

OPTION: REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR CARERS

BUDGET SAVING: £250,000

DESCRIPTION OF OPTION

In the process of conducting a community care assessment, a carer for an individual may be identified. The department has a duty to consider the needs of the carer as part of the overall assessment and the carer has the right to ask for a separate assessment of their own needs. As part of the current assessment process, a carer's assessment generates (through the Resource Allocation System) a carer's budget, a sum of money based on the nature and extent of the impact of the carer role on that individual. This can be paid as a Direct Payment to carers to support them in their carer role. The average annual Direct Payment to carers in Wirral is currently £1,730.

The proposal is to review the current process and consider the efficacy of three alternative options:

- ***the cessation of personal budgets for carers with support for carers being commissioned by the department***
- ***the introduction of an annual grant to carers***
- ***the introduction of a payment to carers based on a banding system that reflects the impact of the carer role on the individual***

The NHS has also been given additional funding to support Carers and NHS Wirral has recently commissioned the Wirral Information Resource for Equality and Diversity Carers Support Service to offer short breaks for Carers. Carers are now able to access these services through GPs rather than through Adult Social Services.

RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

There are a number of issues about the current process for generating a personal budget for carers:

- providing carers with a budget does not help create the range of support services that carers require to sustain them in their carer role
- there is confusion about what should be in the individual and the carer budgets
- the cost of providing support to carers in this way has contributed to significant budget pressures

It is anticipated that through a review of the current process and implementation of one of the above options that savings of £250,000 can be generated in a full year.

IMPACT

This proposal may result in a reduction in the number of carers directly supported by the Department. However support will still be available to Carers from the Council, NHS and Voluntary Sector organisations.

MITIGATION

For all individuals currently receiving a carer's budget, a review would be required before any changes were made to their current support arrangements. Support will still be available to Carers from the Council, NHS and Voluntary Sector organisations.