

Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



Nottingham
City Council

Reference Number:

4384

Author:

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Department:

Finance and Resources

Contact:

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Subject:

The Wellbeing at Home Service

Total Value:

£121,028.00 (Type: Revenue)

Decision Being Taken:

- 1) To approve the continuation of the Wellbeing at Home Volunteer Service for a maximum period of 1 year from 1 October 2021, including expenditure of up to a maximum of £121,028.
- 2) To approve dispensation from Contract Procedure Rule 4.1.2, in accordance with Financial Regulation 3.29 (Operational Issues), to extend the Wellbeing at Home Volunteer Service pilot with Age UK Nottingham and Nottinghamshire for a period of 1 year from 1 October 2021.
- 3) To delegate authority to the Director of Commissioning and Procurement to enter into the contract, and to the Head of Contracting and Procurement to sign the contract with the service provider.

Reasons for the Decision(s)

The purpose of the Wellbeing at Home Volunteer Service is to reduce delayed transfers of care and to improve the flow through social care reablement and into the homecare system. The Service is delivered by volunteers. The service supports citizens to reduce their social isolation, loneliness and lack of confidence following a stay in hospital, it also supports citizens to navigate the health and social care system and welfare benefits system and assists them with day to day tasks such as food shopping.

Positive impacts of the service, as recorded by citizen engagement, include increased independence of citizens returning home, alleviation of symptoms related to loneliness, such as lack of confidence, and improved wellbeing. These outcomes are considered to be important preventative factors in helping to avoid deterioration of health that could lead to repeated or unnecessary hospital admissions.

The current service ends in September 2021. It is intended to extend the service for a period of 6 months while market development work is carried out with an option to extend for a further 6 months until September 2022 to allow a full procurement exercise to take place if required.

The service was extended during 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and it was not possible to carry out the market development work needed to run a full procurement exercise. As we do not yet know what the impacts of the 3rd wave of covid-19 infection will mean for the hospital discharge and social care reablement system, the most reasonable option open to the Council is to extend the current contract. This will give time for Commissioners to assess the current covid-19 situation, including its impacts upon levels of infection, numbers of hospital admissions, hospital discharge flow and capacity within social care reablement over the winter period.

Between September 2021 and March 2022, appropriate consideration will be given to what longer term service may be required. In the interim period, Commissioners will work with adult social care to implement service changes including considering opening up additional referral routes, enabling the service to support homecare more effectively and to include support for citizens who are able to use digital resources. Service demand and citizen needs will be monitored closely during this period to allow Commissioners to develop future service options.

The Service delivers value for money for the Council because it has a proven track record of releasing essential capacity within the internal social care reablement service. Age UK has an established service with over 100 volunteers available to support this service. It is unlikely that a different provider would be able to set up and deliver similar volunteer capacity from the 1 October without putting immediate pressures onto the social care reablement and hospital discharge system. The Service fits with the aims of Better Lives Better Outcomes (Nottingham City's Adult Social Care strategy) in promoting healthy lifestyles; intervening early when a person's wellbeing is at risk; maintaining independence, skills and resilience; supporting access to community resources; and supporting people to make choices about their lives.

The Service will be funded through the Winter Pressures grant funding, which is included within the Better Care Fund (BCF) allocation for Nottingham City Council. This is short-term funding that will allow for a one year extension. The full BCF allocation has been confirmed for 2021/22 and a report with full details of how the funding will be allocated will be taken to Commissioning and Procurement Sub-Committee, with the continuation of the Wellbeing at Home Volunteer Service included within it.

Other Options Considered: 1) Go out to the market with a full procurement exercise: The impact of Coronavirus upon the social care system has meant that the market development work required for this has not taken place. Pressure to maintain flow through the hospital discharge system into social care reablement means that the Wellbeing at Home service is vital in supporting the system and creating capacity in reablement. Currently, there is uncertainty about how the market needs to develop in response to the 3rd wave of coronavirus. This option is rejected for these reasons. 2) Do nothing: this is not a viable option as the current contract expires in September and new arrangements are required for this essential service to continue.

Background Papers: None

Published Works: None

Affected Wards: Citywide

Colleague / Councillor Interests: None

Dispensation from Financial Regulations: Yes

Consultations: Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.

Crime and Disorder Implications: None

Equality: EIA not required. Reasons: EIA not required. Reasons: An EIA is not required because this decision represents a continuation of existing activities. Any proposal for changes to the Service will be subject to an EIA.

Decision Type: Portfolio Holder

Subject to Call In: Yes

Call In Expiry date: 07/10/2021

Advice Sought: Legal, Finance, Procurement

Legal Advice:

The proposals in this report seek to extend the existing service being delivered by Age UK to enable the delivery of the service which continues to prove successful in reducing the delay in transfers from hospital to home and provide support for and to citizens.

The service initially commenced as a pilot but has been extended due to its success and continued requirement. It was previously anticipated that if services continued to be required, a tender process would be undertaken but as a result of time constraints, late guarantee of funding commitment each year and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, a tender process to offer a longer term service has not been possible.

The services are considered to be light touch under the procurement regulations and the value of this extension along with the previous services still fall below the threshold for these services and will ensure there is a continuation of a service that is deemed essential at this time.

For the reasons given in the report, dispensation from the Contract Procedure Rules are supported. It is still prudent to note that future considerations should be considered in a timely manner with a view to procuring a service with a longer term commitment if the services are still considered as of significant importance in the city.

Legal services will support as necessary. Advice provided by Dionne Claire Screaton (Solicitor) on 19/08/2021.

Finance Advice:

This decision seeks approval to spend £0.121m to continue the commission of the Wellbeing at Home Volunteer Service. This service is to be delivered by Age UK for the period of 1 year from the 1st October 2021 and is to be funded by the Winter Pressures grant. The Winter Pressures grant forms part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) grant and will also be subject to a separate joint approval process with the Nottingham City Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The Wellbeing at Home Volunteer Service provided by Age UK has been funded from the Winter Pressures grant for the past 3 years, however, if there are any changes to the grant conditions this year that means this decision can no longer be funded from the grant in-year, the service must identify alternative funding to fully mitigate this expenditure across Adult Social Care ensuring there is no adverse impact on the Council budget. The existing arrangement with Age UK is considered to offer value for money and has a proven track record of creating essential capacity within the homecare market. It is unlikely that another provider would be able to deliver a similar service from 1 October without destabilising the model and having a significant impact on the service delivery.

Due to the service overlapping two financial years any outstanding costs and unspent grant may need to be accrued as part of the annual year-end adjustments. Financial support will be available to support this process if required.

This decision seeks dispensation from Contract Procedure Rule 4.1.2 in accordance with Financial Regulation (3.29) to award the contract extension to Age UK to deliver the service mentioned above for an additional 1 year from 1st October 2021. Given the successful delivery of the service to date and for reasons detailed by the report author, this is deemed appropriate in this instance.

Advice provided by Chanelle Poyser (Commercial Business Partner) on 23/08/2021.

Procurement Advice:

This Decision to dispense with Contract Procedure Rules to extend the contract for the Wellbeing at Home Service delivered by Age UK by 12 months, is supported by the Procurement Team for the reasons provided in this report. If it is determined during this extension period that the service is required to continue for a further term, then a procurement process should be undertaken, allowing sufficient time before contract expiry to secure a new contract. The Procurement Team will manage the procurement process. Advice provided by Nicola Harrison (Procurement Lead Officer) on 23/08/2021.

Signatures

Adele Williams (Portfolio Holder for Adults and Health)
SIGNED and Dated: 29/09/2021
Catherine Underwood (Corporate Director for People)
SIGNED and Dated: 29/09/2021
Clive Heaphy as Chief Finance Officer (Chief Finance Officer) - Dispensation from Financial Regulations
SIGNED and Dated: 24/09/2021
Chief Finance Officer's Comments: A 12 month extension is supported but no further approvals will be granted. This service must be subject to normal procurement rules in future