

1st October 2012**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****CARE HOME MONITORING SYSTEM****Purpose of the Report**

1. As requested by Members, this report provides an update on the Council's work with supporting people who self-fund in Care Homes and the progress with the care home monitoring system (BEDs for short). At today's meeting the Committee will receive a presentation on current progress.

Information and Advice

2. Under the National Assistance Act 1948, local authorities may decide to arrange for the provision of residential accommodation to those who meet assessed needs. The authority is then required to pay for this care for those whose assets fall below a nationally defined level; currently £23,250.
3. If people have more than £23,250 in capital (savings and investments) they self-fund the cost of their care home placement until their capital falls below £23,250. When this happens the responsibility for the funding is then picked up, by the local authority, on a tapering basis. This will result in the person having fewer savings and assets to leave on their death.
4. In Nottinghamshire, based on data provided by Care Homes, it is estimated that 1,083 people are currently self-funding. From the Council's own data approximately 150 people each year will approach the Council to pick up the cost of their placement when their capital falls below the national limit.
5. Research suggests that only 10% of self-funders seek appropriate care fees planning advice in order to maximise the use of their assets, which can better enable them to fund their care for the entire duration of the placement.
6. In their evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Local Government¹, Partnership Assurance estimated that poor decisions about care funding resulted in one in four self-funders falling back on state-funded care at an annual cost of up to £1 billion.

¹ All-Party Parliamentary Local Government Group: "[Care now and for the future](#)" – an inquiry into Adult Social Care – July 2012.

7. The Council offers all people who self-fund a Community Care Assessment. A Community Care Assessment determines people's social care needs and what support is available to meet them. People who self-fund seldom take-up the opportunity of having an assessment. As a result people only approach the authority for support when their funds are almost exhausted.
8. The Department of Health reinforced the need for Councils to promote advice services to self-funders to ensure people are better informed, both as a benefit to themselves and to reduce the pressures of self-funders running out of money and then falling on Councils for financial support.
9. The All-Party Parliamentary Group commented that "There was broad agreement that local government will need to build on existing good practice in ensuring that the resources for self-funders, who make up an increasing proportion of recipients of care, are supported to make the most effective use of their resources."

Paying for Care

10. In order to provide self-funders with appropriate care fees advice, one way the Council sign-posts the public is to advice on the [Paying for Care](#) website.
11. Paying for Care is an advice website developed by Partnership Assurance² that was launched in 2011. The website is designed to help individuals make more informed decisions about the arrangements and funding for their long-term care.
12. Paying for Care is a not-for-profit organisation. It is unique in the market place as it provides holistic information and advice on all matters relating to long-term care plus detailed guidance on funding eligibility criteria. This allows customers to directly engage with independent Later Life Accredited Care Fees Specialists if they wish to seek specialist care fees planning advice (financial advice).
13. Paying for Care provides balanced, up-to-date advice on the complex subject of long-term care, specifically payment for care, through careful, continuous research and collaboration with independent care experts and respected support organisations. As part of this, people can engage directly with an independent care fees adviser via a multitude of mediums including an innovative real-time online chat facility.
14. In order that the public receives appropriate care fees advice, the Council sign-posts people who need care fees advice to Paying for Care through the Customer Service Centre, the Council's website, information sheets and through the local media.

Finding a Care Home Solution

15. To support self-funders to make the most effective use of their resources, the Council awarded a contract to Capita IB to develop a software solution that identifies self-funders and will monitor and record the occupancy and vacancies of beds within care homes in Nottinghamshire. The system is called "BEDs".

² Partnership Assurance is the longest established UK insurer specialising in the design and manufacture of financial products (regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority).

16. The Council implemented the care home bed monitoring system from March 2012 for care homes for older people across Nottinghamshire with a planned full roll-out to care homes for younger adults by January 2013.
17. The system is a web-based system, and enables the public to search for care homes in Nottinghamshire and find out how many vacancies are available at any moment in time. If our neighbouring Councils purchase the system this will widen the care homes that the public can search for.
18. The website contains information about paying for care and enables the public to have a 'live chat' with a specialist fees planning adviser.
19. Through this software the Council will receive details when a self-funder has entered a care home and the system also automatically reminds care homes of the importance of self-funders obtaining advice.
20. The software will also send a notification to Paying for Care notifying them that an unnamed self-funder has entered the care home. Paying for Care will then arrange for an independent Care Fees Adviser to contact the care home seeking permission to meet with the new self-funders.
21. The BEDs system was acknowledged as an area of good practice in the 'Care Now and for the Future' and has won two national awards. Those awards were:
 - i. Capital IB Solutions award for The Innovation in the Public Sector. This Award acknowledged the authority and individuals who provided the ideas and support to deliver an effective business solution; The BEDs system.
 - ii. Partnership Assurance awarded the Best Use of Technology in Care 2012. This was in recognition of the work carried out within the authority and with Partnership Assurance in using technology to benefit the citizens of Nottinghamshire and beyond in developing a cutting edge technical solution to improve services for self-funders and simplifying pathways for care funding advice.

Marketing the Software

22. The intellectual property rights of the use of the software is owned by Nottinghamshire County Council.
23. The Council is working with Capita IB to market and sell the care home bed monitoring system to Health and other local authorities. The realisation of income will be dependent on the take-up by other local authorities. The income is proportionate to the size of the purchasing local authority. The initial interest has been very positive a number of other Councils are in the process of purchasing the software.

Benefits

24. All self-funders will have access to information and advice regarding their care needs and options for care, plus independent care fees planning advice. This will assist them in making

informed arrangements for their long-term care, where appropriate, with the aim of being able to self-fund their care for the entire duration of the placement. This will reduce the need for people to approach the Council for the funding of their placement when they reach the £23,250 threshold.

25. It is difficult to predict how many people will be able, or want to benefit from care fees advice. It is expected that the Council would be able to reduce future financial expenditure by making fewer placements for people previously placed on a self-funded basis. The objective is to increase the numbers of self-funders who receive care fees planning advice in line with Government expectations.

Other Options Considered

26. The alternative is not to provide advice and guidance to people who self-fund. However, this would not ensure the public receives care fees advice to increase their ability to enhance the use of their income or assets.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that the Adult Social Care and Health Committee:

- 1) Note the contents of this report.

PAUL MCKAY

Service Director for Promoting Independence and Public Protection

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

28. There are no constitutional comments as this report is for noting purposes.

Financial Comments (RWK 19/09/2012)

28. There are no financial implications arising from the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- a. All-Party Parliamentary Local Government Group – Care now and for our future – an inquiry into Adult Social Care – July 2012.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

ASCH51