

OPTION: TARGETED SUPPORT

BUDGET SAVING: £3.95m savings and increased income

DESCRIPTION OF OPTION

Wirral Council works closely with the NHS to provide a whole range of services for vulnerable adults. These include nursing care, residential care, and Reablement among others. Reablement is where a person is supported back to full health following an illness or injury.

The option in this area is to work with the NHS and reduce the use of higher cost services such as nursing and residential care homes and to jointly change services to work much more closely together in an integrated way to focus on community based alternatives including Intermediate Care, Reablement and assistive technology. The option also includes ensuring that multi disciplinary assessments are comprehensive and ensure individuals are provided with appropriate support.

RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

The current pattern of investment is skewed towards institutional options. This produces poorer outcomes and is a more expensive model of care. A programme of work is now underway between the Local Authority and the NHS to shift the balance and develop sustainable community interventions and support.

There are a number of efficiencies related to the current high usage of residential and nursing homes in the Wirral. These beds are used for intermediate care and to facilitate early hospital discharge. Community alternatives are not well developed and older people may find themselves being placed in care homes on an interim basis due to a lack of access to domiciliary support. The use of beds as opposed to support in the home is an expensive solution and can reduce an individual's confidence to return to their home and be partly related decisions to remain in care homes.

There is a programme of work ongoing with the NHS, supported by the Kings Fund to achieve greater integration. This programme is focused on delivering streamlined responsive services, better outcomes for people and more efficient use of resources. Jointly with the NHS there is also work underway to develop the market, particularly in the areas of intermediate tier and domiciliary care. This should significantly reduce the numbers of older people going into residential and nursing home care. Over the next few months there will be joint work to develop a commissioning strategy for early intervention and prevention, and this will be the basis for future commissioning with the third sector and help to reduce dependence on some high cost statutory services.

In partnership with the NHS there is further agreement to increase investment in intermediate tier and reablement services. This will include some retendering of existing reablement contracts to ensure they are more outcome focused. The Council will also increase the use of assistive technology and the use of moving and handling equipment to ensure more efficient use of domiciliary care. Finally, it is also recognised that extra care housing is a genuine alternative to residential care and there is a strong evidence base for increasing extra care housing capacity over the next 3 years.

IMPACT

Voluntary, Community and Faith groups will have an increasing contribution to make as individuals are supported in the community and their own homes. They will play an essential part in the formulation of the early intervention and prevention commissioning strategy.

Much of the above is being delivered through a formal programme supported by the Kings Fund. This means that risks are identified and managed within a formal project management approach. There will be some need for operating two models of the service at the same time and there will be a need to ensure that this is tightly managed and resources shifted appropriately.

MITIGATION

Doing nothing is not an option as it produces poorer outcomes and is unaffordable in the medium and long term.