

Report for: Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing

Title: Variation to extend the contract for the provision of Unpaid Carers Support Service

Report authorised by: Rebecca Cribb, Service Manager - Adult Social Care Commissioning, Brokerage and Quality Assurance

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Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision: Key Decision**

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1. This report seeks retrospective approval to vary the term of the contract for the provision of unpaid carers support service delivered by Carers First to extend a further period of thirteen (13) months, effective from 1st September 2023 at a cost of £111,157.41. The aggregated total value of the contract will be up to £605,422.57 including the above proposed extension.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

2.1. Councillor Lucia das Neves is the cabinet member for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing

3. Recommendations

3.1. For the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing to retrospectively approve, pursuant to Contract Standing Order 10.02.1 (b) and 16.2, the variation of the contract for the provision of an Unpaid Carers Support Service delivered by Carers First and extend for a further period of thirteen (13) months, effective from 1st September 2023 at the cost of £111,157.41. The aggregated total value of the contract will be £605,422.57 (excluding VAT) including the proposed extension.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1. The provision of Unpaid Carers Support Service is largely funded by the Better Care Fund (BCF). Services funded through the BCF are reviewed annually to ascertain whether or not there is business case for continuity of funding for the individual service/scheme. The BCF is now held by the NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board (ICB) and is responsible for allocating NHS budget and commissions services. ICBs are a key change in the Health and Care Act 2022 and have replaced Clinical Commissioning Groups. These changes came into effect on 1 July 2022. As a result of organisational changes,

there has been delay in carrying out the BCF Plan review and confirming the funding for the unpaid carers support service.

- 4.2. There is insufficient time to carry out a meaningful options appraisal. A gap in service would lead to service disruption for unpaid carers. Such action would damage the reputation of the Council for not fulfilling its statutory requirement.
- 4.3. The current contract expired on 31st August 2023. The extension proposed in this report would allow for the timescales required to undertake a competitive procurement process to re-commission the service whilst ensuring continuity of vital service to vulnerable carers.
- 4.4. The performance of the service provider has been evaluated as good throughout the contract period.

5. **Alternative options considered**

- 5.1. **Do nothing** – this would leave the Council without a carers support service.
- 5.2. **Procure the service through re-tendering** – It would be possible to tender the current contract and seek a new and refreshed contract. However, given the expiration of the contract and as the implementation of the actions from commissioning peer review is awaited, extending the contract will enable a more efficient solution to maintain continuity of work so provision will meet carer requirements in the coming months while the new procurement process is undertaken.

6. **Background information**

- 6.1. A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.
- 6.2. Haringey's unpaid carers are as diverse as the people of the borough; they live in all parts of the borough and come from all sections of the community. Some may be starting to care as a family member, partner or friend becomes frail or disabled. Others may have been caring for many decades. Some unpaid carers have given up paid employment; others are balancing employment and caring. Some will be grieving after the death of the person they cared for and trying to work out what that now means for their lives. The caring role can be stressful and isolating. Some people may not even recognise themselves as a carer or know there is support available to them in their caring role and in their life apart from caring.
- 6.3. This service provides a pathway for carers to access the support they need and which is available to them. The service also provides a wide range of support including (but not limited to) facilitating or signposting carers to a range of training programmes to support them in their caring role, assist them to access formal or informal respite, provide support to access benefits that they may be entitled to, creating environment for peer support etc.

6.4. The Council's current contract expired on 31st August 2023 and there is now insufficient time available to undertake a competitive procurement process. It is therefore recommended that the existing contract be varied to extend for up to 11 months to facilitate the time required to re-commission this essential service for Haringey adult and young carers.

6.5. The performance of the existing service provider has been evaluated as good throughout the contract period. Quarterly contract monitoring meetings have been taking place with quarterly reports and dashboards submitted regularly.

7. **Contribution to strategic outcomes**

7.1. This service will contribute to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23 and 2023/24 – Theme 4: Adults Health and Welfare.

7.2. The Care Act 2014 put in place significant new rights for carers in England including: a focus on promoting wellbeing; a duty on local councils to prevent, reduce and delay need for support, including the needs of carers.

8. **Carbon and Climate Change**

8.1. Haringey has been a leader in carbon dioxide (CO₂) reduction and in its work on Climate Change. The borough delivered its 40% (and exceeded by 3%) carbon reduction by 2020 from its 2005 baseline. It has a better performance than neighbouring authority areas.

8.2. Carers First are instrumental within the local community to advise the community members around energy efficiency and reducing carbon footprint by playing an active role.

8.3. Their role also extends to actively disseminating information passed by Emergency Planning Team around adverse weather conditions and any actions to be taken as a measure to keep informal carers and their loved ones safe.

9. **Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

9.1. **Finance**

9.1.1. The report seeks approval for the variation of the terms of the existing Carers First contract, which provides the unpaid carers support service, following the expiration of the contract on 31 August 2023. The cost of this 11-month extension from 1 September 2023 to 31 July 2024 is £94,056.

9.1.2. The Better Care Fund provides funding for carers support on an annual basis, totalling £1.067m per annum for the last 5 years. Annually, £114k of this has been allocated as funding for the unpaid carers support service. It is anticipated that funding of £114k will continue in 2023-24 and 2024-25, which will support the cost of this extension.

9.2. **Procurement (PM-120/A – 17/08/23)**

- 9.2.1. Strategic Procurement notes, this report seeks retrospective approval and therefore recommends Adults Social Care Commissioning to ensure they are endeavouring to seek contract extension/variation approvals in a timely fashion to ensure uninterrupted service delivery and mitigation of the risk of late payment and the negative effect on supplier relations.
- 9.2.2. The report relates to services which would be subject to the Light Touch Regime under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR), if valued at or above a threshold of £663,540. Furthermore, the Cabinet Office published a Procurement Policy Note (PPN) no. 10/21 in December 2021, which came into effect from 1st January 2022, which requires public sector contracting authorities to include VAT (where applicable), when calculating the estimated value of the contract to determine whether the regulations apply.

The table below provides the breakdown of contract price:

Contract Period	Values without VAT	Values with VAT (where applicable)
Initial contract period – 1 st March 2018 to 28 th February 2020	£168,225.28	Contract started prior to publication PNN 10/21
Extension allowed within the term of the contract, 12 months - 1 st March 2020 to 28 th February 2021	£86,774.72	Prior to publication PNN 10/21
Variation to the terms of the contract to extend for a period of 13 months – 1 March 2021 to 31 March 2022	100,825.16	Prior to publication PNN 10/21
Variation to the terms of the contract to extend for a period of 12 months – 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.	£97,723.00	£117,267.60
The above variation includes option to extend the contract for further period of 5 months. This option was implemented to extend the contract until 31 st August 2023	£40,717.00	£48,860.40
Proposed variation to extend the contract for 13 months – 1 September 2023 to 31 October 2024	£111,157.41	£133,388.89
Total aggregated value of the contract	£605,422.57	£655,342.05

The table above indicates that the total aggregated value of the contract would be £655,342.05 (inclusive of VAT for contract period of 1st April 2022 to 31st October 2024 and the proposed extension set out in paragraph 3.1 above) which is below the threshold of £663,500 and therefore the PCR Light Touch Regime requirements will not apply.

- 9.2.3. Under the CSO 10.02.1, a contract extension and variation may be approved subject to satisfactory outcomes of contract monitoring. Adults Social Care Commissioning confirms that the provider has met the targets and outcomes set out in contract. This fulfils the CSO 10.02.1 criteria and therefore the recommendation to extend the contract can be approved.
- 9.2.4. The request for contract variation is permitted under Contract Standing Orders (CSO) 16.02 and 10.02.1(b), the reasons for which are set out at paragraphs 4 above.
- 9.2.5. Strategic Procurement notes, this service has not been market tested since 2017/18 and therefore, it is difficult to ascertain whether this contract still delivers best value.

9.3. Legal

- 9.3.1. The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer), has been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 9.3.2. The legal and procurement reasons for the recommendation has been set out within the Procurement section 9.2 to 9.2.5 above.
- 9.3.3. The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing the Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care, and Wellbeing from approving the recommendations in the report.

9.4. Equality

- 9.4.1. The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.
- 9.4.2. The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

- 9.4.3. This report seeks retrospective approval to vary the term of the contract for the provision of unpaid carers support service delivered by Carers First to extend a further period of thirteen 13 months.
- 9.4.4. Carers First design their programmes of work to meet the diverse needs of the population it represents, challenging inequality and forging good relationships between people who share those characteristics and people who do not by:

- Conducting appropriate and proportionate equality impact assessments
- Involving and consulting with individuals and groups with specific experience of issues relating to equalities, diversity, and inclusion as necessary.
- Working to ensure the evidence base more accurately represents the diversity of the communities locally served to promote understanding.

9.4.5. The communities and groups Carers First engage with include harder to reach or seldom heard and Carers First assist in influencing the reduction of inequalities for these groups in health and social care. The seldom heard groups include black and ethnic minority individuals, informal carers, disabled people, LGBTQ+ individuals, refugees / asylum seekers, people who are homeless, and people with language barriers. Co-production with these groups, through Carers First, gives them the opportunity to decide what is important to them and what they want to explore. Additionally, individuals in these groups learn skills which they can take on to other work, as a result enhancing the social value of the work carried out.

9.4.6. This decision to award the extension for 11 months will have a positive impact and ensure that the Council continues to address known inequalities that affect individuals with protected characteristics. Accordingly, the decision represents progress to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. This will be carried out by actively listening to the experiences of those facing inequality, understanding the steps that could improve people's lives, and by acting on what has been learned. No negative impacts have been identified.

9.4.7. The equalities impact will be monitored over the life of the contract.

10. **Use of Appendices**

10.1. None

11. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

11.1. Not Applicable