risks when you have the capacity to do so: "Be very brave and don't doubt yourself," she said, adding that if you are a women working in a senior role, "you are a role-model, whether you know it or not". It is also important to know your brand, so people know what to expect from you – she described hers as "tough but fair" – adding that a quick way to discover this is to ask others how they see you.

QA trainers Aidan Matthews and Penny Withey then ran an exercise providing another way to help attendees search for their values. They asked people to discuss in pairs their favourite film then select a favourite character with a view to discussing the ways in which they are like and not like the film character. The point is that finding and living by our values can make us happier at work, Withey said.

The session also included short talks by Andrea Brewer, an account director at Dell, on the benefits she has gained from practising meditation over 12 years, and Toni Green of Enfield Council on how Socitm's Empowering Women in a Digital World (EWDW) programme has helped her pay less attention to internal voices of criticism, built her personal confidence and empowered her to deliver training to a group of 180 people.

Sam Smith, Socitm vice-president and strategic IT lead for shared services at Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, added that taking an EWDW course three years ago convinced her of the importance of networking. Smith said that despite this sounding like an American concept, networking has turned out to be entirely personal as it is built on who she knows. EWDW has also helped her to do things that initially made her fearful, including taking new jobs, volunteering for the role she now holds at Socitm – and organising this conference.

"Be very brave and don't doubt yourself... you are a role-model, whether you know it or not"

Lisa Harrington, QA

In brief

Data-driven public services

Supporting and enabling better outcomes driven by intelligence-led, digitally-enabled public services is the focus of a new Socitm and Eduserv (now Jisc) joint project. Natasha Veenendaal, Eduserv's head of marketing reported on the initial findings from two practitioner roundtable events. She outlined a number of common themes that have emerged, the most important being skills, partnerships and data sharing, ethics and security, and building business cases. Particular data professional skill gaps are:

> Understanding data – the analytics bit.

> Deploying good communication skills – asking the right questions to get the right outcomes.

> Understanding the area to which the data belongs.

There will be people and teams who have some of the key attributes – for example business intelligence being trained to do predictive modelling as a matter of routine. At the other end of the scale, there is leadership: having high level determination to break down internal silos and encourage data sharing with partners; and culture: all levels of staff appreciating the fundamental importance of data. The findings will be shared in an overview to be published in June, alongside three case studies and a proposal for an information portal on harnessing data.

## LGSS tries analysing work relationships

Shared services organisation LGSS has experimented with using data from collaboration software Slack to chart the quality of professional relationships, digital technologies manager Dan Blundell told the event. He was looking for ways to use data to improve the health and wellbeing of his team, and hit on Slack's ability to generate diagrams of work relationships based on the volumes of communication between

people through the software. This was combined with sentiment analysis to estimate whether these communications were positive, neutral or negative.

Incremental change held back by funding models

Transformational IT projects have died out in favour of agile incremental delivery, Socitm Advisory's director of health and social care Russ Charlesworth told the event. Speaking in a panel discussion, he said that an iterative 'agile development' model that delivers in months rather than years helps build confidence in a project, because it is likely to show benefits much earlier. Mark Golledge, programme manager, care and health digital lead at the Local Government Association, said that while many councils are interested in such development, funding models and business case rules are often designed for multi-year programmes, where the plans are fixed early on. Charlesworth responded that such programmes tend to stifle incremental changes.
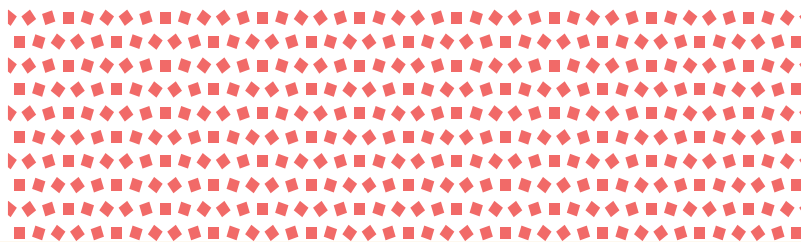
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We always welcome feedback and discussion on the contents of our publications.

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