



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

23 SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT TITLE	QUARTER 3 COMMISSIONING ACTIVITY
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is to update members on Quarter 3 commissioning activity for Adult Social Care in relation to the procurement of short break beds for carers support.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS – The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is recommended to:

1. delegate to The Director of Health and Care authority to undertake for a tendering exercise to procure short break beds to support carers; and
2. delegate authority to the Director of Care and Health to grant tender to the successful bidders following a tender process for the Short Break Beds service, for a contract length of 1 year, plus a 1-year extension option, and at a maximum cost of £641,576.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To enable the Council to continue to meet its Care Act duties to provide services for carers by undertaking the procurement of Short Break Beds.
- 1.2 It is not clear what the full impact of the pandemic will be in terms of people returning to respite care, and a short contract length will enable early evaluation of the impact.
- 1.3 The Council is increasing its numbers of available Extra Care apartments, and a short contract length will enable early evaluation of the impact.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Consideration has been given to not to commission short break beds for carers, but this option is not viable as it would potentially make it more difficult to meet our statutory duties under the Care Act requirements.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The report refers to carers as someone who provides, unpaid, physical and/or emotional support to a family member or friend who has a physical or learning disability, ill health, frailty due age, a mental health or substance misuse problem and without help would not be able to remain living in the community. A carer can be under or over 18 years of age.
- 3.2 Under the Care Act 2014, there is a statutory upon the Council to identify, support and assess carers and for carers to be treated with parity of esteem alongside the vulnerable people whom they are providing care. There is a requirement to provide support to prevent or delay the needs of the carer, and the person they care for from increasing. The carers services provided in Wirral are designed to assist Wirral Local Authority to achieve the requirements of the Care Act.
- 3.3 According to the Census 2011 there are 40,340 Carers in Wirral, it is expected that this figure will increase when the 2021 Census figures are released in spring 2022.
- 3.4 Through the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020/21 the activities of the carers support have been limited due to Covid-19 restrictions, where possible support has been provided through virtual, electronic and tele communications. Where there has been a lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, providers have maintained social distancing, PPE measures and risk assessments put in place.
- 3.5 **Short Break Beds**
Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there were 15 beds commissioned for older people across 3 independent care home providers. The purpose of the beds

was to provide carers of older people the opportunity to arrange a planned break from their caring role, through a social worker referral, or for a bed to be accessed in an emergency due to carer breakdown.

- 3.6 When Covid-19 restrictions came into force in spring 2020, 13 of the 15 short break beds were decommissioned due to the limitations of the Covid-19 pandemic and the short-term admissions to care homes.
- 3.7 With the introduction of effective Covid-19 testing regimes, and the successful roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Wirral, the Council will now look to recommission short break beds, subject to member approval, which would be allocated based on assessed needs and offer carers the opportunity to book short breaks in advance and on a planned basis.
- 3.8 Occupancy data from before the pandemic indicated that 11 beds would be sufficient to meet the level of need rather than the 15 beds that were commissioned pre-covid. The specific places required to meet need would be 6 Residential Elderly Mentally Infirm (REMI) category beds and 5 residential care beds.
- 3.9 In Addition to the carer short breaks beds described above. There is an existing 10-bed short break bed facility for adults with a learning or physical disability. This service has been operating through 2020 offering emergency placements; it will now start to re-provide a short break bed service within a Covid-19 safe environment. The service is operated by Sanctuary Housing and has a contract length of 5 years, 2019 – 2024 with an option to extend for a further 24 months.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Costs indicated are both Real Living Wage (RLW) and standard rate

Contract Length	Residential EMI RLW	Residential EMI standard
One Year	£183,768	£180,648
Two years (dependent on rate rise for 2022/2023)	£367,536	£361,296

Contract Length	Residential RLW	Residential Standard
One Year	£137,020	£125,840
Two years (dependent on rate rise for 2022/2023)	£274,040	£251,680

Total Maximum cost of contract awarded at RLW rate £641,576.

Total Maximum cost if contract awarded at Standard Rate £612,976.

Costs will be funded via Better Care Fund (BCF), and this will also be included in a report to the JHCCEG (Joint Health and Care Commissioning Executive Group) which oversees the BCF.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to meet the requirements of the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

5.2 The tender and procurement of the short breaks beds service will be undertaken under the Council's procurement regulations and will ensure all necessary procurement rules are adhered to.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Restoration of services for carers, and the people they care for, are risk assessed prior to, and throughout, re-opening.

7.2 Council will not meet its Care Act statutory duties under the Care Act requirements if not able to find a provider for the Short Break Beds service.

7.3 The decision to have a short contract minimises risks for the Council as this will provide an early opportunity for review.

7.4 If the procurement activity does not proceed this could result in further demands on carers and increase risks further.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Engagement will be via the newly established Carers Partnership Advisory Board, once established.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Carers come from all areas of Wirral regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, religion, or belief. Carers are entitled to be recognised for assisting to maintain the health and wellbeing of the people they care for and their contribution to the health and social care system.

9.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be completed at relevant stages of commissioning, and strategy developments.

10 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Commissioners will aim to minimise environmental impact through its commissioning process.

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APPENDICES

N/A

Background Papers

- Wirral's Strategy for Carers 2014 – 2017 [Carers Strategy Final 2013 \(wirral.gov.uk\)](http://wirral.gov.uk)
- NHS Commitment to Carers <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commitment-to-carers/>
- Carers UK, Breaks or Breakdown, June 2021 ['Breaks or breakdown', Carers Week 2021 report - Carers UK](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Multilabel Commissions for 2021- Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	7 June 2021
MOU - Supporting an Integrated Approach to Carers in Health - Health and Wellbeing Board	18 July 2018