

Agenda Item No: (6b)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

ADULT CARE

29 JUNE 2017

Report of the Strategic Director for Adult Care

ADJUSTING INVESTMENT IN SIGHT REHABILITATION SERVICES

ADULT CARE

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval to adjust the investment in rehabilitation and support services for people who have a visual impairment, to implement changes arising from a review of sensory services funded through grants. This would mean:

- Adult Care increasing investment in an existing contract with Sight Support Derbyshire that provides sight rehabilitation and information services by £20,000 from 1 October 2017
- Adult Care ending a contribution of £39,000 to a joint grant on 30 September 2017 which is given to Sight Support Derbyshire
- Undertaking planning work with the individuals affected by the proposed change to minimise the impact from 7 July 2017

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. The review has been necessary because of significant reductions in grants paid by central government to local government. The premise of the review was that that all grant funding would end and be replaced by contractual arrangements, where it could be demonstrated that services were required to:

- meet statutory duties
- meet key national regulatory and good practice requirements

- meet local service objectives and performance framework
- meet local needs and reflect what local people identify as important

The sensory review considered three distinct services and these were:

- services for people who are hard of hearing
- services for people who are Deaf
- services for people who have a visual impairment

On 20 September 2016, Cabinet approved changes to services to hard of hearing services and to Deaf services.

2.2 Blind and visually impaired people in Derbyshire

Most of the people who use visual impairment services will have a Certificate of Visual Impairment that certifies people as sight impaired or severely sight impaired. The County Council has a duty to keep a register of certifications and this gives rise to certain other duties and expectations, these are outlined in more detail below. The extent of sight impairment in Derbyshire is similar to the England rate and approximately 336 people a year are certified. During the financial year 2012-13 there were 13,708 people living in Derbyshire aged 65 or above with a sight impairment. By 2030, it is estimated this will rise to 20,600. This increase is due in the most part to a rise in the number of older people.

2.3 Best practice and local needs

The Care Act 2014 retained 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 has also introduced 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.

The statutory guidance accompanying the Act emphasises the importance of accessible information and effective prevention services. Information and advice must be accessible and provided in a way that 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, but local authorities have a degree of discretion about how this is achieved. Where the criterion for accessing prevention services is met, local authorities must provide minor aids and adaptations up to the value of £1000 free of charge. Intermediate care and re-ablement support services must also be provided free for the first six weeks. The guidance recommends that no charges be made for rehabilitation programmes that are longer than six weeks.

Local authorities have the discretion to set their own criteria for sight rehabilitation services. Good practice guidelines suggest that access to services should be determined by sensory needs and not the eligibility criteria for personal social care.

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 Public Health in 2015. 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 Current arrangements and proposed changes

The recommendations about grant funding have taken account of the overall arrangements to provide, information, advice, guidance, rehabilitation and general support to people who have a visual impairment. The grant complements a service that is funded through an existing contract procured by Adult Care. The contracted service value is £0.218m and it provides specialist information, advice, assessments and promotes self-care.

Grant funded services include a Mobile Resource Centre, a volunteer scheme to support access to leisure activities, promotion of self-care and wellbeing, and support through befriending. The total value of the grant is £74,000, Adult Care contributes £39,000 and the Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Groups contribute £35,000.

The proposed changes are:

- Clinical Commissioning Groups will continue to provide grant funding at the same level as now and this will pay for activities that promote self-care and wellbeing. Clinical Commissioning Groups have already confirmed this decision.
- Adult Care to end grant funding, but to increase the value of the contract by £20,000 and change the contract terms to include provision of a mobile resource service.

- The sports and leisure schemes to be funded from a grant making trust and this will be paid to Sight Support Derbyshire.
- Funding for befriending from a specialist visual impairment provider to end and people to be supported to access befriending support from the wide range of organisations who provide befriending support across the county.

The Mobile Resource Service is a statutory duty because it contributes to providing equal access to services in all parts of the county, by enabling people who live in isolated areas to access the service more easily. As the sight rehabilitation contract that is already in place, includes the requirement to provide information, advice guidance and the demonstration of equipment, the Mobile Resource Service has a good fit with this contract. The proposed increase in the contract value is less than ten percent, and the purpose of the contract remains the same. This means the changes would be within procurement rules about varying existing contracts and no retendering would be necessary.

Promoting access to sports facilities is not a statutory duty, but has a beneficial impact on wellbeing and contributes to local service objectives. Funding from other grant making sources is available for the sports and leisure activities and therefore it is better to use these resources rather than funding from Adult Care or health.

Befriending services provide regular contact with people who are at risk of becoming lonely and developing health problems linked to loneliness. An indirect benefit of this service is that the wellbeing of people is monitored, which increases the chances of identifying and responding to a decline in health at an early stage. People can access a wide range of general befriending services across Derbyshire and alternative befriending support would be available to everyone who currently receives support from Sight Support Derbyshire.

The continued investment in specialist sensory rehabilitation provision means that if a person's sight deteriorates, and they need an intervention that is specific to a sight problem, provision will still be available.

2.4 Implications of the proposed changes

The proposals have been subject to an equality analysis that takes account of protecting and promoting the welfare, and interests of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). This is attached as Appendix 1 of this report and it shows that the proposals will impact on people who are old and people who are disabled.

The arrangements for the delivery of services will change, but in many cases, people will not notice any difference and no one will be left without support. A small number of people will notice a change, this is eleven people who receive a befriending service and who will be befriended by a different person.

There would be no impact on people using the sports and leisure service.

The provision of the mobile resource service would continue to be provided in the same way as it is now; with adjusted funding arrangements. Sight Support Derbyshire receives the grant and holds the contract for sight rehabilitation service, so bringing the service into the contract would not mean a change of provider. It would also be beneficial because it would mean the contract could be monitored more closely than it is now and there would be better information about access to the service across the county.

People who are supported by volunteer befrienders would be affected by the proposed changes, because the service would be provided in a different way. Even though the way the service is delivered would change, all but eleven people of the seventy-five people who use the service, would be able to have the same befriender.

- Forty-seven people can transfer to different befriending organisations and the volunteer who supports them now can transfer with them.
- Seventeen people can be transferred to another befriending organisation, but the volunteer would not transfer with them, however the existing volunteers have said they would be prepared to continue to keep in touch with the person on an informal basis.
- Eleven people can be transferred to other befriending organisations, but the volunteer supporting them would be different from the one who provides support now.

2.5 Timescales for the proposed changes

All the actions are subject to the proposals being approved.

July 2017	Letter sent to give formal notification that the grant will not be renewed, but the contract will be varied and the value increased.
July to September 2017	Detailed planning work to take place with the seventy-five people who use the befriending service.
September 2017	Grant ends and contract value increased. All transfers to new befriending arrangements complete.

3. Financial Considerations

The table below summarises the proposed investment re-profile and then the changes are described in more detail below.

Type of investment	Current investment	Proposed future investment from 01/10/2017
Adult Care grant contribution	£0.039m	Nil
Health grant contribution	£0.035m	£0.035m
Adult Care contract funding (Sight rehabilitation and information)	£0.218m	£0.238m
Total	£0.292m	£0.273m

Adult Care would end a £39,000 contribution it makes to a grant jointly funded with health. The total amount of the grant is £74,000 and the health contribution of £35,000 would remain. The grant funding complements a contract for sight rehabilitation and support services, which has a total value of £0.218m. Adult Care funds the contract and the value of this contract would be increased by £20,000. This would result in an overall saving of £19,000.

4. Legal Considerations

The Director of Legal Services advised that these proposals require a full equality impact assessment. The findings of the impact assessment are referred to in the body of this report and the assessment is attached in Appendix 1.

5. Social Value Considerations

The services affected contribute to social value by utilising volunteers. If the changes were implemented, there is a risk that a small number of people would stop volunteering in their current capacity. It is possible that people would volunteer for other organisations, but this cannot be guaranteed. In other respects the proposals add value by utilising the capacity of befriending services and grant making trusts.

6. Other Considerations

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

7. Background Papers

Cabinet Report, Extension of Grant Finding in 2016-2017 Adult Care Service Statutory Priorities, 15 March 2017

Cabinet Report, Procurement of a British Sign Language Service, 20 September 2016

Cabinet Report, Procurement of a Hard of Hearing Service, 20 September 2016

8. Key Decision

No

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

No

10. Officer's Recommendation

Cabinet approves the re-profiling of investment in rehabilitation and support services for people who have a visual impairment and the following actions are taken:

- Adult Care increases investment in an existing contract with Sight Support Derbyshire that provides sight rehabilitation and information services by £20,000 from 1 October 2017
- Adult Care ends a contribution of £39,000 to a joint grant that is paid to Sight Support Derbyshire on 30 September 2017
- Planning work with the individuals affected by the proposed changes begins on 7 July 2017.

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