

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

13 October 2015

Report of the Strategic Director of Adult Care

**REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY
IMPAIRED PEOPLE**

Adult Social Care

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to undertake a procurement exercise for the provision of rehabilitation and advice services for blind and visually impaired people in Derbyshire from 1 April 2016, for a period of up to three years, subject to annual review.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Provision of services in Derbyshire

Contracted services are currently provided on a cost and volume basis and the contract emphasises the range of services that will be provided. These services include:

- The provision of information and advice to people about visual impairments
- Assessments for equipment to help people who have a formal diagnosis and Certificate of Visual Impairment, to carry out daily tasks and rehabilitative programmes to help people manage their condition
- Supporting applications for specialist radios (Wireless for the Blind) and arranging access to talking books services

These services are currently provided through two different contracts, but delivered by the same provider. Both contracts are due to end on 31st March 2016 and the proposal is to procure a new combined service to commence 1st April 2016. The combined value of the current contracts is £226,917.

In addition to the contracted services outlined above there are a range of grant funded services, which complement the contract. The total grant funding for 2015/16 is £77,940 (jointly funded by Adult Care and Derbyshire CCGs).

2.2 Blind and visually impaired people in Derbyshire

A Certificate of Visual Impairment formally certifies someone as sight impaired or severely sight impaired, using established diagnostic tests. The County Council has a duty to keep a register of sight impaired people and this gives rise to certain other duties and expectations, which are outlined in more detail below.

The level of sight impairment in Derbyshire is similar to the England rate and the rate of certifications is approximately 336 people a year. During the year 2012-13 there were 13,708 people living in Derbyshire aged 65 or above with a sight impairment. This is estimated to rise to 20,600 by 2030. These increases are due in the most part to a rise in the number of older people.

During the year 2014-15 everyone issued with a Certificate of Visual Impairment was referred to the service. This generated a range of interventions from a simple assessment to more specialist assessments and rehabilitation programmes. The service dealt with 3572 enquiries for information and resources, provided 165 specialist assessments and provided a total of 359 sessions of rehabilitation.

Most people who go onto access social care services have a long-standing sight impairment. The total number of people in receipt of a social care service last year was 369 and of these 63 were new referrals.

2.3 Statutory duties and good practice guidelines

The Care Act 2014 retains the Council's previous duties to maintain a register of blind and partially sighted people and to provide assessments of people who are deaf/ blind by suitably qualified professionals. The Act also introduces a new general duty for the Council to cooperate with relevant partners to promote preventative services, which includes the duty to provide advice and assistance.

Proper regard has to be had to this duty when making decisions about service provision.

The statutory guidance accompanying the Act emphasises the importance of accessible information and effective prevention services. Initial information and advice, must be accessible and provided in a way which takes account of the needs of people with sensory impairments.

The statutory guidance also states that services should prevent, reduce and delay needs. For the first time the guidance recognises rehabilitation for sight impaired persons as a prevention service. Local authorities have a degree of discretion about how this is achieved. Where the criteria for accessing prevention services are met, local authorities must provide minor aids and adaptations up to the value of £1000 free of charge. Intermediate care and reablement support services must also be provided free for the first six weeks. The guidance recommends that no charges are made for rehabilitation programmes that are longer than six weeks. Local authorities have the discretion to set their own criteria for these services.

Good practice guidelines suggest that the criteria should be determined by sensory needs and not social care needs. The UK Vision Strategy 2013-18 was developed by the leading eye health and sight loss organisations across the UK to enable them and associated agencies to deliver a united approach to the provision of services. The Strategy is the UK's response to the World Health Organisation's Global Action Plan for the Prevention of Avoidable Blindness (formerly the VISION 2020 Action Plan). A position statement by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) recognises the benefits of rehabilitation support in helping people retain their independence.

'Towards a Sensory Impairment Strategy for Derbyshire County' is a discussion document written by the Council's Public Health Department. It sets out the prevalence of sensory impairment in Derbyshire and reiterates the importance of promoting independence, helping people to stay at home for as long as possible and reducing the risk of social exclusion. The paper provides evidence of the cost benefits of rehabilitation services for people who are sight impaired or severely sight impaired.

2.4 Analysis of the current service

Sensory advice and rehabilitation services have been provided on a preventative basis in line with the good practice outlined above. It is proposed to retain this approach.

The current contracts are tightly specified in terms of delivering a specific range of services. During the lifetime of the contract this has been restrictive because it has limited the provider to offering what is specified in the contract, rather than what produces the best outcome for individuals. It is proposed to invite tenders for the new contract on the basis of outcomes and what the provider will achieve, rather than on a fixed list of the interventions they will offer. Evidence based on local experience and national research suggests this produces a better experience for individuals and is a more cost effective way to provide services. It also provides increased flexibility within the contract and means the provider is better equipped to respond to changes in financial and policy drivers such as future reductions in Council budgets and initiatives to provide more integrated services. This could include proposals resulting from the Voluntary and Community Services review.

2.5 Commissioning intentions

The intention is to commission specialist information, advice, assessment and self-care services using an outcome based contract. The main outcomes and related performance indicators and evidence requirements are indicated below:

- Good health and emotional well-being – indicated by a person's ability to live independently without requiring social care services
- Feeling safe around the home – indicated by people feeling they have had the advice, interventions and equipment they need to live independently
- Good quality of life – indicated by people feeling they are making the most of their potential and they are able to participate in the activities that interest them
- Economic wellbeing – indicated by people being in work, feeling they are getting the support they need to find work and feeling that their income is maximised by access to relevant advice about in and out of work benefits
- Feeling respected and in control – indicated by people feeling their independence has been maximised and that they have been able to exercise a choice over services offered
- Additional service outcomes will include requirements to identify, engage and support carers – indicated by identifying carers – measured by referrals to carer services.

A variety of mechanisms will be used to evidence that outcomes are being met. These will include using established tools, such as the 'Outcomes Star', a method which identifies individual goals and demonstrates the progress people have made in meeting goals at the end of an intervention.

The contract will have additional indicators and ways to evidence they are being met.

2.6 Co-production

People who are blind and visually impaired have been involved in shaping what this service looks like in a variety of ways. Feedback from people using the service has been regularly reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring of both contracts. Focus groups are planned to provide additional information as part of the end of contract review. The involvement of people who use the services in the tendering evaluation process is established practice and will take place for this contract.

3. Financial Considerations

The basic contract value will be 218,800. An additional 10% of the contract value will be performance related and only paid if agreed performance measures are met or exceeded by the provider.

These funds can be met from the Adult Care budget.

4. Human Resource considerations

All the current services are provided by Sight Support Derbyshire. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) may apply to staff if there is a transfer of service provision to another provider as a result of the procurement exercise.

5. Legal considerations

The contract will be approved by the Director of Legal Services.

5. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity; human resources; environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

6. Key Decision

No

10. Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report?

No

11. Background Paper

Towards a Sensory Impairment Strategy for Derbyshire County presented by the Director of Public Health to The Adult Care Board, 25 June 2015

11. OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approves the proposed procurement of a contract for the provision of rehabilitation and advice services for blind and visually impaired people in Derbyshire to commence on 1 April 2016.

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