

Report to Executive Director of Adults and Health

February 2021

Discharge to Assess with Reablement Contracts Proposals

Report by Commissioning Lead for Older People

Summary

Discharge to Assess with Reablement services are services within a residential care setting for people being discharged from hospital who are not yet able to return home. There are currently 5 services across the County delivering between 42-48 Discharge to Assess with Reablement beds. The beds have previously been shown to evidence a positive return on investment for the health and social care system. However, recent changes in demand and increases in vacancies has led to a review of the requirement for the beds in the final year of the contract, and the recommended proposals outlined within the report. These include a change of purpose of beds within Burleys Wood to provide nursing provision instead of Discharge to Assess with Reablement and a reduction of the number of block beds within the Heathers and Fulford Care and Nursing Home.

Recommendations

The Executive Director of Adults and Health is asked to;

- (1) approve the extension of Discharge to Assess with Reablement contracts as outlined within the proposals, for a further 12 months until 31 March 2022 at a cost of £0.87m; and
 - (2) approve the repurposing of ten beds at the Shaw Healthcare service Burleys Wood from Discharge to Assess with Reablement to nursing beds.
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Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 Discharge to Assess with Reablement services are beds within residential care provision which support people being discharged from hospital who are unable to yet return home. Services operate from several locations across the county and provide therapy support alongside care in a residential setting where they are assessed outside of the hospital environment to determine whether they may have any longer term needs. The services aim to enable people to regain skills and support people to return home wherever possible. The decision to develop Discharge to Assess with Reablement services was made in September

2017 ([AH01 17-18](#)) and services are now in their penultimate year of the maximum contract term.

1.2 Services are currently available at the following locations:

Service	Location	Current number of Discharge to Assess with Reablement beds
Bletchingley	Haywards Heath	10 (+2 seasonal pressure beds)
The Heathers	Worthing	6 (+2 seasonal pressure beds)
Fulford Care & Nursing Home	Littlehampton	6 (+2 seasonal pressure beds)
Marjorie Cobby House	Selsey	10
Burleys Wood	Crawley	10

1.3 Contracts for services at Bletchingley, The Heathers and Fulford Care & Nursing Home were awarded following a full and compliant procurement process.

1.4 Burleys Wood is operated by Shaw Healthcare as part of the Council's strategic residential care services contract. Marjorie Cobby House is a West Sussex County Council operated service where the service was redesigned to deliver the Discharge to Assess with Reablement service.

1.5 A return on investment analysis showed that over four years the Discharge to Assess with Reablement services made a positive net return of £1.4m to the health and social care system through more time efficient hospital discharges and by enabling individuals to have a more resource efficient solution to their long term care and support needs.

1.6 A total of 216 people were admitted to Discharge to Assess with Reablement services between March and November 2020, although the vacancy rate has been high due to homes being impacted by Covid-19 and unable to take new patients during outbreaks. The vacancy rate target of 20% has therefore not been achieved in this financial year, although with homes residents and staff having been priority for vaccinations over recent weeks it is hoped that this will improve.

1.7 Since these services commenced the Council has also commissioned Home First pathway Hospital Discharge Care services to support people to discharge from hospital straight to their own homes. The majority of hospital discharge cases are now referred to home first services which has also led to a decrease in demand for Discharge to Assess with Reablement services in recent months.

2 Proposal details

2.1 Proposals for the Discharge to Assess with Reablement beds reflect the reduction in demand seen in this financial year, the high void costs where block contracted beds are not able to be used but remain chargeable, and the increase in use of Home First Hospital Discharge services. However proposals also reflect the fact that the majority of services have a positive return on

investment with many customers being able to return home following a stay in these beds. It is therefore proposed the contracts at the Heathers, Fulford and Bletchingley be extended for a further and final year until 31 March 2022, with decisions on commissioning new or similar services to be taken during this final year following a further review of the beds.

- 2.2 Due to the reduction in demand in the last year the Heathers and Fulford will each have a decrease of 2 beds under the contract which will also reduce the risk of the Council paying for multiple vacant beds. These contracts have not had an uplift in rate since they were commissioned since when associated costs have increased significantly. It is therefore proposed these contracts have the same inflationary uplift of 1.75% applied as has recently been agreed for other independent residential care services.
- 2.3 Following a review of the 10 beds located in Burleys Wood and the potential opportunity a change of use of these beds presents, the proposal is that these beds be repurposed to nursing beds. There is an anticipated demand for nursing beds in this area, and the change of these beds will provide additional capacity to support those with nursing needs.
- 2.4 It is proposed Marjorie Cobby House continue to provide 10 Discharge to Assess with Reablement beds at the current time whilst this service continues to be reviewed.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 Commissioning new replacement contracts has not been proposed partly because the tenders received for a recent procurement of similar services from the same market highlighted the current contracts as being good value for money.
- 3.2 Allowing the contracts to end without replacing them has not been proposed because there are currently no other bedded reablement services available for individuals requiring a discharge from hospital.
- 3.3 Extending the contracts without any variation has not been proposed because of the high void rates experienced this year which impacts on the efficiency of the contracts and the return on investment.

4 Consultation, engagement, and advice

- 4.1 The services are well regarded within Adult Operations and across the health and social care sector. Discharge to Assess with Reablement services play an important role in hospital discharge pathways and social care workers and placement finders advised they felt it preferable to retain them.
- 4.2 The Adults' Health and Leadership team were engaged and approved of the proposals. The Commercial Panel has also approved of the proposals.
- 4.3 Each of the service providers have been consulted with and are keen to extend the services for a final year. Shaw are open to repurposing the beds to nursing beds and are developing a plan to support this change within the service.

5 Finance

- 5.1 Revenue consequences for three Discharge to Assess services.

	Year 1 2021/22 £m	Year 2 2022/23 £m	Year 3 2023/24 £m
Cost of contract	£870k	N/A	N/A
Funding from Improved Better Care Fund	£870k	N/A	N/A
Net cost of proposal	0	N/A	N/A

5.2 The total cost of changing the type of the ten beds at Burleys Wood to nursing has been quoted by Shaw to be £47k per year, which will be managed within the Older People’s budget because fewer beds will need to be bought at market rates from other providers.

5.3 The effect of the proposal:

(a) **How the cost represents good value**

Following a recent tender for similar beds it is confirmed that the contracts are generally priced at a competitive rate. In addition, reviews of the services have confirmed that they have a positive return on investment for the wider health and social care system.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

These services support people to regain and maintain their independence allowing their long-term care needs to be met with more resource efficient solutions. These services also help facilitate more time efficient discharges from hospital.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

These proposals will have a low impact as the services are already in place. The resource implications include managing the transfer to nursing beds within Shaw services and the associated contract variation, contract management of the provision and review of the arrangements to support consideration of the requirement for these services from the end of the contract period in 2022.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Underutilised services	A decrease in the number of these beds will help ensure the services still funded via block payments are better utilised.
Insufficient services	Each of the three contracts include ‘flex’ beds which can be utilised at points of high demand without obligatory payments at points of low demand.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 The services provided are in line with the Hospital Discharge Service Guidance and the services delivered are aligned with the Regaining Independence policy.

- 7.2 The proposal to extend for this final year was allowed for within the original contract and fits regulation 72 (1) (a) of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Equality Duty

- 7.3 This proposal will positively support to the County Council's equality duty in relation to people with the protected characteristics of age and/or having a disability. These groups will be disproportionately affected positively in relation to those without those characteristics as they will have access to additional care and support on discharge from hospital. It is considered that those with the protected characteristics of gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief will be neither positively nor negatively affected in relation to those without those characteristics.
- 7.4 Service providers will be required to meet Equality legislation and ensure that recruitment and staff development processes reflect the same level of equality for people with protected characteristics.
- 7.5 Customers referred to Discharge to Assess with Reablement services will have one or more protected characteristics; services will be provided through a consistently trained workforce in accordance with Care Quality Commission regulations and the contract. It is therefore expected that providers of Discharge to Assess services will be delivering a comparable service to all customers, including those presented as a result of their protected characteristic.
- 7.6 The contract extension will enable the Council to work with the successful contractor to ensure alignment with health over the term of the contract through design, implementation and adoption of a trusted assessor agreement between the care provider, health and social care.

Social Value

- 7.7 The proposal supports sustainability of the care market in West Sussex. Extension of the contracts for the Discharge to Assess with Reablement beds from the market will enable successful contractors to plan delivery, recruit staff and invest in future sustainability of the service due to commitment afforded through a defined contract term and training opportunities provided by the Council to contractors as part of the Discharge to Assess pathway.
- 7.8 **Crime and Disorder Act Implications** - No implications
- 7.9 **Human Rights Implications** – No implications

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Appendices None

Background papers None