

Procurement of All-Age Carers Service

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| To: | Adults and Health Committee |
| Meeting Date: | 14 December 2023 |
| From: | Patrick Warren-Higgs, Executive Director, Adults, Health & Commissioning |
| Electoral division(s): | All |
| Key decision: | Yes |
| Forward Plan ref: | 2023/088 |
| Outcome: | Carers of all ages in Cambridgeshire can access information and support to enable them to maintain their caring role. |
| Recommendation: | Adults and Health Committee are being asked to: a) approve the general procurement approach and the overall value of £6,315,616 based on (2023/24 values) over 3 years + up to a 12-month extension period if required of the all-age carers service. b) delegate responsibility for awarding and executing contracts for the provision of the all-age carers service and extension periods to the Executive Director, Adults, Health & Commissioning in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Adults & Health Committee. |

Officer contact:

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1 Background

- 1.1 The Care Act 2014 defines a carer as: “someone who helps another person, usually a relative or friend, in their day-to-day life. This is different from someone who provides care professionally or through a voluntary organisation.”
- 1.2 Unpaid carers are an asset in society, helping to support people’s independence and meet their social care needs. The value of unpaid care now exceeds the value of the NHS budget in England and Walesⁱ demonstrating just how significant the contribution of carers is. Whilst providing care can be a rewarding experience, it can also have an impact on the carer’s own health, education, ability to remain employed, relationships and social life.
- 1.3 Under the Care Act (2014), the Council has a statutory duty to “recognise unpaid carers in law in the same way as those they care for”. The Act sets out unpaid carers’ legal rights to assessments and support. It relates predominantly to adult carers as young carers under the age of 18 years are assessed and supported under the Children and Families Act (2014).
- 1.4 In June 2023, Adults & Health Committee approved a new All-Age Carers strategy. The strategy encompasses all carers, including adult carers, parent carers and young carers. It sets out key priorities, gathered through engagement with carers and professionals and partners working with carers. Carers are a priority for the council and the strategy informs the specification of the carers service recommission. In this way the council has built on feedback and learning from the current service provision.
- 1.5 As part of its support for carers, the Council commissions an all-age carers service to ensure carers are recognised, valued, and supported in the areas of:
 - Prioritising their own health and wellbeing
 - Fulfilling their educational and employment potential
 - Maximising their income
 - Access to information and support in case of emergencies

This service enables carers to maintain their caring role for longer. This benefits the Local Authority, as it delays the need for individuals requiring a higher cost and longer-term adult social care placement.

The commissioned All-Age Carers service is enhanced through additional support offered by the Council. This includes small grants offered to voluntary organisations across Cambridgeshire districts. Some of these grants are used to provide local, place-based support for carers.

- 1.6 The contract for the current all-age carers service will expire on 31st July 2024 and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules together with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 require the service to be retendered. This report sets out the proposed approach to recommissioning of the service.

2 Main Issues

Commissioning Approach

2.1 The recommissioning of the all-age carers service provides an opportunity to progress the Council's ambitions to increase support for carers. Central to the proposed commissioning approach are the key priorities identified in the new All-Age Carers strategy.

These include:

- Identification of and support for Parent carers
- Identification of and support for young carers
- Young carers to be supported when moving into adulthood
- Support for carers at risk of domestic abuse
- Supporting the emotional and psychological wellbeing of all carers
- Joint working across health and social care for all carers
- Ensuring our webpages support easy access to information

2.1.1 The current all-age carers service has contributed to increased levels of support for local carers in recent years, despite the pandemic. The 2021 [NHS Digital Survey of Adult Carers](#) indicated that in Cambridgeshire progress made supporting carers includes:

- Carers reporting better knowledge and understanding of how to access information, advice, and support services
- Carers feeling better supported in their caring role
- Identification of a large number of previously hidden carers
- Increased numbers of 'What If' plans¹ being registered and activated
- Carers having a strong voice through Healthwatch Partnership Boards
- Timely access to advocacy and promotion of self-advocacy to enable carers to be confident to speak for themselves in future

The positive impact and achievements of the current service has been integrated into the commissioning plans to ensure this progress is built upon.²

2.1.2 To ensure the new all-age carers service really does meet the needs and wishes of local carers and their families, the service has been designed in collaboration with carers and people with lived experience of fulfilling a caring role. Building upon the engagement undertaken as part of the strategy's development, including feedback on the current service, Commissioners have undertaken further consultation and engagement activities with carers and partners to shape the proposals for the new service. This reflects the importance placed on the voices of experts-by-experience, carer groups, VCSO's and other partner organisations in shaping how we support carers.

2.1.3 Proposals for the new service also draw upon the latest best practice guidance for adult carers published by The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance for adult carers. It forms the foundation for the recommissioned service. The NICE Guidance recommendations for adult carer support are outlined in 2.2.

¹ <https://www.caringtogether.org/support-for-carers/adult-carers/whatifplan/>

² [Carer feedback following counselling support Nov 2023.docx](#)

2.2 The new all-age carers service will continue to offer support to adult carers, adults caring for loved ones with mental health conditions, young carers and young adult carers caring for their family. The service will also continue to offer a range of services including:

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| Carers conversations/assessments | Guide carers to advice, information, and support available to help make life easier |
| Support with emergency planning (What If plans) ¹ | Help carers put a plan in place for when there is an emergency |
| Counselling, training, and short breaks | Short breaks away from a caring role, training to give care safely e.g., lifting techniques, someone to talk to (can be a professional) |
| Community support groups | Place based carer groups offering peer to peer support |
| Information and advice | Outlines carers rights, what support they can access, where and how (includes a help line) |
| Care needs assessments | An assessment of needs for someone who requires care and support |
| Young carers digital offer | Online support groups with specific focuses and age groups to best meet the needs of young carers. |

2.2.1 In addition to the existing offer, a number of innovations will be introduced to the service in line with feedback from people with lived experience and the key priorities in the new All-Age Carers strategy.

- Increasing support for young adult carers to transition into adults service
- increasing awareness and signposting for carers in situations of domestic abuse/violence
- Increasing support for adult carers caring for loved ones with dementia and Alzheimer’s diagnoses
- Taking “Whole family” approaches with an intensive focus on high-risk young carers and services tailored to the needs, maturity, abilities, and choices of young carers

Procurement Approach

2.3 It is proposed to recommission the all-age carers service on a 3 + up to 1-year contract term. This is the preferred contract length indicated by the local market and enables the successful provider to embed and develop the service in a way that short term funding does not allow. There is an expectation that the procured service delivered by the contract will be subject to variation over its term to enable it to better deliver the All-Age Carers strategy. For example, closer connections with the NHS regarding carer involvement, when appropriate, in hospital to home transitions for loved ones.

2.4 The service will be commissioned in 3 lots (Adult Carers, Children and Young Carers and Carers for Adults with Mental Health needs), reflecting the different needs and specialisms basis.

2.5 The proposed budget for the new service is set out below

Figure 1: Lot structure and contract value

| | Value per annum | MSIF funding Year 1 (8 months pro-rata) | Value over 3 years + 12 months |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Lot 1 Adult Carers | £1,078,504 | £92,664 | £4,406,680 |
| Lot 2 Children and Young Adult Carers | £355,700 | | £1,422,800 |
| Lot 3 Adults Mental Health | £121,534 | | £486,136 |
| Total | £1,555,738 | | £6,315,616 |

- 2.6 In keeping with the commitment made within the All-Age Carers Strategy to involve people with lived experience, carers will be invited to participate in the procurement. They will be included in setting an evaluation question which will then be evaluated by Officers.
- 2.7 All bidders will be required to demonstrate how their proposed service solution will deliver social value. Responses will be evaluated, and delivery of commitments monitored. Bidders' social value offer will be evaluated by the Social Value Portal.
- 2.8 Alternative procurement options considered and excluded include:
 (1) In-house provision for the all-age carers service would cost considerably more, due to organisational overheads and would not represent value for money.
 (2) Doing nothing and allow the contract to expire; The all-age carers service is a statutory duty of the Council, and the service is required to be procured, so this is not an option.
- 2.9 The risks for the local authority with the recommended approach are low. There may be a risk of eligibility to access carers services for carers who live on Cambridgeshire borders with Peterborough, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Essex, and Hertfordshire. To mitigate this risk carers in border areas will have to evidence residence in Cambridgeshire or attend a Cambridgeshire school to access support from the county. ^(OBJ)
- 2.10 The key milestones for the procurement are set out below:

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| Specifications and consultation | Mid-December 2023 |
| Tender Go Live | Mid-January 2024 |
| Evaluation and moderation | End of March 2024 |
| Decision to award/standstill period | Early-April 2024 |
| Implementation and mobilisation | End-April 2024 |
| Contract Go Live | 1 st August 2024 |

Service development during the course of the contract term

- 2.11 It is expected that the service will develop and flex to support carers needs using an iterative process that runs parallel to strategy development and implementation. This will include more co-production and co-design over the course of the contract.

- 2.12 The All-Age Carers Strategy 2022 – 26 will be reviewed in spring 2024 with a view to connecting its implementation with the Cambridgeshire Integrated Care Systems. Specifically, this relates to carer input to home discharges and how that transition can be made as seamless as possible for the carer and their loved one. The carers service will be reviewed and updated as required as part of this process.

Service Performance Management

- 2.13 Carer support is a key strategy for public sector organisations and as such will come under CQC (Care Quality Commission) scrutiny. It is therefore important that the service is able to evidence its support for carers and demonstrate that it is evolving in response to their requirements and aligned to the Carers Strategy.
- 2.14 To achieve this outcome and enable effective decision making in the future, Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's) will be developed with service providers and experts by experience. Aligned to NICE guidance for adult carers, they will connect the service provided to strategy implementation and corporate/national ambitions for carers. Over time the KPI's will provide evidence to support the narrative of service development.

3 Alignment with ambitions

- 3.1 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes

Method questions will include a question that supports the councils net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire 2045 ambitions.

- 3.2 Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable

There are no significant implications for this ambition.

- 3.3 Health inequalities are reduced

There are no significant implications for this ambition.

- 3.4 People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs

The report above sets out the implications for this ambition in [1.5], [2.2] and [2.2.1]

- 3.5 Helping people out of poverty and income inequality

The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:

Unpaid carers are likely to reduce the hours they work or may even leave work entirely because of the demands of their caring role. This can result in unpaid carers being pushed into poverty while providing care and enabling their loved one to remain at home in their community. The carers service offers information and advice to help unpaid carers understand what support they can access and how they can access it including the financial support and benefits they may be entitled to. This is in line with the current budget allocated for the support of carers.

- 3.6 Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised

There are no significant implications for this ambition.

- 3.7 Children and young people have opportunities to thrive

The report above sets out the implications for this ambition in [1.5], [2.2] and [2.2.1]

4 Significant Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in [2.5]

- 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The report sets out details of significant implications in [1.6], [2.3], [2.5] and [2.6]

- 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

The priorities within the service are in alignment with duties placed on local authorities by the Care Act (2014) and Children and Families Act (2014) in respect of assessment and support planning for carers and wider duties around information and advice and market shaping within the Care Act (2014).

- 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The public sector equality duty has been considered as part of the service development and an EQIA (Equality Impact Assessment) has been completed

- 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

- 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

- 4.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet point sets out details of significant implications identified by officers:

It is important to recognise the contribution that unpaid carers make to supporting the health and wellbeing of those that they care for. The all-age carers' service includes actions relating to supporting unpaid carers in these areas to improve health outcomes for those that they care for.

- 4.8 Climate Change and Environment Implications on Priority Areas (See further guidance in Appendix 2):

- 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral

Explanation: No change

- 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: No change
- 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats, and land management.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: No change
- 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: No change
- 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability, and management:
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: No change
- 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: No change
- 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.
Positive/neutral/negative Status: Neutral
Explanation: No change

5 Source documents guidance

5.1 Source documents - None

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes
Name of Financial Officer: Justine Hartley

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement and Commercial? Yes
Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal? Yes
Name of Legal Officer: Anne Ferrario – Pathfinder Legal

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User?
Yes
Name of Officer: Charlotte Knight

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?
Yes
Name of Officer: Simon Cobby

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes
Name of Officer: Will Patten

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Smith

If a key decision, have any Climate Change and Environment implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

ⁱ Petrillo & Bennett (2023) "Value of unpaid care now exceeds that of the NHS budget" Available at [Value of unpaid care in England and Wales now exceeds that of NHS budget - the Centre for Care](#) (Accessed 03/11/23)