

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 27 JUNE 2017



REPORT OF: MR MEL FEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS

LEAD OFFICER: HELEN ATKINSON, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

JULIE FISHER – DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: CONTRACT AWARD - COUNTYWIDE CARERS SUPPORT

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Ensuring there is adequate support for carers is a key priority for both Adult Social Care (ASC) and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Surrey. This is a result of increased statutory requirements to support carers in the Care Act 2014, young carers in the Children and Families Act 2014 and a range of national policies including the Government's National Carers Strategy.

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.

To ensure effective delivery, the CCGs and SCC have undertaken joint procurement exercises for four support services for Carers:

- Specialist Young Carers Service
- Giving carers a voice and multi-agency awareness raising for carers
- Back Care Services
- Welfare Benefits Advice for carers

The services are currently delivered as eight individual grant agreements ending on 31 July 2017. There are both quality and financial efficiency gains to be achieved through a consolidated contract process rather than grant funding. Each proposed contract supports the corporate aim of promoting wellbeing and provides invaluable support to carers and young carers in a preventative way, reducing stress to individuals and the need for more expensive reactive interventions. The report seeks approval from Cabinet to award four new contracts to deliver this.

Due to the commercial sensitivity involved in the contract award process, the financial details of the successful providers and the scoring summary are detailed in the Part 2 annex to this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the award of four contracts for the provision of specialist countywide carers support services:

- Young Carers and Young Adult Carers awarded to Action for Carers Surrey
- “Giving Carers A Voice” And Multi Agency Awareness Raising awarded to Action for Carers Surrey
- Back Care Services awarded to Action for Carers Surrey
- Benefits Advice for Carers awarded to Surrey Welfare Rights Unit

Each contract is for a period of two years commencing 1 August 2017 with an option to extend on one or more occasions for up to a total period of two years.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to support adult and young carers in case of need, which could be met through a variety of approaches. There are also specific key objectives in the National Carers Strategy to engage with carers and young carers in co-design and to ensure staff are properly briefed about carers needs. Following an assessment of several service delivery and procurement options, it was concluded that a full competitive tender based on subject specific lots was the most appropriate approach. The project is funded from the Better Care Fund and forms part of the Surrey Better Care Plan.

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

An open, fair and transparent tender process was undertaken and potential providers were invited to bid for one lot for each service. Following a thorough evaluation process suppliers were selected for each area.

The recommended bidders have demonstrated that they can deliver high quality services expected by Surrey County Council (SCC) and the CCGs.

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” or interventions. Although no accurate calculation of the benefits can be made it is estimated £17.2 million of additional care and support costs will be prevented over the life of these contracts.

DETAILS:

Background

1. The Care Act 2014 created new obligations for carers based on the principle of “equality of esteem for carers”. This requires that carers with identified needs are either be offered preventative support or services following a statutory carers’ assessment. This means that nearly all the carers supported by SCC’s early intervention services would otherwise be entitled to a statutory assessment and this would have major resource implications for Adult Social

Care Teams. The Children and Families Act 2014 has also substantially increased our obligations to young carers with requirements to provide them with early intervention support. Under both sets of legislation, there is a duty to have an effective range of preventative services.

2. Surrey Carers have told us that they hugely value such services. Providing support for carers through early interventions greatly reduces the risk of a break down in caring situations and prevents a need for more intrusive and costly interventions. This also supports Surrey residents with caring responsibilities to have a life outside of caring and contribute to the Surrey economy and local communities.
3. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure carers are supported but there is discretion as whether to deliver the support through preventative services (such as help for young carers and advice about safe moving and handling techniques) or following a carers' assessment or young carers' needs assessment. Without the proposed services, many carers would come directly to the Council for additional support. This would have a very significant impact on demand of our Adult Social Care and Children's Services Teams and as highlighted below in the report would lead to greater costs and additional burdens placed upon SCC staff.
4. The legislation also enhances CCGs' obligations to work in partnership with the SCC to support carers. This is reinforced by key objectives in the National Carers Strategy to engage with carers and young carers in co-design of services and to ensure staff are properly briefed about carers needs. Statutory Guidance also requires CCGs to collaborate through the Better Care Fund and also to engage with patients and carers. These requirements have been amplified through the new Carers Memorandum of Understanding developed by NHS England and a local version of this "Together for Carers" has been agreed by the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board.
5. The need for such support is also emphasised in the Government's National Carers Strategy 2010. This strategy has recently been subject to widespread government consultation about its renewal. It is set to be refreshed and re published by the new Government later this year and is expected to call for increased effort across the whole system to identify and support carers and young carers.
6. SCC and the CCGs have reviewed the whole range of funding arrangements for supporting carers delivered through the Better Care Fund. Working together, the commissioners have identified how to support an increasing number of carers within a reduced cost envelope. As part of this review, the Adult Social Care leadership team recommended continued investment for the provision of the countywide carers support services identified in this report including services for young carers; as a key preventative offer to deliver obligations under the National Carers Strategy, the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014. Support services for carers have been shown to:
 - maintain the physical and mental health of carers and their families
 - maintain their independence and reduce carer break down
 - empower carers to manage their caring roles and have a life outside of caring
 - avoid the need for more expensive interventions via care packages
 - improve outcomes for young carers
7. The proposed contracts provide a more robust form of agreement and replace existing grant agreements for support to young carers and young adult carers, giving carers a voice, multi-agency awareness raising, back care services and benefits advice for carers.

8. It should also be noted that if these services were to cease both Adult and Children's 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 which is a joint plan agreed between SCC, CCGs, carers and other stakeholders. The services support a wide range of carers; some with eligible needs and many who would rapidly develop eligible needs without support.
9. Surrey has a strong national reputation for innovative support for carers and young carers and have been identified as an exemplar area by NHS England (NHSE) result SCC and CCG partners will be working with NHSE in the coming year to disseminate learning and good practice from our work in Surrey. The services described in this report will have a key role in helping deliver this.

Available Funding

10. The services are funded by Adult Social Care but with contributions from the Department of Health's "Better Care Fund." 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). The funding proposed for these services totals £1,458,500 a year and a breakdown of this is provided in the part 2 Annex.
11. The services are currently delivered as eight individual grant agreements that end on 31 July 2017. There were two grant agreements for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers, two for "Giving Carers a Voice," three for Back Care Services and one for Benefits Advice for Carers. The services will instead be delivered via four contracts that will enable efficiency gains to be made and also ensure more regular and detailed monitoring arrangements are in place. Details of the service requirements for each contract are described below.

Young Carers Support Service

12. The service is to maintain a high quality service supporting over 2000 Young Carers (under 18) and 200 Young Adult Carers (aged 18 to 24). The support provided includes:
 - A wide range of one to one support, information and advice provision
 - Group activities that enable young carers to take time out from caring; having fun and benefitting from peer support
 - Work in Surrey schools in collaboration with teaching staff and other professionals to identify and support young carers in schools
 - Supporting these young people in their transition to adult hood including facilitating a Young Adult Carers Network
 - Raising awareness with professionals and local communities to increase identification of young carers
13. The existing grants for young carers and young adult carers have been merged to promote greater reach without increasing costs. The proposed contract will support 15% more carers than at present (increasing the reach by an additional 300 young / young adult carers) but at the same cost.

Giving Carers a Voice

14. Combining existing grants for giving carers a voice and multi-agency awareness raising for carers and young adult carers has allowed for savings to be made while achieving similar outcomes in promoting carer friendly

communities and a carer friendly NHS. This work is of critical importance in supporting co-design and further integration and includes

- Programme of activities to give carers a voice
- Provide informed carer views to commissioners and service providers and support carer engagement across the whole system
- Provide a programme of activities to raise awareness amongst professionals about the needs of carers and young carers
- Ensuring carers engaging with the programme have the information they need and are put in touch with appropriate support

Back Care Service Need

15. Back Care Services to provide advice to carers on safe moving and handling techniques that help avoid risk of serious injury and complete breakdown of the caring situation. The service is delivered in people's own homes as both research and feedback from carers shows that it is essential for advice to be specific to the specific circumstances in each person's home. If not undertaken by these services, the cases would all need to be supported by the local authority at greater expense. Were this support not provided, many cases would result in injury to the carer leading to expensive care packages for those they look after. Three local grants have been replaced by a single contract to ensure best value. The support provided include:

- To provide advice to carers in their own homes on safe moving and handling techniques and back care
- To ensure service is provided by suitably qualified staff
- Awareness raising about service and how to make referrals so that carers needing such advice have access to this

Welfare Benefits Service

16. A Welfare Benefits Advice service is designed to give "second tier" advice on benefits issues in complex cases where the independent carers support service needs an expert opinion. It forms part of our response to the requirements of Clause 4 of the Care Act concerning information provision for carers and ensuring carers have the right benefits is important in preventing breakdown of caring situations. The council has recently made savings in the provision of benefits advice that can be obtained elsewhere. However, it has been felt essential to maintain this service that deals with enquiries that are too complicated for the independent carers support service to resolve. This is a highly complex area and hence the separate specialist commission designed:

- To provide expert specialist benefits advice to carers who have been referred by carers organisations (where the case is too complex for carers support advisers to deal with)
- To provide regularly updated information for carers on benefits for carers; both online and through printed materials
- Provide briefings for people working with carers

Procurement Strategy and Options

17. An open tender procedure 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.

18. Details of the options considered for both tendering processes and the evaluations undertaken are attached as the Part 2 report.

Key Implications

19. 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 including young carers support.
20. New mandatory statutory guidance also requires CCGs to undertake stakeholder engagement including with carers. The county council also has a strong commitment to Carer engagement and co-design and this is best and most cost effectively achieved through shared processes.
21. 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 underpin community’s ability to support vulnerable people.
22. 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. It will also help ensure that carers have timely information and are referred for Carers Assessments and Young Carers Needs Assessments where appropriate.
23. It is proposed that contractual agreements are offered for each service 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.
24. 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:

25. 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:

26. The non-provision of support to carers would have severe reputational, legal risks. After an extensive co-design undertaken together with CCGs, we gleaned from discussions and feedback that the withdrawal of the service would seriously harm Surrey's reputation with carers, health partners and staff.
27. 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. They will be monitored on a quarterly basis.
- iii. The Council's ability to exit the contract if required - 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

28. 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 reduces the need for more expensive and intrusive care packages. A new study "The Economic Case for Supporting Young Carers" – Ecorys May 2017 shows very similar cost avoidance through preventing the need for social care support as "Children in Need". Based on this calculation, an estimated £17.2 million will be saved via cost avoidance over the full term of these contracts.
29. In this context, the investment through the Better Care Fund to support carers and young 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.
30. 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.

31. 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

32. The County Council is facing a very serious financial situation, whereby there are still substantial savings to be identified and delivered to achieve a balanced budget in the current year and a sustainable budget plan for future years.
33. The Section 151 Officer can confirm that the costs of the proposed carers contracts set out in this paper are within the budget envelope for these services that has been included within the current Medium Term Financial Plan. It is also recognised that these services form an important part of Surrey's health and social care prevention strategy and help to mitigate costs across the whole system.
34. In spite of these factors, it is important to recognise that agreeing to this recommendation will reduce the council's options to balance the budget, although 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 – certainly in long term.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

35. The Council's award of the 4 contracts and the services provided under them will help it to comply with the duties placed upon it under the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014.
36. The Council advertised its requirements for the services to be provided in the Official Journal of the European Union. Bids were evaluated to achieve best value. . The procurements are legally compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Standing Orders.

Equalities and Diversity

37. 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.
38. The proposed Support for Young Carers contract maintains current support for carers and indeed will increase the numbers supported. There are therefore there are no negative impacts to address.
39. However, an Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) has been undertaken to test this and is attached as Annex 1.

Other Implications:

40. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered and are summarised below:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	Set out below.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below.

Public Health	Set out below.
Climate change	No significant implications arising from this report
Carbon emissions	No significant implications arising from this report

Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications

- 41. 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. Services working with adult carers do so as part of a whole family approach and will identify children in the household who may be young carers and will refer them to appropriate sources of help.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

- 42. 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 and support 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.
- 43. As part of the delivery of these contracts 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

- 44. The support to carers and young carers delivered through these services are designed to promote the health and wellbeing of carers and reduces the risks of stress related illness.
- 45. Support for young carers assists with approaches to promote healthy schools.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 46. 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
John Bangs - Carers Strategy and Development Manager (01483 519145)
Rachel Maloney, Strategic Procurement Manager (020 8541 7529)

Consulted:

Internal – Adult Social Care Senior Management Team, Orbis Procurement and Commissioning, Orbis Legal and Finance Departments.

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 Countywide Carers Support Services

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)
 - Economic Case for Supporting Young Carers Ecorys (May 2017)
 - 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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