

North Yorkshire Council
Health and Adult Services
Executive Members Meeting

14 April 2023

REPORT TO Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services (HAS) in consultation with the Executive Member for Health and Adult Services

Carers Break Service - Procurement

This report includes a supporting Annex which contains exempt information as described in paragraphs 1, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

1.0 Purpose Of Report (required)

Seeking approval to conduct an open procurement of a Carers Break Service in 4 lots under the Light Touch Regime, with a contract period of 7 years in total (3+2+2) commencing 1 October 2023. The aim of the service is to support and sustain carers in their caring role and promote their health and wellbeing by providing a break from caring.

2.0 Background

This is a re-procurement of existing provision. The Carer break service has been established since the mid 1990's and is a key strategic prevention service offered to carers within North Yorkshire. The current service provision is designed as an open access volunteer led carer 'sitting' service.

The aims of the new Carer Break Service are broadly aligned with the current service specifications to support and sustain carers in their caring role and promote their health and wellbeing by providing a break from caring. This includes the provision of a 'sitting service' where volunteers will spend time with a person in their own home.

It is clear from feedback that carers see 'Carers Break Services' as a valuable service for them to continue caring and contributes to well-being. The opportunity to volunteer for these services also gives meaningful activity to the volunteers who are often ex carers and can provide the benefit of their experience to current carers.

3.0 Issues

Key elements of the new Carer Break Service include:

- Support for all unpaid carers aged 18 years or over, who are caring or looking after someone living with a physical, mental, or learning disability, substance misuse, or life limiting or terminal illness.
- Identifying and working with all unpaid carers within the community.
- Innovative support offer which enables carers to access a break from caring on a regular basis.

- Services designed to promote early intervention and prevention, and support that reduces risks of harm and prevents or delays admission into hospital or long-term residential care.
- Commitment to delivering person-centred, high-quality support.
- Collaborative working with other community providers to deliver a place-based response to need.

As the service will continue to be volunteer led, providers are not required to register with the Care Quality Commission as a domiciliary care provider, as it is not intended that the service will provide personal care services or the provision of overnight or residential type service.

Organisations are supported by the charity sector and the local authority to develop strategies to support recruitment of volunteers where there may be difficulties. In addition, the service specification will encourage collaborative working to maximise the volunteer pool.

There are situations where the support needs of the person being cared for are too high to be met via a volunteer led support service. To respond to this issue, we will identify and reinforce the pathway via APL providers and identify ways in which service development within communities could strengthen the offer, including the offer from Dementia Forward to support providers.

4.0 Financial Implications

The estimated future annual cost is £320K which shows an uplift on the current budget as the budget has remained static since 2018. This includes a contribution from the ICB.

The proposed Lot structure reflects the current Lot structure. Other options were explored in the market engagement exercise – and the recommended option was the one supported by most respondents, citing the benefits of localism, strong community knowledge and collaborative working as their reasons.

We also sought comments from organisations in relation to how they might be impacted by a proposal to align levels of funding between the Lots using carer data from the Census 2021. Comments suggested that this would represent a risk to effective delivery particularly in one area which would see a reduction in funding. We will revisit our plans regarding the budget split before launching the tender, looking to use other demographic evidence to support an equitable and fair budget split.

5.0 Legal Implications

It is recommended to undertake a procurement exercise in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, section 7, Social and Other Specific Services.

The services fall under the light touch regime, the procurement will follow the principles of an Open procedure, regulation 27.

The Gateway 1 report has been authorised by legal services.

6.0 Consultation undertaken and responses

In February 2022 an engagement exercise was conducted to continue our co-production phase of the service specification design. The exercise involved carers, carer organisations and local authority colleagues to identify good practice within the current service provision, highlighting any elements of the service that are innovative and help people live a good life. Carers cited numerous benefits for both themselves and the person being cared for. The way the service was able to

personalise the support was deemed to be a significant and overarching benefit as volunteers and people receiving support are matched according to shared interests and hobbies.

An additional market engagement exercise was undertaken through YORtender in February 2023 to gauge interest from organisations in this procurement opportunity and to outline the key elements of the service. Overall, the responses suggested that the proposed specification was a strong, shared vision between the local authority and community organisations which reflected a holistic and person-centred approach to supporting carers.

7.0 Impact on other services/organisations

In order to ensure that there is a full range of joined-up support for carers the specification will include a requirement to work closely alongside the existing carers support services as well as the emerging community anchors, and other place-based prevention support.

Re-procurement of the Carers Break Service as a volunteer led locally based service is likely to have a positive impact on the voluntary sector and market engagement suggests that there is an appetite to tender for the service on that basis.

14.0 Recommendation/s (required)

Conduct an open procurement of a Carers Break Service in 4 lots under the Light Touch Regime, with a contract period of 7 years in total (3+2+2) commencing 1 October 2023.

Lot No	Area
Lot 1	Craven & Harrogate
Lot 2	Hambleton & Richmondshire
Lot 3	Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale
Lot 4	Selby

Sally Anderson - Strategic Service Development Manager – Prevention

Supporting Annex – Procurement Gateway Document – Gate 1