NORTH AYRSHIRE
Health and Social Care Partnership

Integration Joint Board
24th October 2019

Subject:	**Community Care Occupational Therapy Update**
Purpose:	The purpose of this paper is to update the Integration Joint Board on: - The current waiting time position for occupational therapy assessment within the community care teams in North Ayrshire - Progress made to date to reduce these waiting times - Actions planned to further improve this position
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board: - Note the content of this paper - Approve the actions proposed to further improve this position

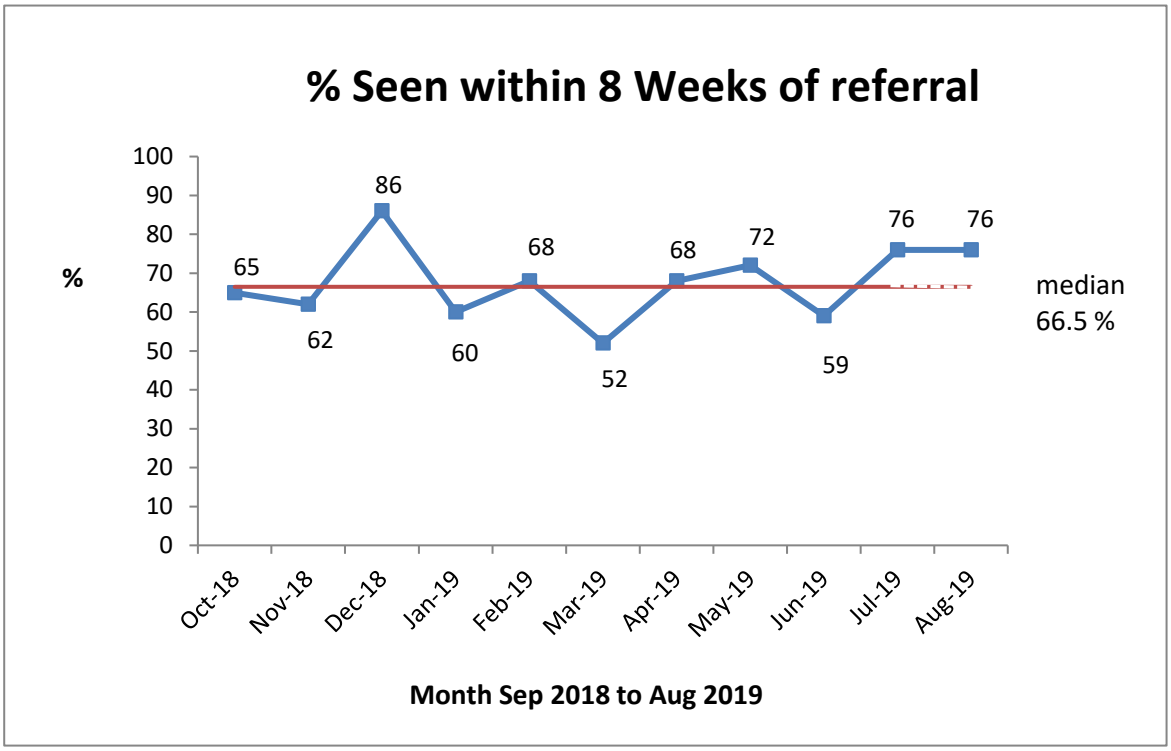
Glossary of Terms	
HSCP	Health and Social Care Partnership
AHP	Allied Health Professional
IC&R	Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation
OT	Occupational Therapist
IJB	Integration Joint Board

1.	**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
1.1	For some time now, there has been challenge around the capacity of the occupational therapy teams in North Ayrshire, with people waiting longer than is desirable for occupational therapy assessment in community care. In March 2019, a paper was brought to the Integration Joint Board to provide assurance around the steps already taken to improve the position. A stretch aim was agreed - that by the end of September 2019, 90% of referrals to community care occupational therapy will be seen within eight weeks of referral. This paper summarises the steps taken since February, provides update on the improving waiting time position, and proposes actions to further improve the position.
2.	**BACKGROUND**
2.1	The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by working with people and communities to enhance individuals' abilities to engage in the tasks or activities they want to, need to, or are expected to undertake, or by modifying the

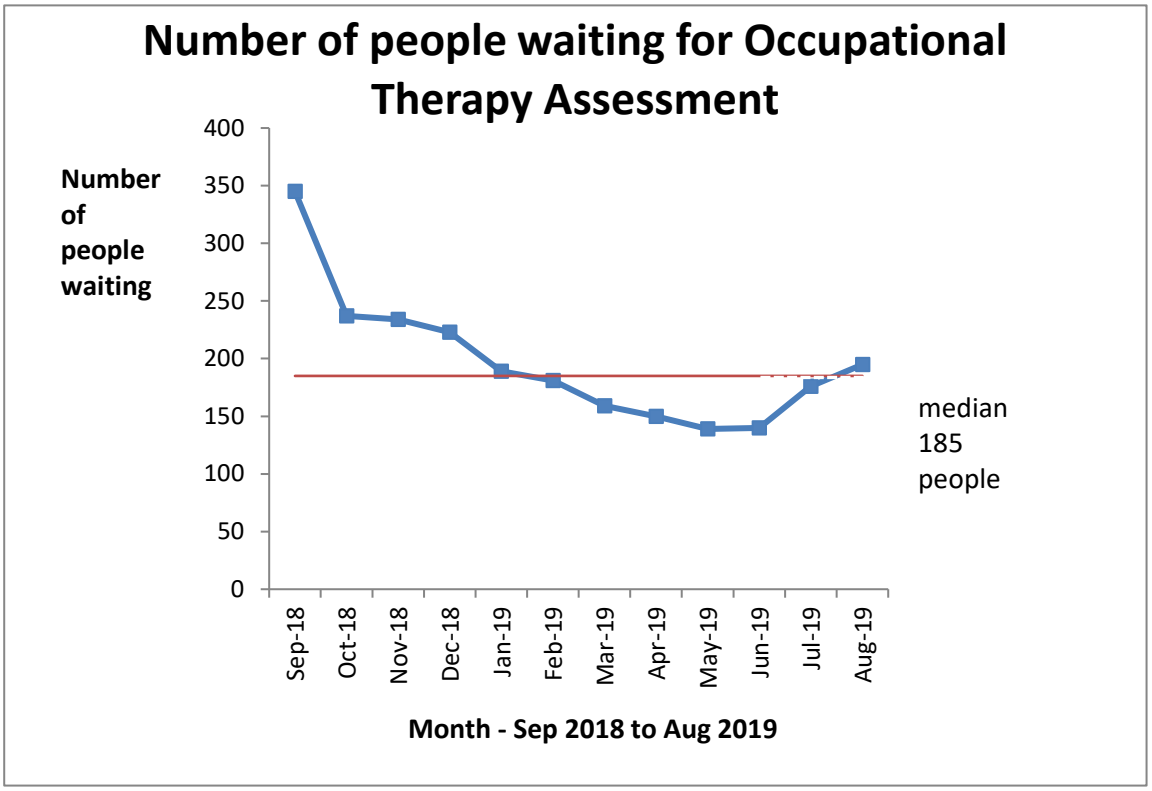
	occupation or environment to better support function.
2.2	The scope of this paper pertains to the occupational therapy input provided by those teams employed by North Ayrshire Council which have traditionally sat within the community care teams. These teams provide assessment and interventions which promote independence, keep people at home, and at their functional optimum. Traditionally the focus of such input has been mainly around the provision of equipment – such as, for example, toileting equipment, bath lifts or environmental adaptations – from the provision of a ramp, shower adaptation, or stair lift, through to complex major extensions to properties.
2.3	In March 2019, a paper was tabled at the Integration Joint Board (IJB) to advise on the current waiting time position for occupational therapy assessment within the community care teams in North Ayrshire, progress made to date to reduce these waiting times, and actions planned to further improve this position.
2.4	Despite the range of improvement initiatives already progressed, the paper highlighted that as of February 2019, waiting times for occupational therapy assessment in North Ayrshire remained higher than acceptable. Although the paper highlighted some variance across teams, as of February 2019 there were **226** people waiting an average of **105** days for occupational therapy assessment.
2.5	In March 2019, the IJB noted the contents of the paper tabled, and approved the action plan outlined in the paper. The IJB requested an update paper be brought back to update as to progress made.
2.6	This paper builds upon the March 2019 paper, and provides update on • Current wait times for occupational therapy assessment • Actions progressed in the last six months And outlines plans for continued improvement
3.	**UPDATE POSITION SEPTEMBER 2019**
3.1	**ACTION PLAN UPDATE** Table 1 below provides update against each of the actions approved in March 2019: **Table 1**

	Action	**Update October 2019**
3.1.1	A Quality Improvement approach is being progressed, with a stretch aim set that : '90% of referrals to the occupational therapy team are seen within 8 weeks of referral, by the end of September 2019'	The aim was agreed and has focussed efforts in its pursuit. A suite of measures are being used to monitor progress and consider impact. These are presented in section 3.2 of this paper. In August 2019, 76% of referrals to occupational therapy in North Ayrshire community care were seen within eight weeks of referral.

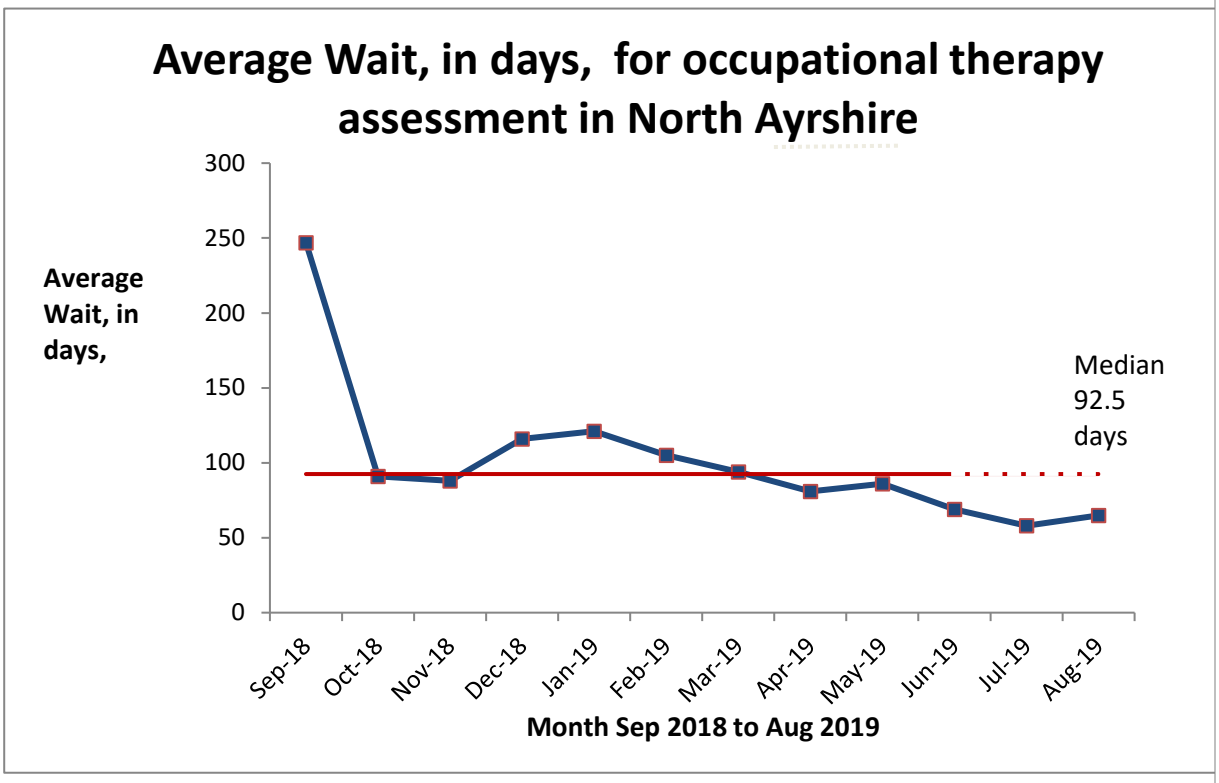
3.1.2	Equipment training will be rolled out across other professional groups, to improve early access to low risk, high volume equipment, and protect occupational therapy capacity and specialist skill set for more complex situations.	An element of equipment training has continued, alongside joint working to promote confidence and competence amongst staff groups who would not traditionally provide such equipment, freeing up the specialist occupational therapy time and skills for complex cases.. Further discussions are planned, with the appropriate stake holders to support roll out of this approach across wider staff groups.
3.1.3	Professional triage of occupational therapy referrals through the IC& R hub will continue, with a 'rehab first' approach being promoted wherever possible.	Triage of referrals by the Senior Occupational Therapists has continued, aligned to the Intermediate Care and Rehabilitation hub, with a significant proportion of requests for assistance being streamed to other community rehabilitation options, in support of a right service, right time approach. Further, this provides a new assurance that for those who do require to wait, they are waiting in the right place, with risk managed – urgent need being passed to Intermediate Care Team for immediate response.
3.1.4	Housing options approach will continue, with plans to train local staff to become trainers in this approach; cascading a 'housing options' approach across services which enables practitioners to have early conversations with regards to long term suitability of homes	Housing options 'train the trainer' training has been completed. Officers from North Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) are currently working with the other two Ayrshire Local Authorities to provide a sustainable training programme in Ayrshire and further embed this approach across practice, ensuring early conversations with people around the long term sustainability of home accommodation.
3.1.5	Internal professional work will continue, promoting joint working, joint training and reducing unnecessary transitions between the different components of the occupational therapy profession in North Ayrshire	Joint working continues to embed across occupational therapy within NAHSCP, with mentoring approaches enabling straightforward adaptation work to be progressed without onward referral. The Complex Case forum has reduced in frequency as a result of regular professional supervision, and associated decreased demand for such a forum.
3.1.6	The occupational therapy workforce will be increased, within existing available resources, to create additional capacity and further narrow the gap between referrals and allocations. Use Care & Repair budget of £125K , to employ additional assessment and review capacity as follows: • North - 1WTE OT, for 11 months • South – 1WTE OT & 0.5 WTE OTA, for 11 months • Extend the 3 Senior OT grade 11 for 12 months.	The timescales associated with recruitment processes have meant that some appointees to these temporary posts have only taken up post in recent weeks with others still awaiting confirmed start dates. An appropriate level of induction will require to be completed before the value of this additional capacity can be realised. In addition, movements within the existing workforce, and a 10% absence rate have further limited the availability of occupational therapy over the last few months. As a result, despite timeous action to recruit as approved, additional capacity within occupational therapy has not yet been experienced

3.2	**CURRENT WAITING TIME POSITION**
3.2.1	As of the 1st September 2019, there were **195** people waiting an average of **65** days for occupational therapy assessment in North Ayrshire. Since the last report to IJB in March 2019, there has been little significant change to the number of people waiting for assessment. There has, however, been an increase in the number of referrals received, and continued challenge around the capacity of a small and fragile workforce. Despite this, the average waiting time has considerably decreased to 65 days, bringing achievement of the set aim closer. Performance is illustrated further through the following charts:
3.2.2	**Chart 1 - Percentage of People Being Seen by Occupational Therapy Within Eight Weeks of Referral** 

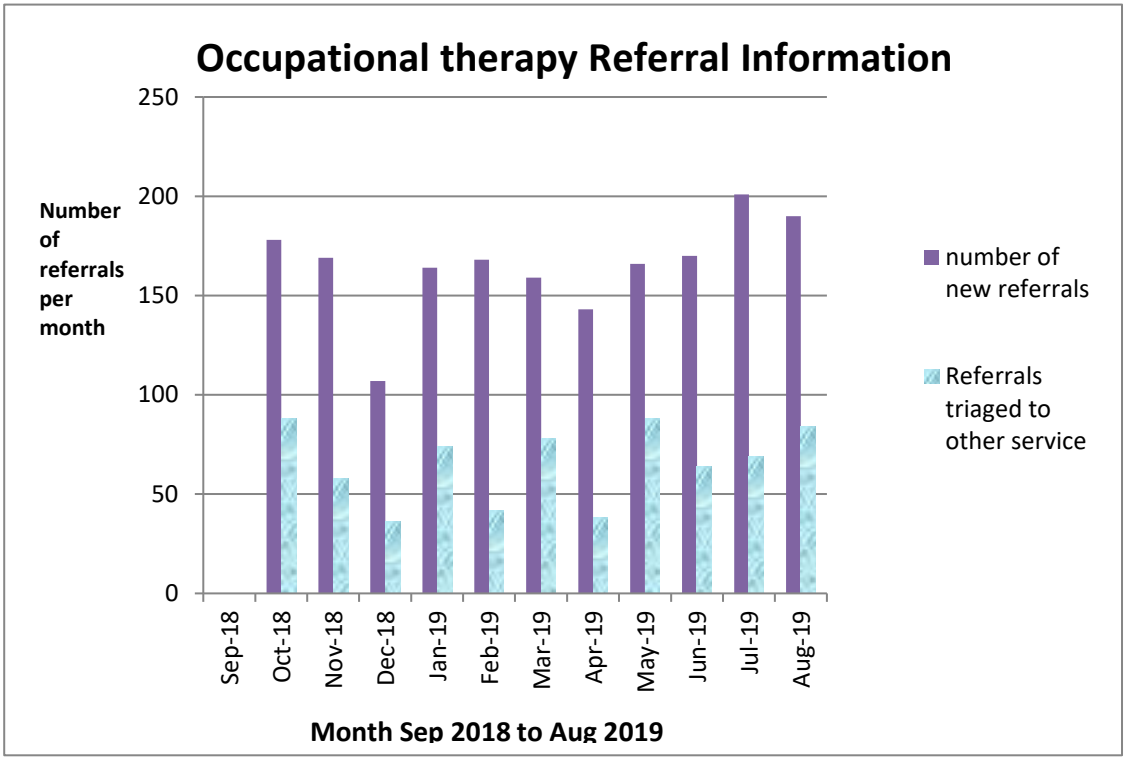
3.2.3 **Chart 2 - Number of People waiting for occupational therapy assessment in North Ayrshire**



3.2.4 **Chart 3 - Average Wait, in days, for occupational therapy assessment in North Ayrshire**



3.2.5 **Chart 4 - occupational therapy Referral Information**



4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 Despite the small scale, and fragile nature of the substantive workforce, coupled with increased demand for occupational therapy, it is encouraging to see that the average days waiting for assessment has reduced considerably since the paper brought to IJB in March 2019.

Further, there can be a level of assurance accepted that the triage approach is ensuring people are streamed quickly to the service most likely to best meet their needs, and that those who do require to wait for occupational therapy assessment are those people who require such specialist assessment, with high risk cases being addressed appropriately.

That said, there has been little change in the number of people waiting for occupational therapy assessment, and the overall aim has not yet been achieved.

It is, therefore, proposed that the improvement approach continue, with the following focus:

- Continue the triage approach to referrals, with a focus on process to ensure maximum efficiency
- Continue the internal professional work around joint working and supervision to support effective, safe, evidence-based practice which takes a ‘rehab first’ approach
- Continue to progress plans around equipment training; to protect specialist occupational therapy capacity for complex cases and improve experience around access to simple, low risk equipment solutions.
- Continue work with electronic systems to ensure accurate data for performance monitoring and reporting
- Given the timescales around recruitment, and within recurring available finance, seek to extend new recruits beyond original timescales.

4.2	**Anticipated Outcomes**
	The approach taken to date, and outlined as planned above, seeks to ensure the best outcomes for the people of North Ayrshire, and best use of the occupational therapy resource available.
4.3	**Measuring Impact**
	A suite of measures including referral numbers, service activity, and waiting times will continue to be monitored, with regular reports to the Director of North Ayrshire HSCP, and North Ayrshire Health and Care Governance group, and future update report back to IJB on progress.
5.	**IMPLICATIONS**

Financial:	Nil
Human Resources:	Nil
Legal:	Nil .
Equality:	Nil
Children and Young People	Nil.
Environmental & Sustainability:	Nil
Key Priorities:	The content of this paper relates to the HSCP's strategic priorities around early intervention and prevention, and bringing services together
Risk Implications:	The steps already taken, and actions proposed in this paper seek to mitigate risks associated with people waiting for community care occupational therapy assessment
Community Benefits:	Nil

Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both	Direction to :-	
	1. No Direction Required	X
	2. North Ayrshire Council	
	3. NHS Ayrshire & Arran	
	4. North Ayrshire Council and NHS Ayrshire & Arran	

6.	**CONSULTATION**
6.1	The attached report has been developed in consultation with the Senior Occupational therapists, the AHP Leadership team, and the Community Health and Care senior management team in North Ayrshire.
7.	**CONCLUSION**
7.1	**This paper has provided update to the Integration Joint Board on :**

	The improving waiting time position for community care occupational therapy assessment in North Ayrshire And Actions planned to further improve this position **The IJB are asked to :** Note the content of this paper Approve the actions proposed within, to further improve this position

For more information please contact

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