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SUBJECT: CONTRACT AWARD - SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CARERS

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Improving support for carers is a key priority for Adult Social Care (ASC) and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Surrey. This arises from increased statutory requirements to support carers in the Care Act 2014 and a range of national policies including the Government's National Carers Strategy. To ensure effective delivery, the CCGs and Council have undertaken joint procurement exercises for two support services for Carers:

- Independent Carers Support Service and
- Home Based Breaks for Carers' service

Currently the Independent Carers Support Services provides essential advice, one to ones, peer and other external support to Adult carers. The service is currently delivered as 24 individual grant agreements that come to an end on 31 March 2017. There are both financial and quality efficiency gains to be achieved by rationalising the current offer. The report seeks approval from Cabinet to award new contracts to deliver these services across four areas.

Surrey's Home Based Breaks for Carers provision provides respite for young and adult carers by allowing them to go on scheduled breaks with the assurance that their loved ones are being supported by competent care workers. The current contract will expire February 5, 2017. This report also seeks approval from Cabinet to award a new contract for Home Based Breaks for Carers.

Both proposed contracts support the corporate aim of promoting wellbeing and provides invaluable support to carers in a preventative way, thus reducing stress and more expensive reactive interventions.

Due to the commercial sensitivity involved in the contract award process, the financial details of the successful suppliers have been circulated as a Part 2 report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**Independent Carers Support**

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the award of new contracts based on four geographical lots to Action for Carers Surrey, each contract commencing on 1 April 2017. The contracts will be for an initial two year period, with the option to extend for up to two further periods of twelve months.

The geographical lots being:

Lot 1 - Woking, Runnymede and Spelthorne

Lot 2 - Guildford, Waverley and Surrey Heath

Lot 3 - Covering Epsom and Ewell, Banstead*, Mole Valley and Elmbridge

Lot 4 - Area within the boundaries of East Surrey CCG (Reigate, Redhill and Horley* and Tandridge

* The borough of Reigate and Banstead is split between lots 3 and 4 based on the respective boundaries of Surrey Downs and East Surrey CCG

Home Based Breaks for Carers

It is also recommended that Cabinet approves the award of new contracts based on two lots to Crossroads Care, each contract commencing on 6 February 2017. The contracts will be for an initial two year period, with the option to extend for up to two further periods of twelve months.

The lots being:

Lot 1 - Home Based Breaks for Carers

Lot 2 - End of Life Care

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Council has a statutory duty to support carers in case of need, which could be met through a variety of approaches. Following an assessment of several service delivery and procurement options, it was decided that a full competitive tender based on geographic lots was the most appropriate approach in both instances. This model increases the reach of the service, without increasing costs and allows for greater efficiencies through rationalisation of services.

An open, fair and transparent tender process was undertaken for each service. Following a thorough evaluation process two suppliers were selected. One for the countywide Independent Carers Support and the other for the countywide Home Based Breaks for Carers.

This procurement exercise has been carried out in collaboration with Surrey's six NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to secure the best supplier(s) to deliver cost effective, high quality services against agreed specifications that will improve the quality of life for carers.

The recommended bidders have demonstrated that they can deliver high quality services expected by Surrey County Council (SCC) and the CCGs and will work with us over the lifetime of the contract to make continuous improvements and add value.

There is strong evidence from national cost modelling, that support to carers helps prevent breakdown of caring situations and avoids far greater cost for the provision

of more expensive, more intrusive “care packages”. Based on this calculation an estimated £38.8 million of additional care costs will be prevented over the life of both contracts.

DETAILS:

Background

1. The Care Act 2014 created new obligations for carers based on the principle of “equality of esteem for carers”. This means nearly all of the carers supported by our early intervention services would otherwise be entitled to a carers’ assessment and at least information and advice. The Children and Families Act 2014 has also substantially increased our obligations to young carers. Under both sets of legislation, there is also a duty to have a range of preventative services.
2. In these circumstances the Local Authority has a duty to ensure carers are supported but there is discretion as whether to deliver the support through preventative services or following a carers’ assessment. Without the proposed services, many of these carers would come directly to the Council for additional support. This would have a very significant impact on workloads of our Adult Social Care Teams and as highlighted below in the report would lead to greater costs.
3. The legislation also enhances CCGs’ obligations to work in partnership with the council to support carers. This has been amplified through the new Carers Memorandum of Understanding developed by NHS England. The need for such support including the need for carer breaks is also emphasised in the Government’s National Carers Strategy.
4. The Independent Carers Support services have a key role in supporting carers’ health and well-being through the provision of care specific information and advice, facilitating peer support, as well as empowering carers to continue to care and have a life outside of caring. The independent carers support service also has a key role in promoting awareness of carers needs on behalf of health and social care professionals. The service is not a regulated service, however it adheres to best practice, information and guidance as set out by the Care Quality Commission, however this service does not though provide direct breaks services in carers own homes.
5. The independent carers support service is complemented by Home Based Breaks Services that are services regulated by the Care Quality Commission. This requires different organisational experience and skills sets for staff. Therefore, going out to tender for separate contracts to deliver both of the services mentioned above was considered appropriate to ensure provision of quality services.
6. It should also be noted that if these services were to cease Adult Social Care teams would need significantly more staff to deal with substantially increased volumes of referrals and assessments. The provision of these services forms a central part of Surrey’s Multi Agency Carers Commissioning Strategy. The services support a wide range of carers; some with eligible needs and many who would rapidly develop eligible needs without support.

Available Funding

7. The Independent Carers Support service is wholly funded by Adult Social Care. The Home Based Breaks Services are funded by Adult Social Care but with contributions from the Department of Health's "Better Care Fund" and Children's Services. Surrey County Council (SCC) is the pooled budget holder for the Better Care Fund and use of this funding is by mutual agreement with Surrey's six NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Independent Carers Support Service Need

8. The service will focus on local delivery but with a coordinated approach to ensure consistent responses aimed at achieving satisfactory outcomes for carers.

This will include the following components:

- Support for 15% more carers than at present (increasing to 20,000 a year) but at a third less cost. That represents cost avoidance of £238K a year based on current costs
- Use of innovative approaches and opportunities including modern technology
- Where necessary, visits will take place in the most appropriate setting to meet the needs of carers e.g. in the hospital
- The service should take into account the needs of all carers including those who are seldom heard such as Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME) carers
- The service will reflect the principle of the parity of esteem for mental health carers
- Strong emphasis on partnership working and a coordinated approach to marketing new service.
- The design of the service will ensure effective delivery and effective responses to carers.

Independent Carers Support - Benefits

9. These include:
 - Improved delivery of information to carers through use of a "digital offer". Opportunity to introduce new technologies and triage processes to deliver services at a larger scale
 - Helps avoid far greater costs arising from increased numbers of support packages
 - Opportunity to make cost savings by reducing duplication of service and back office resources
 - Reduced number of contract contracts and management time for SCC staff
 - Clearer oversight of services within each area – functions not split up over several providers
 - More seamless service for carers not needing to be referred on for employment support
 - New areas are more closely aligned to the NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) Footprints. This offers more strategic opportunities to link with health than is possible with 11 locality based services
 - New larger area services more likely to be financially resilient than the current smaller services

Contract Objectives for Independent Carers Support

10. There will be a coordinated county wide approach but delivered locally in each defined geographic area. This will promote Carers' health and emotional wellbeing, while achieving efficiencies through reducing back office costs, increased use of triage and improved use of technology. The service will consider the needs of working carers through extended hours of operation. These are extended from Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm to 8am to 8pm weekdays and Saturdays 9 am to 12 Noon. This contract proposes to:
 - i. Support carers to identify their own needs and support them in undertaking self-directed assessments where there is personal choice. Provide individual support, advice for carers as well as emotional support to carers
 - ii. Provide information and advice to former carers; for example relating to returning to work
 - iii. Provide support to carers in relation to training and work (available both to those who are unemployed and those juggling work and caring)
 - iv. Helping carers access more detailed specialist information available from other organisations and other support that promotes their health and wellbeing. Provide individually tailored information for carers including basic advice about welfare benefits
 - v. Facilitate initiatives for carers such as support groups that promote emotional wellbeing, information events and peer support.
 - vi. Identify children within families, young carers and adult carers and make referrals as appropriate e.g. refer to a Young Carers service and / or Social Care Team
 - vii. Identify opportunities for delivering training for carers in partnership with other agencies including provision of courses designed to help enable carers to access the employment market or vocational training
 - viii. Collaborate and communicate with partners in health and social care so that carers are informed of their right to a carers' assessment regarding their own needs.
11. While this service does not directly arrange home based carer breaks which are regulated by the Care Quality Commission, it will direct carers to appropriate sources of help.

Home Based Breaks for Carers – Service Need

12. This service is for all carers of all client groups and all ages, including breaks for those caring for people towards the end of their lives.
13. Parents/carers of children with disability require breaks from caring including home based services plus opportunities to be involved in community's activities of their choice. This also helps reduce risks of their children being taken into care because of family breakdown. Best value has been obtained through a whole council approach by linking this requirement with those of adult services. This also has the advantage that when the child reaches 18, there is not the need for reassessment.

14. The contract also includes arrangements for customised support for carers of people in the End of Life period (where life expectancy is less than 12 months).
15. Carer Break Services have been shown to:
 - i. maintain the physical and mental health of carers and their families
 - ii. maintain their independence and reduce carer break down
 - iii. empower carers to manage their caring roles and have a life outside of caring
 - iv. avoid the need for more expensive interventions via care packages.

Home Based Breaks for Carers - Benefits

16. The existing contract will expire on 5 February 2017 and it is essential to maintain this service in order to avoid greater costs being incurred through carer breakdown and the risk of putting the Council's reputation and compliance with its statutory duties at risk.
17. By joining up adults and children services the Council can get better value for money.
18. The service will be complemented through the voluntary sector provider's own fundraising currently worth £200,000 per annum to be used as additional support for carers. This has the potential to provide nearly 12,000 additional hours of support per annum. In addition the service provider has committed to employing two apprentices.

Contract Objectives for Home Based Breaks for Carers

19. To provide a flexible Home Based Breaks service for carers of people of all ages that:
 - i. is individually tailored to enable carers to have some time for themselves
 - ii. reduces levels of stress for carers
 - iii. improves the carer's quality of life including their emotional, physical and mental health
 - iv. responds to a diverse range of caring situations and is able to work with frail, ill and disabled adults, disabled children and their carers
 - v. includes a customised support service for carers of people in the End of Life period, where life expectancy is less than 12 months.

Procurement Strategy and Options

20. An open tender process compliant with the requirements of Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement Standing Orders, was carried out for each service. The procurement was completed, using the Council e-Procurement system, with the opportunity advertised within the Official Journal of the European Union, and on Contracts Finder. Following a thorough evaluation process the recommendation provides best value for money for this contract.
21. Details of the options considered for both tendering processes and the evaluations undertaken are attached as the Part 2 report.

Key Implications

22. The Care Act requires a more proactive approach to early intervention and prevention for carers as well as increasing responsibilities to meet their assessed eligible needs. The legislation also highlights a need for greater cooperation with Health Services and this is likely to lead to further increases in referrals from GP practices and NHS providers to carers support organisations.
23. According to the 2011 Census there are 108,433 carers in Surrey. Of these 52,050 carers were providing over 20 hours care a week. (48% of the carers) The above total also includes 64,884 carers who are also juggling work with caring. Carers also save the public purse approximately £1.8 billion per annum in Surrey alone by caring for individuals who would otherwise need more support from the state. (Valuing Carers 2015 – Leeds and Sheffield Universities). As such carers must be suitably supported in their caring role.
24. Supporting increased numbers of carers is a key priority for both Adult Social Care and the NHS in Surrey. This is also essential if the “Family Friends and Communities” approach is to be fully effective as supporting carers to continue to care (where this is their wish) helps underpins community’s ability to support vulnerable people.
25. This range of carers support is designed to support carers in their caring role and to have a life outside of caring and to help protect children and young people from inappropriate levels of caring.
26. It is proposed that contractual agreements are offered for both services for periods of up to four years. This will entail an allocation for initial 2-year contracts with the option to extend for two further periods of one year. This is to balance the need to ensure that service providers have longer-term stability in their business plans while maximising value for money.
27. The proposed contractual agreements are designed to reflect that the support is community based, to facilitate flexible and locally responsive delivery and a focus on outcomes. The agreements will be focused on achieving outcomes for carers, with guidance in the service specification about the type of service and levels of support expected and more details about quality standards.

CONSULTATION:

28. External Consultation has been undertaken with our partners from Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Carers Commissioning Group. The specification for the service was developed through a co-design process involving a number of carers’ organisations. When the Multi Agency Carers Commissioning Strategy was refreshed in 2015, carers indicated strong support for prioritising provision of these services. Internal consultation has been undertaken with officers from Children, Schools and Families and Adult Social Care.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

29. The non-provision of support to carers would have severe reputational, legal risks. After an extensive co-design undertaken together with CCGs, the withdrawal of the service would harm Surrey’s reputation with, carers, health partners and staff.
30. Risks were appropriately identified and have been satisfactorily mitigated.

These include:

- i. Costs may rise - the provider has won the tender on a fixed rate price, therefore the total annual amount paid to the supplier will not change.
- ii. Poor performance - a series of performance measures have been included in the contract covering timeliness of services delivery, carer satisfaction, quality assurance
- iii. The agreement includes termination provisions to allow the Council to terminate the agreement should circumstances change, by giving 3 months' notice
- iv. Providers' ability to deliver - the providers were assessed as satisfactory for all financial checks in relation to the value of the proposed awards for each lot
- v. Budget pressures. -the element of funding drawn from the Better Care Fund is currently only in Government spending plans for 2017/18 and 2018/19. The availability of funding beyond that date would be dependent upon a future Comprehensive Spending Review. This risk is mitigated by adopting a two year contract with options to extend if funding is still available.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

31. There is strong evidence that supporting carers helps prevent breakdown of caring situations and avoids far greater cost for the provision of more expensive, more intrusive "care packages". The "*Economic Case for Local Investment in Carer Support – Dept Health and ADASS: March 2015*" which includes a case study based on cost modelling in Surrey suggests that each pound spent on supporting carers has a cost avoidance effect of £2.97. This is where the service provided avoids the need for more expensive and intrusive care packages. Based on this calculation an estimated £38.8 million will be saved via cost avoidance over the full term of both contracts (detailed in paragraph 8).
32. In this context, the investment through the Better Care Fund to support carers is good value in terms of cost avoidance. It has been demonstrated that should investment in carers support cease there would be far higher costs arising from care packages to respond to a break down in the caring situation. The process therefore was focused on getting maximum support from available resources rather than cost reduction.
33. This procurement forms part of a bigger piece of work undertaken by Surrey County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Surrey to review their funding arrangements for supporting carers delivered; including through the Better Care Fund. Working together, the commissioners have identified how to support increasing numbers of carers whilst achieving efficiency
34. A detailed performance and quality monitoring process will be put in place by the carers Commissioning Group to support the winning bidder and ensure that the targets for increased support for carers and young carers are achieved.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

35. The County Council is facing a very serious financial situation, whereby it is forecasting a significant revenue budget overspending in this year, and does not have a balanced nor sustainable budget plan for future years. Although this planned expenditure has been included within the current Medium Term

Financial Plan, agreeing to this recommendation will reduce the council's options to balance the budget in the future.

36. It is noted though that the award of these contracts will deliver £0.57m of cashable savings and the national cost modelling conducted in relation to the provision of support to carers indicates that the cost to the council of not maintaining these services would likely be higher.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

37. This report concerns a project which will enable the Council, working in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups, to meet its statutory duties to carers. Given the Council's current financial position, members will wish to ensure that it will be effective in meeting that duty and provide value for money. However, it should also be noted that this project is funded from the Better Care Fund, and forms part of the Surrey Better Care Plan, which is governed by an agreement with the CCGs and national guidance. Any changes to the Plan must be approved by the Local Joint Commissioning Group, and ultimately NHS England have the power to intervene if monies are not spent in accordance with the Plan.
38. The Council advertised the procurement exercises in the Official Journal of the European Union. Bids were evaluated using objective criteria. Both procurements were legally compliant with EU procurement law, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Standing Orders.

Equalities and Diversity

39. The scope of this commissioning and procurement exercise is to respond to the needs of Surrey carers. It is designed to seek to maintain and extend the reach of preventative support services while achieving savings through efficiencies. The integrated area based approach to services replaces a range of independent grant funded provision across the county comprising of local carers support and training carers, a learning and work service and a GP recognition project that works with GP practices.
40. There is a change to service and reduction in spend as a consistent county wide approach is needed that is locally responsive. To help facilitate this, Surrey was broken into four lots based on areas with each working to a standard specification. These new larger area services are more likely to be financially resilient than the current smaller services.
41. The proposed Home based breaks contract maintains current support for carers and therefore there are no negative impacts to address.
42. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) have been undertaken. The EIA "Independent Carers Support Services merging into new Area Model" is attached as annex 1 and the EIA: "Home Based Breaks for Carers" as Annex 2.

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

43. Both services work with adult carers but as part of a whole family approach the service will identify children in the household who may be young carers and refer them to appropriate sources of help. Support for young carers has considerable preventive benefits, helping reduce the risk of harm to these children and young people and reduce the likelihood of them being taken into care.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

44. Providing timely information, advice and support to carers helps reduce stress for carers; which in turn reduces the risk of incidents requiring safeguarding interventions. Identification of young carers and referring them to appropriate sources of assistance helps reduce the risk of harm to the children and young people in question and diminishes the risk of them being left to undertake inappropriate levels of caring.
45. As part of the delivery of this contract all workers that will be assigned to work with or have exposure to vulnerable adults or children will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. The suppliers will have in place robust DBS procedures that are in keeping with the Council's policies.

Public Health implications

46. The support to carers delivered through this service is designed to promote the health and wellbeing of carers and reduces the risks of stress related illness.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

47. Following agreement by Cabinet:
 - Contracts will be formerly offered to the successful bidders
 - Regular Monitoring Meetings will be held with successful bidder to ensure that the targets for increased volume of support are achieved

Contact Officers:

Independent Carers Support	Home Based Breaks for Carers
John Bangs - Carers Strategy and Development Manager (01483 519145)	John Bangs - Carers Strategy and Development Manager (01483 519145)
Jason Duncombe, Procurement Category Specialist (0208 541 9401)	Yasi Siamaki, Procurement Category Specialist (020 8541 8543)

Consulted:

Internal: Cllr Mel Few, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, SCC Adult Social Care Senior Management Team, Orbis Procurement and Commissioning for SCC, Orbis Legal and Finance Departments for SCC.

External: The specification was developed jointly with the 6 CCGs in Surrey. This was based on continued delivery of objectives in the co-designed Surrey carers Commissioning Strategy.

Informed:

Members of the Carers Commissioning Group were a part of the evaluation panel and are aware of the outcome of the bidding process.

Bidders have also informed of the evaluation panel's recommendations, and that the recommendation is subject to approval by Cabinet.

Annexes:

Annex 1 - EIA Independent Carers Support Services merging into new Area Model

Annex 2 - Equalities Impact Assessment: "Home Based Breaks for Carers"

Sources/background papers:

- "Recognised, Valued and supported: Next steps for the Carers Strategy"
(Department of Health Nov 2010)
 - "*Valuing Carers 2015*" Leeds and Sheffield Universities and Carers UK
 - Economic Case for Investment in Local Carers Support (Dept Health & others 2015)
 - Impact Assessment for the Care Act Department of Health (October 2014)²
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Surrey
 - Surrey Joint Carers Commissioning Strategy
 - Making It Real for Young Carers (Young Carers Strategy for Surrey)
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