

Sefton Carer Service Procurement Contract Proposal

Date of meeting:	03/10/2024		
Report to:	Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Member – Children’s Services		
Report of:	Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing		
Portfolio:	Adult Social Care and Health Children, Schools’ and Families		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary:

This Cabinet report outlines the recommended approach to the future commissioning arrangements for all age carers support and advice, currently provided by Sefton Carers Centre. The existing contract expires in March 2025 and so a new arrangement will need to be put in place.

There are approximately 35,000 informal carers in Sefton. A “carer” is defined as an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult who has got a long-term care needs or terminal illness. Sefton Carers Centre supports 12,186 adult carers over 18 in Sefton.

In the last School Census Return there were 40,447 pupils recorded in Sefton. The Carers Trust (the largest network of organisations across the UK) identifies that 8% of those children will be young carers. This equates to 3,236 children. Sefton Carers Centre is supporting and providing activities to approximately 500 young carers in Sefton at any one time.

Carers support and advice provided by a good organisation will enable a carer to receive individual support, advice and services at the right time for them by professionals, that meet with their individual needs. These include Carers Assessments, Parent Carer Needs Assessments, Young Carers Assessments and Young Carers Transitions Assessments. Sefton Carers Centre also provides a wide range of the services which meet the outcomes of these assessments as required by the legislation.

The Council has historically funded carers support and advisory services through a

contract arrangement with Sefton Carers Service which is due to expire on 31/03/2025. This report recommends that there is a procurement exercise to award a 3-year contract award with opportunity to extend the contract subject to a formal review. This will allow support and advice for carers to be aligned to the Carers Strategy for Sefton and will enable the new service to provide longer term continuity to carers and respond to the needs of all carers both children and adults in our borough.

This report seeks approval to procure and award the contract for carers support and advice through an open and competitive process with the decision to award the contract delegated to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing, alongside the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Health.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is recommended to approve:

- (1) The commencement of a procurement exercise to extend and develop Sefton's Carer Service provision in Sefton that will be established for up to, and not more than, a five-year period, commencing in April 2025 (3 years +1 year+1 year). The total Local Authority budget for the contract from April 2025 will be £990,930 (See table below) and additional Integrated Care Board (ICB) funding for 25/26 is anticipated to be £132,000.
- (2) That decisions on the model for the new Carers Service provision, including the workforce strategy, service specification (including young carers service support and provision), quality and cost threshold, initial procurement and tender evaluation process, and any contract variations throughout the life of the new Carers Service provision to deal with any specific additional service delivery requirements are delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Adult Social Care & Health.
- (3) Contracts to be awarded for an initial contract term of three years with the option to further extend for a period of up to two years, (either as a single extension or via two separate twelve-month extensions) subject to satisfactory performance and being able to demonstrate the achievement of value for money of the successful supplier/s and the required budget being available, and that decisions on the awarding of the contracts, and any permitted extensions thereof, be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Members for Children's Services and Adult Social Care & Health.
- (4) Should it be identified during the contractual period that the contracts need to be increased in value to reflect increases in demand for carer services and to ensure that Sefton continues to meet its statutory obligations, then delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, and the Cabinet Members for Children Services and Adult Social Care & Health, to approve any such increases, under the proviso that the additional expenditure can be met with existing budget provision, falls within the associated delegated authority to approve such an increase, and is in line with the applicable procurement regulations.

- (5) That throughout the life of the commissioned Carer Support Service provision, delegated authority is given the Executive Director of Adult Social Care Health and Wellbeing, alongside the Director for Children's Services and in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Childrens Services and Adult Social Care & Health, to make decisions on any amendments to its operation, so as to ensure that such decisions can be implemented in a timely manner and so that the provider is able to operate in a flexible way which addresses any emerging issues and supports wider work such as the further integration of Health and Children Social Care services with Adult Social Care.
- (6) Decisions regarding the pooling of any other funding between Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board for Sefton, will be delegated to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing who is also the ICB Place Director for Sefton in consultation with the Director for Children's Services and Cabinet Members for Childrens Services and Adult Social Care & Health.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

Follow Sefton Council's procurement cycle to ensure that commissioning arrangements for the provision of a Carer Support and Advisory Service within Sefton are directed by Sefton, to meet its demographic requirements, are in place to meet the assessed needs of Sefton's residents, so that future decisions on commissioning and market management can be made in a timely manner and to put in place new contractual and service delivery arrangements which both seek to ensure market sustainability and reduced disruption to Service Users.

2. Introduction / Background

- 2.1 In 2022/23 Cabinet approved an interim 2-year contract for Sefton Carers Service while a service specification was developed to go out for procurement and commissioning in 2025. Cabinet was advised that a further report would be submitted providing details on the future Carer's Strategy for Sefton Carers service provision and support for this cohort.
- 2.2 Since approval of that Cabinet report, Sefton Carer's Strategy and its delivery plan have been written. All strategic priorities identified within the strategy will be considered in the procurement of the new Sefton's Carer Service including an all-age offer to carers in Sefton. [Sefton All Age Carers' Strategy](#)
- 2.3 At present all age Carers Support and Advisory Services in Sefton are provided by the Sefton Carers Trust, Carers Centre. Carers report that they need support for their physical health, mental health and wellbeing needs whilst they are meeting the needs of the person that they care for and Sefton Carer services and resources ensure that Carers own life choices and ambitions are supported and recognised. The service provides integrated services to ensure that those being cared for and their unpaid carers can get help and support in the appropriate place at the right time. Sefton Carers Trust have a proven track record of a proven track record of providing free advice and guidance, emotional and practical support, training and a range of holistic therapies for unpaid carers living in Sefton.
- 2.4 Support to carers is a key duty, set out in the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014, for Councils with responsibility for Adult Social Care, and so we

need to respond accordingly to ensure that the needs of carers and those they care for are met in a timely and appropriate way, in adherence to the Acts.

2.5 This Report seeks approval for the implementation of the future commissioning approach, associated future delegated authority permissions and outlines the future strategic direction for the sector, linked to the wider Department of Health and Social Care directed work, which has impacted on the implementation and direction of previous decisions approved by Cabinet.

2.6 The new contract will allow Sefton Council to:

- Secure provision which can be evaluated based upon Sefton's local demographic and carer's needs:
- Enhance the service provision for carers, recognising how caring affect physical or mental health, supporting unpaid carers at all stages of caring, ensuring the right information and planning is effective to avoid crises by providing early assistance and preparation and increasing leisure and cultural opportunities for all carers and improving access to training.
- Support sustainability and quality of carer support and advisory service provision and associated funding requirements
- Support the delivery of strategic local and national carer support objectives:

2.7 The commissioned carer service will commence on 1st April 2025 and will be in operation for a maximum 5-year period (3 + 1 + 1 years).

2.8 A dedicated project group will be established consisting of officers from Strategic Commissioning, Procurement, Legal, Adult Social Care Social Operations and Commissioning Partners. This group will have oversight of the delivery of the contract and any additional budget requirements will be pooled where possible and in accordance to demand and improved service delivery and opportunities.

2.9 An engagement and co-production ethos will be adopted, bringing in partners such as Healthwatch Sefton, Service Users and their Families/Advocates and Providers, to ensure that the new arrangements deliver services to best meet people's needs and desired outcomes for people who use services.

2.10 It is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, alongside the Director of Children's Services, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care to make decisions on the future contracting / Provider model for the new Carer Service contract.

3. Operational Approach

3.1 It is anticipated that the Contract will be annually reviewed with a more detailed review at the end of Year 3, to ensure sufficient service provision and a Provider that supports Service User choice.

3.2 It is recommended that, throughout the lifecycle of the new Carers Service Contract, delegated authority is given the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing alongside the Director for Childrens Services, and, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Childrens Services and Adult Social Care & Health to make decisions on periodic refreshing of the contract content as required.

4. Financial Implications

(A) Revenue Costs

Revenue costs with respect to the new contract will need to be met from existing Carer Support and Advisory Service ASC and CSC budgets.

The Table below includes the areas of funding. This is the for the current service provider to provide the service and does not include the annual uplift.

Contributing portfolios	Contribution 24/25	Assumed Contribution
Adult Social Care	£731,236	£731,236
Children's Social Care	£259,694	£259,694
TOTAL	£990,930	£990,930
Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board Sefton Place	£132,000	£132,000
GRAND TOTAL (Excluding ICB contribution and uplift)	£990, 930	£990,930

(B) Capital Costs

There are no capital costs associated with the implementation of the recommendations within this report.

5. Legal Implications

- Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 place specific statutory duties on the local authority to meet the needs of carers and young carers.
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Procurement Act 2023 associated Regulations
- Data Protection Act 2018

6. Risk Implications

Increased financial costs for commissioning a Care Support and Advisory Service provision in line with increasing demand for this service year on year (circa 30% increase per annum).

There is a potential that due to growth in demand for advocacy services, contract values may need to be increased year on year. Any increase to expenditure will need to be met from existing associated budgets and within the financial regulations set by the Council.

7. Staffing HR Implications

N/A

8. Conclusion

The above recommendations have been submitted to seek to establish a new service to meet the needs of carers in Sefton and in addition, ensure that the offer to carers of all ages is sustainable and offers sufficiency of provision to meet emerging demands.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 1. Maintaining the status quo** – The current provider arrangement is an extension of an Agreement, and a new contract is required that is robust and up to date in terms and conditions with defined and agreed contractual lifespan

Equality Implications:

Equality Implications could include the identification of unpaid carer and carers that do not identify as carers despite being in a caring role and requiring support, young carers, carers from ethnic backgrounds and carers that are digitally isolated or excluded.

The annual Carers Survey also helps to identify carers and their needs and this information also supports areas for service development to ensure that all carers' needs are met and identified services can be easily accessed as appropriate.

Carer Support and Advisory services supports the maintenance of independence, including ensuring that carers and the people that they care for remain a part of their local communities and associated activities and service provision.

The adoption of the recommendations will ensure that statutory services will continue to be delivered to people with additional care and support needs and the new arrangements will better support the provider market and its sustainability.

Impact on Children and Young People:

Continued support for Sefton Young Carers, Parent Carers and Unpaid carers will end if no extended contract / commissioned service provider is agreed and commissioned.

The establishment of a newly commissioned Carers Support and Advisory service provision, with an extended contract lifespan, will help to ensure that there is continuity and certainty of a continued service that is uninterrupted. Sefton Carers service provision will be better positioned to respond to changes in the marketplace and to deliver long term projects that will effectively support all Sefton Carers.

Climate Emergency Implications:

N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services and Commercial (FD.7750/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5850/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The carers strategy has been through consultation and the specification which will be developed will reflect feedback from carers in Sefton. The development of the new Sefton Carers Service Contract will be co-designed to ensure that any gaps in services are met.

Implementation Date for the Decision:

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet decision.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

N/A