

## **Report to Cllr Amanda Jupp, Cabinet Member for Adult Services**

**September 2022**

### **Recommissioning of Carers' Short Break Services**

**Report by Alan Sinclair, Director of Adults and Health**

**Electoral division(s): All**

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#### **Summary**

The current contractual arrangements for the provision of carer short breaks expire on 31 March 2023. The re-commissioning process will provide an opportunity to reconfigure the current arrangements following many months of analysis, benchmarking, carer engagement processes and soft market testing.

This report sets out the recommendations for future arrangements for carer short break support.

#### **Recommendations**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services is asked to agree that;

- (1) a competitive tender process be commenced, to commission a range of carer short breaks, with contracts to commence on 1 April 2023, for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a period, or periods, of up to 2 years;
- (2) authority is delegated to the Director of Adults and Health, to award the contracts to the bidders submitting the tenders that best meet requirements and to agree to future extensions of the contracts up to a maximum of two years.

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#### **Proposal**

##### **1 Background and context**

- 1.1 There are approximately 120,000 family and friend (unpaid) carers in West Sussex (based on projections from the 2011 Census data and national trends).
- 1.2 The contracts will help support the market to provide services for frail elderly residents and/or those living with dementia, with a focus on providing family and friend carers with much needed short breaks. In addition, each provider will be

required to signpost and support carers into wider carer services if required by information, advice, assessment etc.

- 1.3 The support and promotion of carer wellbeing is a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014. Carers Short Breaks also help deliver Adult Social Care Policy priorities to support independence and enable people to remain in their own home.
- 1.4 The preventative value of enabling carers to take a break and thus preserve their own wellbeing is recognised by West Sussex County Council and local NHS partners. As such these services have an important role to play around promoting independence in later life, because they enable 'the cared for' to live without the need for formal social care to be provided. Consequently, they are integral to making the adult social care budget more sustainable, which is the reason why the procurement will include the potential for an increase in investment, if providers are able to evidence commensurate benefits.

The current short break services:

- 1.5 The Carer Short Breaks contracts were awarded in 2019 via a procurement process compliant with WSCC Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.  
There are currently up to 20,000 hours of subsidised 'At Home' carer respite provided across the county each year. On average, per annum, around 200 (usually older) carers, receive regular respite breaks in this way. In addition, nearly 4,000 carers are on the Emergency Respite Scheme should there be a sudden illness or accident.
- 1.6 Carer 'Away from Home' respite services are also provided across the county by a range of different providers. Services include:
  - Day services
  - Outings
  - Dementia cafes

Total carer respite hours across all 'Away from Home' contracts amount to over 36,000 hours per annum. Over 450 (usually older) carers are enabled to receive a regular break and their cared for person has a positive experience socialising outside of home.

- 1.7 Providers have been encouraged, through the life of the current contracts, to review and amend their delivery model as required in order to better meet demand as well as carer requirements. These include, for example, changing times of availability, venue and/or location on the basis of consultation with carers and referring professionals.

## **2 Proposal details**

- 2.1 To carry out, in the autumn, a competitive tender process to re-commission a range of carer short breaks, with contracts to commence on 1 April 2023. The contracts will be for an initial period of 3 years, with an option to extend for a period, or periods, of up to 2 years.
- 2.2 To commission services that:

- Improve the lives of local unpaid carers and those that they care for.
- Maintain and develop resilience to enable carers to carry on caring i.e. Improved health and wellbeing of the carer and, through enabling safe and better caring, improved health of 'the cared for' person.
- Ensure that local people have choice and control over the services they need and are treated with dignity and respect.
- Develop partnership arrangements, as necessary, to fill gaps and reduce duplication in provision across the county, and
- Improved independence for both carers and people they care for.

### **3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)**

- 3.1 To roll on the current contractual arrangements for a further year. This would provide service stability and is compliant. It would however delay the benefits of reprocurring now and achieving the efficiency of reconfiguring the services following review as well as consultation with both carer and provider.
- 3.2 To let the contracts terminate and not re-commission.
- 3.3 This was rejected as to support carer wellbeing is a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 and would leave us open to challenge. The current services are performing well and are much valued by the carers and service users. The preventative value described above would also be lost and therefore not cost effective in the longer term. Consultation, engagement and advice
- 3.4 Carers have been consulted via questionnaire and there have been focus groups specifically about carer short breaks. Co-design will feature in the process and a small group of carers have been enlisted for the purpose. Bidders will be expected to demonstrate consultation with carers and an ongoing commitment to carer engagement and outcome measurement throughout the life of the contracts.

### **4 Consultation, Engagement and Advice**

- 4.1 Carers have been consulted via questionnaire and there have been focus groups specifically about carer short breaks. Co-design will feature in the process and a small group of carers have been enlisted for the purpose. Bidders will be expected to demonstrate consultation with carers and an ongoing commitment to carer dialogue and outcome measurement throughout the life of the contracts.

### **5 Finance**

- 5.1 All costs will be met within planned budget limits. The budget for these services will be £1,075,000 per annum. A non-guaranteed uplift clause will be in place therefore the total contract sum, over its maximum five-year duration, is likely to be circa £5,375,000.
- 5.2 The effect of the proposal:

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

All providers rely on customer charging as part of the business model, as the contracted funding provides some core funding only. Full cost recovery is not therefore an aspect of any contract. This model has been successful and will

continue into the new arrangements as the risk is with the provider to fill voids in order to make the initiative viable.

The value for money that they deliver is significant; for the approximate 430 carers who are supported by the services, the average weekly cost is a little less than £40 per person per week. The benefit being that carers are able to undertake caring responsibilities for longer. This delays the point at which the person with care needs will require formal social care at considerably more cost.

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

Census data trends suggest over 1,400 extra carers per year will be living in the county. The trend is likely to continue throughout the life of the new contracts and therefore the new contracting arrangements will aim to stretch the reach of the funding available. Although it is difficult to be certain about the size and timing of benefits, the procurement has obvious potential to contribute towards delivery of future savings targets through cost avoidance thus enabling informal/family care to continue for longer.

There is an open and positive relationship with the current providers, and other potentially interested parties, all charities. The planned procurement will build on this relationship and innovation will be encouraged in order to best meet the desired outcomes for as many carers as possible.

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

There will be no increase in current requirements.

### **6 Risk implications and mitigations**

- 6.1 To recommission the provision now is the low risk option as it gives other potentially interested parties the opportunity to tender.
- 6.2 In the unlikely event that the take up for services is slow, plans are in place around marketing and raising awareness amongst referrers.
- 6.3 Should the financial position require resources to be reallocated to other areas of carer support services, a contract clause will enable early termination.

### **7 Policy alignment and compliance**

- 7.1 Our Council Plan - provision of respite for carers supports all four priorities of the plan.
- 7.2 Legal implications - there are legal implications to the proposal that have been considered, including the statutory requirements to meet the eligible needs of residents of West Sussex.
- 7.3 Equality duty and human rights assessment - the County Council's obligations in relation to the public sector equality duty have been identified through an Equality

Impact Assessment. The future operational oversight of the implementation of the procurement will have due regard to the issues raised in the EIA. No negative impacts on people, particularly those with protected characteristics, have been identified. Protected groups will be given robust consideration within the specification and there will be a method statement question, within the tender process, about equality of access to service. Equality will remain a strong feature within any new contracts and associated performance monitoring. There will be specific key performance measurement of engagement with carers from both the BME and LGBT+ communities.

- 7.4 Climate change - the procurement will have a positive impact on the climate with reducing need for non-local travel. The provision of carer short breaks will be in and around the carer's home or in the local neighbourhood.
- 7.5 Crime and disorder – considerations do not apply.
- 7.6 Public health – this proposal supports the Carer Health Inequalities agenda.
- 7.7 Social value - the procurement process will seek to improve the capacity we have to meet emerging carer need across the County through recognising, valuing and building on our wealth of social capital. Consequently, whilst funding applications will still be evaluated against value for money and quality criteria, they will also be critically measured in terms of the contribution they will make to building social capital in the County. There will be an expectation that, as a minimum, bidders demonstrate:
- local knowledge and experience of community engagement,
  - service user and/or carer-accountable structures (e.g. user-led organisations),
  - active network participation,
  - use of volunteers, and
  - acceptable access points and transport solutions.

There will also be a strong emphasis on achieving the concept of 'communities around carers' at a localised level, and building carer resilience, to enable people to live well and remain at home for as long as possible.

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**Appendices** None

**Background papers** None