



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

13 June 2023

REPORT TITLE:	RECOMMISSION OF WIRRAL INDEPENDENCE SERVICE (COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT AND TELECARE)
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to request approval from Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee to recommission the Wirral Independence Service (WIS) within quarter 2 of financial year 2023/2024. The current contract ends in June 2024 and there are no further contract extensions available. This is a joint commission with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (Wirral Place) (NHSCMICB) and is managed via the Better Care Fund. The WIS is inclusive of:

- The provision of Community Equipment.
- Technology Enabled Care and Response service.
- Carers emergency card.
- Falls Pick up service.
- Falls prevention service.
- Provision of Paediatric equipment.
- Education equipment for schools.

The commission will support the following Wirral Plan objectives:

- Sustainable Environment - working towards a clean-energy, sustainable borough that leads the way in its response to the climate emergency and is environmentally friendly.
- Inclusive Economy - working for a prosperous, inclusive economy - helping businesses to thrive and creating jobs and opportunities for all.
- Safe and Vibrant Communities - working for safe and vibrant communities where our residents feel safe and are proud to live and raise their families.
- Active and Healthy Lives - working to provide happy, active and healthy lives for all, with the right care, at the right time to enable residents to live longer and healthier lives.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

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

1. Approve the re-commission of the Wirral Independence Service on a 5-year contract (with options for a 3-year, plus a 2-year contract extension) with a total contract value of £4.2m annually, up to £42m over 10-years.
2. Give delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to award the contract to the most economically advantageous tenderer.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Wirral Health and Care system must ensure that it has a fully operational and responsive community equipment and technology enabled care (TEC) service to meet local needs to meet its statutory duties.
- 1.2 The use of TEC forms a key part of the Councils approach to digital care and early intervention and prevention services.
- 1.3 The Council has a duty to ensure value for money and to tender will ensure that best value is sought.
- 1.4 A longer contract length of up to 10 years, will support the successful tenderer to invest in local infrastructure and support social value.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To not tender the service, would mean that the Council would not meet its statutory duty to provide community equipment.
- 2.2 To not proceed as a joint commission, would mean that procurement activity would be duplicated across the Wirral Health and Care system and not be efficient.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 This is a joint commission with NHSCMICB and Wirral Council (WC), Adult Social Care and Public Health and Childrens Directorate working collaboratively with Wirral schools. This service supports people to remain independent and safe in their own home, and at school.
- 3.2 The provision of community equipment to eligible children and adults is vital in helping to achieve efficiency and cost-effectiveness across a range of other local authority and health authority services, and to help achieve local and health authority strategic objectives.
- 3.3 Wirral Council has had a contract with the Incumbent provider since 1 July 2015, and the contract will expire in July 2024. There are no further contract extension options to consider.
- 3.4 During the lifetime of the contract, the service has developed and now also supports provision of specialist equipment to mainstream schools, provision of equipment for paediatrics and as part of the new commission will include specialist schools' equipment.
- 3.5 The overarching aims of this service is to support people to live independently in their own homes as long as possible, support the reduction in hospital admission and support timely hospital discharges.

The service is inclusive of:

- Pressure care.
- Community equipment, e.g., bathing equipment, beds, commodes.
- Response for Continuing Health Care (CHC).
- Adult Visual Impairment & Hearing Impairment equipment.
- Technology enabled care and remote monitoring (equipment, installation maintenance, decontamination and repair and recycling).
- An online IT requisition, monitoring and reporting system.
- Centre for Independent Living with a Retail Outlet/ Demonstration facility.
- An online self-help and ordering system with suitably qualified, knowledgeable, and experienced staff to support those funding their own care and to provide professional assessment and oversight within the service.

3.6 The provider is required to procure community equipment as set out in a service specification agreed with commissioners to the standards and guidance as set by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and identified within the NHS Controls Assurance Standards.

3.7 The service will operate 7 days a week (8am to 8pm) to achieve:

- Delivery of equipment.
- Installation of equipment.
- Technical support/knowledge for prescribers.
- Maintenance and repair of equipment.
- Collection and decontamination of equipment.
- recycling, disposal and adaptation of equipment.
- reissue of community equipment.

3.8 The specification will also require the new supplier to:

- Work collaboratively with WC and NHSCMICB to develop a multi-disciplinary approach for an Independent Living Centre in partnership with other stakeholders across Wirral.
- Strengthen the approach to best value and procurement approach throughout the lifetime of the contract, through continuous proactive negotiations with suppliers, geographic pricing comparisons and reviews.
- Work proactively on reducing costs of supply – seeking local alternatives make and buy from UK.
- Work with Wirral to achieve a suitable and affordable pricing model working within the WIS contract cost envelope agreed as part of the Better Care Fund.
- Work proactively and collaboratively with WC and NHSCMICB and wider stakeholders to maximise equipment recovery and recycling to support the Council with its carbon reduction mission.

- Reduce the impact of the environment through tracking and recycling of equipment, reducing the carbon footprint.
- Work collaboratively with WC and NHSCMICB to deliver a carbon reduced transport solution provision across the lifetime of the contract in line with Wirral Council's priorities, objectives, and values.
- Work collaboratively with WC and NHSCMICB and wider stakeholders to increase performance around equipment recovery and recycling as above.
- Work in collaboration with WC and NHSCMICB to drive the Early Intervention and Prevention and NHS England 2-hour Crisis Response National Initiatives, by recalibrating service delivery to meet urgent equipment requests between 4pm and 6pm, 7 days a week.
- Work with WC and NHSCMICB to achieve value for money Technology enabled care installation, monitoring and response service solutions in line with the switchover from the old analogue public switched telephone network (PSTN) to a fully digital network by 2025.
- Work collaboratively with WC and NHSCMICB to review the cost of call centre and explore alternative operating models e.g., virtual or agile/hybrid working to maximise efficiencies and financial gain share.
- Work with WC and NHSCMICB to support Early Intervention and prevention initiatives and data quality through the development of interface between Digital Equipment ordering system for Community, Liquid Logic and NHS systems, with the production of a commissioner dashboard.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The WIS contract is managed within the Better Care Fund (BCF). The BCF was launched in 2015 and requires local authorities to pool budgets, joined up with the NHS and housing services. The BCF programme supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care in a way that supports person-centred care, sustainability and better outcomes for people and carers.
- 4.2 The current annual value of the contact is £4.2m, this amount for the future commission does not allow for inflationary impact or growth. The current contract is a maximum amount with mitigating actions taken within year to continue to achieve this amount.
- 4.3 Financial implications up to 10 years based on current expenditure:

Number of Years	Total Amount (£m)
1	4.2
5	21.0
8 (5+3)	33.6
10 (5+3+2)	42.0

4.4 Commissioning and contract officers have worked proactively with the incumbent provider to deliver continued efficiency within the overarching contract value. This has included procurement initiatives, effective treadmilling of associated commissions and recycling initiatives.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Wirral Council and NHSCMICB is required to meet its statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 (Adult Social Care only) to provide specialist Equipment to the Wirral population.

5.2 The supply of Community Equipment is also a statutory duty under:

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.
- Children and Families Act 2014.
- National Health Service Act 2006.
- Health and Safety at Work act 1974 and Regulations.

5.3 In accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules, the new service provider will be commissioned in open competition as it is considered that this procurement route would provide value for money.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no current resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There is a risk that the people of Wirral will not have a service to support them to remain independent at home, this risk will be mitigated by recommissioning the service.

7.2 There is a risk that providers will not tender if the contract is let for a shorter-term period, as the new provider will require investment for premises and supply chain. This will risk will be mitigated by a longer contract length with contract extension options.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Local agreement has been reached between commissioning partners in Adult Social Care and Public Health, Children's and Young People Department, and NHSCMICB on a joint specification.

8.2 Work is underway with Wirral Older Peoples Parliament on the content of the service design, given this is technical and logistical contract, this is not a fully coproduced service design.

8.3 The incumbent provider has provided monthly intelligence on customer satisfaction and feedback.

8.4 Coproduction sessions have been held with the prescriber community, in particular Occupational therapy services in Adult Social Care for both TEC and community equipment provision.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. An EIA can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Commissioning of services will have an impact on the Council's indirect emissions. The tendering process will ensure prospective bidders are aware of the Council Environment and Climate Emergency declaration and ensure they have a sustainability or environmental policy in place.

10.2 Within the specification, commissioners have aimed to minimise environmental impact through its specification and commissioning process. The specification for the service includes targets for recycling of equipment, a requirement to provide a carbon efficient fleet of vehicles for deliveries, and local sourcing of supplies to support the Councils carbon reduction programme.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The provider is required to have a depot for storage and distribution which is based in Wirral and will therefore contribute to the Wirral economy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Case Studies

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Telecare Standards agency (TSA) – Analogue to Digital Shift <https://www.tsa-voice.org.uk/campaigns/digital-shift/social-alarms-systems-from-analogue-to-digital/>

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)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	3 March 2022