

11 January 2021

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY SERVICES – AGEING WELL

TEMPORARY POSTS TO COMPLETE DEFERRED ASSESSMENTS OF CARE PACKAGES FUNDED IN THE SHORT TERM BY THE NHS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish some temporary posts to complete deferred assessments of care packages that were initially funded by the NHS during the first wave of the Covid 19 pandemic from 19 March to 31 August 2020.

Information

2. A new national Covid 19 Hospital Discharge policy was introduced on 19 March 2020 in order to manage the anticipated pressures on hospitals during the pandemic. This included:
 - the requirement to cease all NHS Continuing Healthcare assessments so that staff undertaking this work could be redeployed
 - the establishment of a new national short-term NHS fund for all re-ablement and packages of care required to facilitate people's discharge from hospital, or, avoid a hospital admission.
3. Across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, between March and August 2020, 1,725 people received support using £15.7m of the NHS fund. 1,200 of this total were people living in Nottinghamshire. The majority of these people were aged over 65 years. From an initial desk top review of these people, it is anticipated that approximately 500 people will require multi-disciplinary input in to a full assessment of their eligibility for Continuing Healthcare funding for all or part of their package of care. The remaining 700 people will likely be eligible under the Care Act for social care support only.
4. Further national NHS guidance has been issued stating that the national NHS fund will cease on 31 March 2021. This means that all the people who had deferred assessments will need to be reviewed with regard to their eligibility for future health and social care support, and moved to either core NHS, social care, joint or self-funding arrangements, by 16 March 2021 (although the funding will be available until 31 March). A joint plan has been

developed between Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group regarding the temporary workforce required to undertake this work.

5. National one-off funding of up to £50 million was made available to Clinical Commissioning Groups for them to work with their local authority partners to recruit temporary health and social care staff to undertake this work. This funding can only be used to recruit assessment staff who are required over and above the usual assessment staff that the health and social care system would employ. The allocation of the national fund to the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group is £1.126m. £390,000 of this amount has been allocated to the County Council to cover the cost of the recruitment of staff and equipment to carry out the County Council's responsibilities within the joint plan.
6. The Department of Health Adult Social Care Winter Plan requires all local authorities to secure sufficient staff to rapidly complete deferred assessments.
7. Due to the very short time-scales available to undertake the work, part of the County Council share of this funding of £390,000 has already been used to recruit temporary staff and engage agency staff up to 31 March 2021.
8. In order to be able to undertake the remainder of the deferred assessments with all 1,200 people by the end of March 2021, approval is sought to establish and recruit to the temporary posts described in the table below, using some of the remainder of the £390,000 funding allocation:

- a) Further to the temporary establishment of some posts, the extension of the following temporary posts to 31 March 2021:

Role	Grade	FTE	Duration	Cost
Community Care Officer	Grade 5	7.2	5 months to 31 March 2021	£105,600
Social Care Assistant	Grade 3	2	5 months to 31 March 2021	£21,600
Total				£127,200

- b) The establishment of the following new additional temporary posts until 31 March 2021:

Role	Grade	FTE	Duration	Cost
Community Care Officer	Grade 5	6.2	4 months to 31 March 2021	£72,800
Total				£72,800

- c) The establishment of the following additional temporary posts until 30 April 2021:

Role	Grade	FTE	Duration	Cost
Community Care Officer	Grade 5	9	4 months to 30 April 2021	£104,800
Total				£104,800

- d) One-off equipment costs of £43,000.

9. The table at **paragraph 8** describes the total number of temporary posts it is intended, subject to approval, to recruit up to, as this is the most cost-effective way to resource the work. However, if it is not possible to recruit to the posts, the department will use the funding to buy in agency staff support so that the work can be delivered within timescale. The department will ensure that the combined cost of recruitment and any use of agency staff comes within the overall £390,000 allocated to the County Council by the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
10. As shown in the table at **paragraph 8**, it is proposed that some posts will be retained until 30 April 2021 so that there is ongoing capacity to ensure that the appropriate communication and commissioning activity is put in place to resolve any outstanding issues.
11. In the event that any of the deferred assessments remain outstanding at the end of March 2021 there is a risk, because the NHS funding of packages of care commissioned between 19 March and 31 August 2020 will cease, that the Council will have to bear the cost of these packages of care from 1 April 2021 until the assessment has been completed, eligibility for health and social care support confirmed, and future funding arrangements identified.

Other Options Considered

12. It is not feasible to use the existing social care staff in the department's community teams to undertake this work, as this would divert them from other business priorities, for example winter planning work.

Reason for Recommendation

13. Undertaking the work is a Department of Health requirement, set out in the Winter Plan. Existing teams do not have the capacity to take on this additional one-off work, due to other priorities responding to the Covid 19 emergency.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

15. A summary Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been submitted to the Council's Information Governance Team and they have confirmed that a full DPIA is not required.

Financial Implications

16. As noted in **paragraph 8**, the total number of temporary posts that the department intends to recruit up to is as follows:

Role	Grade	FTE	Duration	Cost
Extended Temporary Community Care Officer	Grade 5	7.2	31 March 2021	£105,600
New Temporary Community Care Officer	Grade 5	6.2	31 March 2021	£72,800
New Temporary Community Care Officer	Grade 5	9	30 April 2021	£104,800
Extended Social Care Assistant	Grade 3	2	31 March 2021	£21,600
One off equipment costs	/	/		£43,000
Total		24.4		£347,800

17. If it is not possible to recruit to the posts, the department will use the funding to buy in agency staff support, however the department will ensure that the combined cost of recruitment and any use of agency staff comes within the overall £390,000 allocated to the County Council by the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

Human Resources Implications

18. It is the intention to recruit to these posts in line with the Council's recruitment procedures as this is the most cost-effective way to resource the work. However, as mentioned in the body of the report, if it is not possible to recruit to the posts, the department will use the funding to buy in agency staff support so that the work can be delivered within timescale.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

19. The deferred assessments will be conducted in keeping with the department's established practices for the assessment and review of the vulnerable people we support. These practices give due attention to the needs of people with protected characteristics. For this work the main protected characteristics impacted will be age (as the majority of the 1,200 people requiring a deferred assessment are over 65 years of age) and disability.

Smarter Working Implications

20. Although the post holders would ordinarily be office based and undertake face to face visits, due to the current emergency response to the pandemic the expectation is that post holders will be home working based. However, in situations where discussion with the person being supported cannot be addressed remotely it may, subject to the outcome of a risk assessment, be possible to undertake some assessments face to face. The department will keep this under review as Government guidance changes.

Implications for Service Users

21. Some of the people currently in receipt of packages of care that are funded by the NHS may no longer be eligible for health and social care support or, subject to the outcome of a financial assessment, may have to cover part or all of the cost of ongoing care themselves. Letters have been sent to people to explain this. However, many people and their families do not currently know what they may need to contribute to their care in the future. Undertaking financial assessments to establish if people need to fully fund their care or pay a contribution towards it will therefore be a priority, so that people can make informed decisions.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That Committee approves the establishment of the following posts and equipment budget which will be funded from the £390,000 funding allotted to Nottinghamshire County Council as part of the joint Deferred Assessments Plan agreed with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group and Nottingham City Council:
 - a) further to the temporary establishment of some posts, the extension of 7.2 FTE (full time equivalent) temporary Community Care Officer (Grade 5) posts until 31 March 2021
 - b) the extension of 2 FTE temporary Social Care Assistant (Grade 3) posts until 31 March 2021
 - c) the establishment of 6.2 FTE temporary Community Care Officer (Grade 5) posts until 31 March 2021
 - d) the establishment of 9 FTE temporary Community Care Officer (Grade 5) posts until 30 April 2021
 - e) an equipment budget of £43,000.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 24/12/20)

22. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (ZB 22/12/20)

23. The posts detailed in **paragraph 8** will incur expenditure of £304,800 and equipment costs of £43,000, resulting in a total cost of £347,800.
24. This is to be funded by agreed income of £390,000 from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

25. Where it is not possible to recruit, agency staff support will be sought, but the department will ensure that total expenditure incurred will not exceed the £390,000 allocation available.

HR Comments (WI 04/12/20)

26. Fixed term contract extensions and recruitment to additional temporary posts will be undertaken in line with the Authority's recruitment procedures. The successfully recruited candidates will be employed on fixed term contracts for the duration as described in the report. Should recruitment be unsuccessful the Authority's Managed Service Supplier will be engaged to seek suitable candidates.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

[Department of Health and Social Care's hospital discharge service: policy and operating model 21 August 2020 \(updated 13 September 2020\)](#)

[Nottinghamshire County Council's Winter Plan 2020/21](#)

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

All.

ASCPH742 final