

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

20 September 2016

Report of the Strategic Director for Adult Care

PROCUREMENT OF HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

ADULT CARE

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to undertake a procurement exercise for two hard of hearing services, one in the north and one in the south of the county, to provide:

- Information, advice and demonstration of specialist equipment
- Assessments for specialist equipment
- Installing specialist equipment in people's homes
- Advising funders on making their public meetings accessible and setting up equipment
- Promote peer support

The contract period would be up to three years, subject to annual review.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Background information

On 15 March 2016 Cabinet approved a Thematic Review of Sensory Services as part of the wider review of voluntary and community sector funding. That review has considered three areas of service provision that have a common theme, but which relate to three distinct areas of provision. The other two areas are covered by separate reports and relate to visual impairment services and British Sign Language (BSL) support services for people who are profoundly Deaf. The report about BSL support services has also been tabled for the 20 September Cabinet meeting.

2.2 Prevalence of hearing loss

Estimates indicate that 68,594 people in Derbyshire have a hearing loss of such severity that they require hearing aids or other hearing equipment. The problem has a strong relationship to age affecting:

- 20% of 65-74 year olds (17,240 people)
- 64% of 75-84 year olds (30,967 people)
- 88% of people aged 85 plus (33,027 people)

2.3 Hard of Hearing services

The current service is provided by Deaf and Hearing Support, which operates in the south of the county, Camtad North and Hearing Help Amber Valley. Three grants are paid to these organisations to provide information and advice about specialist hearing equipment to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Two of these grants are funded jointly by CCGs and Adult Care. Each of the organisations differs slightly in the precise range of services they provide, but in general they include information on all aspects of hearing loss and deafness including:

- Information, advice and demonstration of environmental hearing equipment.
- Assessments, including assessments in people's homes
- Installing environmental hearing equipment, such as loop systems and special telephones in people's homes
- Promotion of peer support
- Making public meetings accessible

Self-reported information from the grant funded hearing organisations gives an indication of the volume of service they provide and suggests there were just under 14,000 beneficiaries of services during the year 2015-16.

Audiology services were not part of the recent review, but are an important part of the hearing health pathway of support. These services are funded by health and carry out hearing tests, and prescribe and maintain hearing aids.

2.4 Statutory duties and good practice

The Equality Act 2010 sets out duties for reducing health inequalities, more specifically wellbeing principles are set out in the Care Act 2014 and the NHS and Social Care Act 2012. People should be able to receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious, or delay the impact of their needs and be able to get information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support.

The Accessible Information Standard is a legal duty that requires health and social care providers to make sure people can get information about services and access services by getting appropriate quality support communication quickly. The advice this service provides means people can access equipment which facilitates access to information, so indirectly contributes to meeting the standard.

The County Council is signed up to the charter for Deaf People, which includes commitments to people who are hard of hearing and makes the following five pledges:

- Ensure access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to information and services
- Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language and other methods of communication used by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people
- Support Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and families
- Ensure staff working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people can communicate effectively in British Sign Language and other methods of communication
- Consult with our local Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities on a regular basis.

The Charter commitment and the commissioning proposals for the hard of hearing service reflect national guidance. The Action Plan on Hearing Loss was published by NHS England in 2015. It commits to 5 objectives and sets out actions in relation to each objective and the report states.... *These actions will support all bodies in meeting their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and for reducing health inequalities under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012).*

The five objectives are:

- 1 Good prevention
- 2 Early diagnosis and effective management of condition once diagnosed
- 3 Services that are well co-ordinated and integrated
- 4 Independence and ageing well
- 5 Learning and working

Good hearing health makes a positive contribution to a number of other conditions. In particular:

Dementia - During 2014 there were around 10,660 people over 65 years with dementia in the county. Poor hearing can be a significant factor in making dementia worse or appear to be worse. This can lead to costly and incorrect responses. Newly emerging findings suggest that the rate of cognitive decline decreases with the use of hearing aids which may reduce the risk of developing dementia.

Social isolation – This can include things like not being able to talk on the phone, not hearing people at the door and cutting oneself off because of bad experiences of mishearing conversations.

Self-care – A large proportion of people will have hearing loss, along with one or more other long-term conditions. Evidence suggests around 30% of those reporting severe hearing loss have at least four long-term conditions. Getting good information and advice about environmental hearing equipment means people can carry out simple tasks such as phoning up the GP to get help.

Depression – Any of the above impacts combined with reduced quality of and disconnection from previous habits or hobbies can lead to depression. People with unmanaged hearing loss are more likely to go straight to expensive care packages.

2.5 Review of Hard of Hearing services

Over 100 people attended meetings in June and July at different venues throughout the county. 60 people returned questionnaires.

Overall people highlighted that:

- It is good to be able to get independent friendly advice about equipment and make informed choices.
- Being able to access a service at convenient local community bases is important.
- The way services are currently organised results in quick responses to requests for information and help.
- Social contact and peer support from other people experiencing similar problems is important. Some people have said they would rarely leave the house if this support was not available.
- Good advice about environmental hearing equipment reduces isolation from friends and family. It also enables people to get information about services, for example special telephones mean people can make health appointments and get advice over the telephone.
- The installation and demonstration of certain types of environmental equipment is inconsistent and fragmented because responsibility sits with two different organisations.
- Some of the grant funded organisations provide hearing aid maintenance. This is highly valued by people, but it should be provided through other contractual arrangements that are in place.

The review has concluded that Hard of Hearing services fulfil an important statutory duty as well as contributing to service objectives. Good management of hearing health makes a positive contribution to avoiding or preventing the onset or deterioration of other conditions.

2.6 The proposed service

The review has concluded that Hard of Hearing Services contribute to statutory duties and meet service objectives. As well as commitments made in the Deaf Charter these services have an important impact on prevention of long term conditions such as dementia and mental health.

The proposal to undertake a procurement exercise would see three longstanding grant arrangements replaced with two contracts. Overall the service would be broadly the same as what is funded by the grants and would include the areas of support described below.

The change from the current arrangements is that only one provider would be funded, one to cover the north of the county and one to cover the south. The service that people receive would not be affected; there would be no changes to the access criteria, and the funding would remain the same.

The procurement proposals seek to ensure the Council:

- Meets statutory duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' for anyone who falls under the definition of disability under the Act. Hearing loss comes under the definition of physical impairment under the Equality Act 2010.
- Meets local service objectives and performance frameworks
- Meets key national regulatory and good practice requirements

In order to fulfil these requirements and improve on the current service it needs to provide:

Information, advice and demonstration of environmental hearing equipment – This will ensure people are made aware of specialist equipment that is not readily available in high street shops and which can enhance independence by assisting with daily life and reducing the risk of social isolation. Audiology equipment such as hearing aids is not part of this contract and is a health responsibility.

Assessments for environmental hearing equipment – This is a more efficient way to assess for community equipment than people coming through Call Derbyshire of local teams. It also results in a better and speedier service for people.

Installing environmental hearing equipment in people's homes – This may arise as a result of an assessment. The effective installation is important to ensure that equipment works properly and people use it to its best effect.

Advising funders on making their public meetings accessible and setting up equipment – This is important in terms of meeting equality duties.

Promotion of peer support – Peer support is a cost effective way of helping people to help each other.

2.6 Timescales

Subject to Cabinet approving the proposal, procurement will begin in September 2016. Tender interviews will take place in November and a recommendation will be made to Cabinet in February. It is intended for the new service to begin on 1 April 2017, but TUPE issues may delay implementation and mean that the contract starts as late as June 2017.

3. Financial Considerations

The level of investment in these services will be maintained at the current levels, apart from a 3% reduction in the funding from North Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group, which has been applied across all the services they fund in the voluntary sector.

The contracts will be funded jointly by the CCGs and Adult Care. The CCG contribution is £60,510. The maximum Adult Care contribution will be £59,200 which can be met from the existing budget.

The maximum value of the contracts will be £0.120m per year. The cost over 3 years will be £0.359m.

4. Human Resources Considerations

The current service is provided by Deaf and Hearing Support, Camtad North and Hearing Help Amber Valley. Collectively the grant funded services are provided by eight paid staff and ninety one volunteers. 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

Procurement of the Services will be undertaken in accordance with the European Procurement Regulations 2015.

6. Social Value Considerations

The service will add value to a wide range of Council services and health services by ensuring people who have hearing difficulties are aware of and

can use equipment which enhances their independence, reduces isolation and keeps them well for longer. The promotion of self-help groups also has social value benefits. Both activities directly contribute to the prevention of problems from intensifying and becoming more difficult to resolve. The tendering process will encourage providers to make effective use of volunteers as part of service delivery and to undertake activities which seek to bring in additional income from grants to complement the activities funded by this contract.

7. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: Legal and Human Rights, equality of opportunity, health, environmental, transport, property, crime and disorder considerations.

8. Background Papers

Derbyshire County Council Cabinet 15 March 2016, Extension of Grant Funding in 2016-17, Adult Care Service Statutory Priorities

9. Key Decision

No

10. Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?

No

11. Officer's Recommendation

To approve the procurement of two hard of hearing services, one in the north and one in the south of the county to provide:

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Joy Hollister
Strategic Director – Adult Care
County Hall

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