



## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**18 July 2024**

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| <b>REPORT TITLE:</b> | <b>LEARNING DISABILITY AND AUTISM RESPITE<br/>SERVICE COMMISSION</b> |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>    | <b>DIRECTOR OF ADULTS, HEALTH AND STRATEGIC<br/>COMMISSIONING</b>    |

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report describes the co-production activity to procure and award the Learning Disability and Autism Short Break Service, which is due to end on 16 April 2026 after the current contract extension. The report describes:

- The co-production and co-design work that will be undertaken during the extension period to prepare new specification for a new service, and
- A request that the award of the contract for the new service (in late 2025) is authorised by delegated decision by the Director of Adults Care and Health

The report supports the following priorities from the Wirral Council Plan:

- Theme 3 – Promoting Independence and Healthier Lives.

The estimated costs of the new service will be £756,756 per year. It is anticipated that the new co-produced service will be commissioned for 5 years, resulting in a predicted cost of £3,783,780 between 2026 and 2031.

This affects all wards and is a key decision.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

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

1. Approve the re-specification and procurement by way of a competitive process of a new Learning Disability and Autism Short Break Service using co-production and co-design processes with people who use the service, their families and supporters for a contract terms of 5 years
2. Delegate the award of the contract for new service, to start in 2026, to the Director of Adults Care and Health at an indicative cost of £756,756 per year.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty, under the Care Act 2014, to provide Short Breaks services for people and to support Carers.
- 1.2 The commissioning of a new, redesigned Short Breaks service will support Wirral Council to continue to offer the most effective and attractive services to people with learning disabilities and / or their families.
- 1.3 Wirral Council has made a clear commitment to support adult Carers through its new Adult Carers Strategy 2023-2026, and short breaks were highlighted as a priority for Carers themselves as part of the strategy development. This commitment extends to co-producing and co-designing services wherever possible.
- 1.4 The Council has stated its commissioning intentions in its Market Position Statement to support Carers.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Not re-commissioning a Short Breaks service. If the Council did not have a service in place this may mean that the Council would not meet its statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to both provide services for people and support carers.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Short Breaks are important for some Carers. It enables them to live their own, good quality lives and enjoy relationships and activities away from their caring role. Evidence shows that effective short break services prevent crises and reduces harm that can be caused from undertaking the caring role. (Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2019).
- 3.2 Wirral Council's Adult Carer's Strategy 2023 to 2026 indicates the value it places on the contribution that Carers make in the community.
- 3.3 The existing service is rated as "Good" by the Care Quality Commission having been inspected in July 2023. The service also enjoys positive feedback and compliments. This provides confidence and assurance that the extension of the existing service to 2026, will continue to result in good outcomes for service users and their families until the commission of the new service offer.
- 3.4 The new Short Breaks service will be co-produced with service users, their families and supporters in line with the requirements of the Care Act 2014. The process will use all relevant and appropriate techniques outlined in the Adult Social Care Co-Production Charter and Co-Production Strategy.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The current cost of the service is £686,400 per year. Estimates suggest that by 2026, the costs will have risen to £756,756 per year. This is based on a 5% growth model reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has a duty under the Care Act to provide a range of services to meet assessed needs under the Care Act and the provision of Short Breaks is one of the options available to people.
- 5.2 The care provision procurement is undertaken in accordance with The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The current contract extension option for 2 additional years up to 16 April 2026 has been implemented at a cost of £1,372,800.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are no implications for staffing, ICT or Council assets.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 Any risks in relation to customer satisfaction are mitigated as high levels of satisfaction are reported by service users and their families on the current service offer.
- 7.2 Without the Short Break service being available, there is a likelihood that Carers will experience fatigue which could lead to Carer breakdown. This would lead to the need for unplanned emergency provision to ensure the family's and the cared for person's welfare and wellbeing. There is also an increased risk that families would seek alternative, permanent care arrangements, placing increased pressure on publicly funded services.
- 7.3 There is a risk that it will not be possible to commission the service at the current contract value which has been held since 2019, therefore an indicative contract values of £756,756 per year based on a Medium-Term Financial Plan of 5% growth in costs is anticipated and will be paid for from within existing resources.
- 7.4 There is a risk the quality of services may not meet the standards required by the Council. To mitigate against this, all contracts covering any regulated services for Adults have the necessary clause in relation to employment, recruitment, and DBS requirements. Failure to comply with the requirements will automatically result in default notice being served.
- 7.5 We require providers to adopt Safeguarding Policies and Procedures that comply with the Council's Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy. This also includes the requirement to ensure all staff have been issued with copies of the Council's Policies. This is checked and monitored as part of our contract monitoring processes and forms part of our quality monitoring assessment process.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The existing service takes into account all the needs, risks and characteristics of a person on an individual basis whenever a referral or request for respite care is received. The service is designed to respond to individual need and tailors the respite package accordingly.
- 8.2 During the period of contract extension, a new service specification will be co-produced with service users and their families ensuring that the new service meets needs. The new Short Breaks service specification will be co-produced with service users, their families, and supporters in line with the requirements of the Care Act 2014. The process will use all relevant and appropriate techniques outlined in the Adult Social Care Co-Production Charter and Co-Production Strategy.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced in April 2024 and can be accessed by the following link: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessment>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no significant environmental and climate implications.
- 10.2 Due to the additional needs of service users, some travel by road transport will be required, resulting in emissions, however by procuring services within Wirral, this is kept to a minimum to limit the impact on air quality and the environment.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Provision of the respite service provides opportunities for local employment in the care sector.
- 11.2 Short Breaks offer Carers the flexibility and ability to work part-time and offer additional support to working members of the household.
- 11.3 The service will be procured to be delivered within the Wirral boundaries.

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## **APPENDICES**

N/A

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Wirral Council Plan  
Carers Strategy 2023-2026  
Market Position Statement 2023  
Adult Social Care Co-Production Charter  
Adult Social Care Co-Production Strategy.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in accordance with Section 2.2 a and b of its Terms of Reference, “adult social care matters (e.g., people aged 18 or over with eligible social care needs and their carers)” and “promoting choice and independence in the provision of all adult social care”.

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

| <b>Council Meeting</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|
|                        |             |