

Report



meeting

SOCIAL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

date

4th April, 2006

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

THE LEVEL OF DEMAND FOR CARERS SERVICES

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the level of demand for Carers services experienced over the past six months and receive any comments.

2. Information and Advice

- 2.1 A special Select Committee met on 9th September 2005 and a report on the Carers Grant and the overall Carers Strategy was presented to Members. It was recommended and approved that a progress report on the demand for Carers Services be brought back to the Select Committee in six months time.
- 2.2 The department can report that social services officers, voluntary sector providers and carers themselves are satisfied that existing Community Care services, such as sitting services and day care, should continue to be commissioned from the Carers Grant as a means of providing breaks for carers, as these provide the core support that they require. Carers Grant 'Project Advisory Groups', which have been established to focus on each area of disability in detail, also report ongoing demand and a need to continue with the existing Carers Grant funded projects. Some schemes such as those for adults with autism and for people with dementia are showing increased demand.
- 2.3 During the past six months there has been new demand for services specifically for carers of people from black and minority ethnic groups and the department has been able to respond to the new levels of demand with the help of locality staff. Several new schemes are presently being designed. Demands for carer-specific services (i.e. not community care services for the cared-for person) have also surfaced. This may be as a result of more outcome-focussed assessment. These new demands will be met from the Carers Grant, as far as possible.

- 2.4 A new and increasing demand is for information packs, advice and signposting through the carers unit. This is particularly true for carers in the north of the county and might be a reflection of the fact that PCTs in the north do not have carers' support workers to provide on-the-spot advice. (With the emphasis which the recent White Paper gives to carers services, particularly the development of emergency support, and the future changes of PCT boundaries and roles, there is the potential for NHS organisations in the north of the county to enhance their services to carers over time.) On receipt of information more carers are then signing up for the popular Emergency Card Scheme for carers (**Appendix 1**) and a survey has shown that this scheme gives them considerable peace of mind (**Appendix 2**). The department hopes carers will not need to frequently access this service, but the service has been called upon by several carers over the past six months who have been very grateful for its existence.
- 2.5 Existing services funded by the Carers Grant will be reviewed in detail in 2006/07 as stated in the department's Carers Strategy. The department will continue to develop areas where more support is needed, whenever funding permits. The Carers Grant is confirmed only until April 2008; with no new growth allocated from central government for 2006. Sustaining all current services and some small variations to meet new demands will be possible however. Sizeable changes in demand will require additional funding or restructuring of existing services. Uncertainty about ongoing funding for providers may start to have an impact during the next two years unless additional sources of funding are identified.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members comment on the report.

4. Director of Resources' Financial Comment (DW 14/03/06)

- 4.1 In 2005/06, Nottinghamshire allocation of Carers Grant totalled £2.42 million. It is expected that the budget will underspend by £150,000 and authority will be sought from Cabinet to carry it forward into 2006/07. In 2006/07 the base allocation of Carers Grant will be £2.46 million, rising to £2.49 million in 2007/08. Funding beyond 2007/08 will be dependant on the outcome of the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

5. Background Papers Available for Inspection

- 5.1 Nottinghamshire Carer second edition.
5.2 The Carers Strategy for Nottinghamshire.
5.3 Select Committee Report - 9th September 2005

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