



Doncaster Council

Report

**Date: 17th January
2022**

To the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

TO IMPROVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPORTING INFORMAL CARERS OF DONCASTER PEOPLE WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS

| Relevant Cabinet Member(s) | Wards Affected | Key Decision |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Councillor Andrea Robinson | All Wards | Yes |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report outlines the proposal to change the way in which the approved budget for the Carer's service is utilised. The proposed shift to a carer led preventive model will improve service effectiveness and maximise carer independence.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is asked to approve the proposal to implement a carer led preventative model and to undertake and conclude the associated procurement activity.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. In agreeing these recommendations, the Cabinet Member is agreeing to implement a change to the access model for Doncaster carers, which will be facilitated through the commissioning of a person centred, prevention-focussed Carers' Wellbeing Support Service.

5. Existing service provision focuses less on prevention and more on moving individual carers into a more formal assessment pathway and support via direct payment, administered directly by Adult Social Care.
6. It is proposed that the new service will comprise of two elements; support for all carers and support for those with urgent needs.
7. The service accessible to *all carers* will include:
 - Identification and recognition
 - Information, advice, guidance
 - Connecting carers to other services which will improve the individuals wellbeing
 - Peer support
 - Short term crisis support
8. The new service will build and develop the initial support to all carers to maximise carer independence and the number of carers supported. Where the individual presents as having further needs beyond accessing the general support for all carers, the appointed provider will work with the carer to formally assess their needs and plan their support.
9. The support for those who are identified as having further needs will include the provider working with the carer to:
 - Complete a Carer's Assessment
 - Plan their support
 - Access a Carers Direct Payment if this additional support will demonstrably increase wellbeing and reduce the risk of breakdown
10. The carer and the person they care for may have a range of needs and the provider will need to work with appropriate organisations, including the Council, to make sure that information is shared and joined-up support is provided.
11. The service will focus on getting alongside carers to understand the challenges they face, whilst working with them to identify means to meet their own needs. It will support at the earliest opportunity and therefore reduce, prevent and delay the need for more formal support for the carer. The service will work proactively with carers from various caring circumstances in order to reduce the additional challenges they face.
12. The contract value is £240,000 per year, of which the Provider will be expected to administer £120,000 ring fenced sum for Carer's direct payments.
13. The Council commenced the tender process pursuant to the approval given in ODR AHWB 047.2021
14. The contract will be awarded to the successful bidder following the running of a legally compliant procurement process which involves key stakeholders including carers. The Contract will commence on 1st April 2022 and will be for a period of three years, with the option of 2 x12 month extensions.

15. There is existing budget for this, approved as part of the 2021/2022 Budget report, but aligned as £90k for provider support and £150k Carer's direct payments.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

16. Option 1 – Maintain the current arrangements – extend the contractual arrangement and continue with the current offer.
17. Reason for rejection: This is not considered to be a viable option, as the needs of Doncaster Carers have changed. Feedback suggests that the current service no longer meets Carers' needs in terms of carer networks, expert by experience support and the digital offer.
18. Option 2 – Re-procure the service without changing the model.
19. Reason for rejection: This option is not recommended as the current model is less preventative and therefore less effective. The current model does align as well to best practice and prevention and as such would likely be an influx of carers in crisis with limited preventative support, and pressure on social workers to deliver support/ assessments.
20. Option 3 – No longer commission a carers support service.
21. Reason for rejection: This is not a viable option as carers feedback suggests there is a preference for support being delivered through a carers' organisation outside of adult social care support. It would also place greater pressure on adult social care.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

22. Both the Care Act 2014 and best practice promotes access to support which prevents, reduces and delays the need for more formal support. Through this there is a focus on wellbeing and strengths based services which seek to empower individuals and build networks and resilience. The change in access within the proposed new service creates a shift to this type of model which makes the carer the expert and focusses doing things with carers, not to them, with a less process driven approach to supporting an individual to meet their own needs.
23. The change in access model will improve the experience of Carers; who will be identified sooner and have the opportunity to gain information, advice, build networks and access peer support at the initial stages, rather than getting to crisis. The service will empower Carers to explore wider opportunities to meet their needs, whilst reducing the number of hand-offs they experience.
24. To support the change in access model, the Council's wellbeing teams have already started to run a pilot. They are working with Carers who are being referred through our front door and those who are awaiting a Carers review, to focus the conversations much more on a preventative basis giving access to information and advice, and connecting carers to other services in order to improve their wellbeing.

25. Where Carers have previously had a Carer's Assessment and Direct Payment, Wellbeing Officers will discuss payment, wellbeing officers have been discussing with individuals what is important to them and assessing their needs through discussion, whilst recording the outcomes and an outline of how the Carer shall meet their needs, giving an overview of spend (where a cost is identified). The approach through wellbeing teams has proven to be quicker and more accessible to individuals.
26. For carers who have not been in contact with the Council, the Carers Time for You fund has been delivered through the existing carers service. This fund currently offers a payment made in response to the carer having urgent needs. The payment is made to improve their wellbeing, targeted at approximately £300 per carer. Feedback from carers has been positive; the waiting times have been significantly less than those awaiting social work support, with many carers choosing this fund over a social work Direct Payment. This has proven to be an effective route for carers as from 1st April to 30th September 2021, social work averages 66 days waiting for a Carers Assessment, whereas the carer's service wait is on average 13 days (to gain a funding agreement). During the same period, the overall spend has also been less - the average spend on a Council carers direct payment was around £470 per carer, and the average spend on the Time for You fund during this period was around £242 per carer. Feedback from carers suggests that it has been no less effective, with all those who have accessed the fund rating their wellbeing as improved as a result.
27. A recent example from the pilot where the carer has had an improved experience and we have reduced overall spend is when a carer who had previously received a Direct Payment through the Council. This carer has had £450 for the last two years, and £600 for the year previous, which she has spent on recreational things, decorating and gardening. When she came to the Carers Time for You service, she had been waiting for a social work assessment for a while due to Covid. As she accessed the Carers Service, she joined a local carer group and has found it has helped improve her wellbeing. Through the Carers Time for You fund she sought funding for a spa day which cost £100. This is significantly less than what she spent through social work in previous years, though she reported her needs were met and she has accessed the more preventative and sustained support of the carers' service, which will support to reduce future crisis.
28. Whilst the pilot has demonstrated a reduced spend on each individual carer, it is not planned to reduce the amount of money committed to supporting carers as a result of the new contract. Instead the surplus funds will enable the service to support more carers at an earlier stage, by investing in early intervention.
29. The £240k used to commission the service is made up of the current Carers Service budget of £90k and the budget from the overall direct payment budget of £150k, which is the estimated annual spend on carers' Direct Payments based on previous years. In moving the budgets to the new model, £120k will be ring-fenced for spending on carers with urgent needs, which will equate to around 400 carers receiving a Carer's Direct Payment, if spend continues to be around £300 per carer, though each carer will be considered on an individual basis. In 2020/2021 the Council made Direct Payments to 302 carers totalling £144,025 at an average of £480 per carer.

It is therefore envisaged that by transferring to this contract the average payment will reduce by circa £170.

30. Whilst there is a significant saving being made per average payment, this will be reinvested in the service to support more carers more effectively. Through investing in the front end community based services, there will also be a reduced number of carers accessing a Direct Payment. There is an expectation that the service will grow over the duration of the contract, the shift to a preventative model will increase the number of carers accessing universal support, which will support in reducing, preventing and delaying the needs for further support through elements such as peer support and community connection.
31. It is recognised that there may be a lag between establishing the new service and its support networks and seeing this reflected in such significant average cost reductions. Therefore Better Care Fund (BCF) funding has been secured for 2022/2023 to support this transition.
32. The other £120k will be allocated to the providers costs for the delivery of all elements of the service, the provider will be asked to tender with their costs for delivery within the £120k threshold.
33. Following award and mobilisation of the new arrangements, the council's commissioning team in partnership with the Carers Strategic Lead will monitor the provider through quarterly quality checks, to ensure they are fully complying with the council's Care Act obligations towards carers pursuant to their contractual obligations.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

34 .

| | Outcomes | Implications |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment | <p>The service will support working carers, enabling carer to pursue their ambitions whilst caring.</p> |
| | <p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good | <p>The service will support in improving and maintaining carer wellbeing through pursuit of hobby and interests, as well as encouraging a healthy lifestyle. The service will forge links to improve overall wellbeing of carers.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <p>quality, affordable home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage | |
| | <p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work | |
| | <p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes | <p>In supporting carers the service is supporting the people they care for to continue to live the life they chose, in their community. The preventative service is accessible to carers across all age categories.</p> |
| | <p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths <p>Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance</p> | <p>The tender process has placed emphasis on value for money as well as quality of service.</p> <p>The delivery of the service through the community will enable a reduction in average spend per carer, therefore enabling more carers to be supported. Delivering greater value for money.</p> |

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

35. There is a risk that if the carers wellbeing service is not procured, there will be reduced support for carers which will in turn have a significant impact on carer health and wellbeing in Doncaster. There is a risk that if the model does not change to a strengths based, preventative and person-centred model, carers needs will be less effectively met. Given the current pressures within the system due to Covid, there is a risk that if the new service does not support carers through assessment and to access a direct payment, carers will have a long waiting time in order to access social work support, leading to poor carer wellbeing and potential carer breakdown.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SRF Date 21.12.21]

36. In accordance with Section 2 of the Care Act 2014, “A local authority must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources, or take other steps, which it considers will.....

(d) reduce the needs for support of carers in its area.

In performing that duty, a local authority must have regard to—

the importance of identifying carers in the authority’s area with needs for support which are not being met (by the authority or otherwise).”

As set out in s111 Local Government Act 1972 “a local authority shall have power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions”

The award of the contract for these services should be carried out in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 04/01/22]

37. The annual cost of this contract is £240,000. The intention of the new service is that it will use existing permanent funding, included in the 2021/22 Budget for the support of carers, but use it in a different way. ie to fund more up-front universal support for carers and consequently spend less on Direct Payment made to individual carers after assessment of their needs. It will also “externalise” the payment of the Direct Payment so that it is a standalone contract assessed and administered by the successful provider and not within

the Council's social work teams as at present.

| | Current £'000 | Proposed £'000 |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Wider All-carer support and administration | 90 | 120 |
| Carers Direct Payments | <u>150</u> | <u>120</u> |
| Total | 240 | 240 |

38. The £150,000 currently funding Carers direct payments supports an estimated 300 – 315 carers. To release the £30,000 from this element required to fund the wider all-carer support element the average cost of direct payments for this number of carers would have to reduce by circa £100.
39. The current average for Carers direct payments awarded after social work assessment is circa £470 per person and for payments via the current Carers Time for You is £242. Given this difference the assumption is that by developing the early intervention, advice and guidance element for all carers there will not be as much demand on the Direct Payment element because carers will be supported more effectively and earlier in the process, thus enabling the shift in funding shown above, as the average for all carer direct payments reduces towards the lower Carers Time for You average.
40. It is however recognised that this may take some time to embed, given that the contract is not intended to begin until 01/04/22. There is therefore additional BCF funding set aside to cover any potential double-funding in the first year (2022/2023). This is not expected to be required and if needed would only be up to £30k, the additional commitment around the wider contract element.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [EL 17/12/2021]

41. There are no direct HR implications in relation to this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials... PW Date...15/12/21]

42. There are no direct ICT implications at this time. However, any requirement for new, enhanced or replacement technology in support of the delivery of the Carers Wellbeing Service must follow the agreed ICT governance processes for the Council and partners.

In commissioning any new provider, due consideration needs to be given to:-

- How information is shared between the Council and the provider and
- Any IT systems requirements to support monitoring and tracking of performance.

Adults, Health & Wellbeing should engage with ICT early in the process to consider any arising IT implications.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials LR. Date 16/12/21]

43. It is essential that we look after our carers and their own health and wellbeing. Looking after others can be very demanding on our own health and therefore we need to ensure our carers are also looked after. A strengths based approach is advocated across many areas and in this way carers can receive the access and support when/where they need it and it will be more person centred and flexible in line with their own lifestyles. Access to appropriate and timely information and also peer support is essential to provide carers with the best possible support. The long term health and wellbeing of our carers is crucial to supporting those who are most vulnerable and in need of care therefore prevention of further ill-health and inequalities is the key.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials...TB..... Date...18/12/2021.]

44. The service will recognise carers of various circumstances and will ensure that the support provided accurately meets a diverse range of carers needs to ensure equality of access and experience of the service. Support delivered will work proactively with more diversely affected groups including: young adult carers, parent carers, working carers, carers of those with mental illness, carers of those with a learning disability, carers supporting those with dementia, ethnic minority carers, LGBTQ+ carers, carers associated with the armed forces community, carers of those with a long term and life limiting illness, and carers supporting those at end of life.
45. The service will ensure equality of access and support to all carers irrespective of their location within Doncaster.
46. To effectively monitor the impact of the service, the provider will be asked to report on activity with the carers identified above and their levels of satisfaction with the service in order to ensure that through positive discrimination the service is meeting identified need.

CONSULTATION

47. In order to ensure the service was developed in line with Doncaster carers' needs, the council undertook extensive consultation which incorporated 54 interviews with carers and 148 surveys completed by carers. The feedback given highlighted that carers' experiences and ambition for future provision included; carers to be better identified and recognised, for support to be delivered at the earliest stages through people with lived experience and for a focus on preventative support; particularly information and advice. Feedback from the consultation was fed into the Due Regard statement which ensures the consideration of carers in relation to the protected characteristics.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

48. Carers Wellbeing Service ODR

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