

**6<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**Agenda Item: 10**

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE AND PUBLIC PROTECTION**

### **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY UPDATE**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the use of Assistive Technology to support vulnerable people as requested at the October 2012 Adult Social Care and Health Committee.
2. To seek approval to fund the Assistive Technology Service.
3. To progress a tender for a new Assistive Technology service (which provides equipment, installation, maintenance and telecare monitoring) as the current contract is due to expire in April 2014.
4. To seek approval for the funding of two existing posts for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 (1 fte Assistive Technology Project Manager, Band D, and 1 fte Assistive Technology Project Assistant Post, Scale 4)

#### **Information and Advice**

5. Nottinghamshire County Council currently provides three main Assistive Technology services which can help to support vulnerable adults to maintain their independence and also provide support to carers. The current schemes are:
  - Telecare – a range of sensors which can detect risks at home, including ‘wandering’ by people with dementia, falls, poor medication compliance, epileptic seizures, fire and flood. These sensors are linked to a 24 hour monitoring service which can arrange for the appropriate response if a risk to the service user’s wellbeing is detected.
  - Standalone Assistive Technology – a similar range of sensors to telecare, but linked to a short range pager which supports carers to sleep better at night or better manage their daily routine at home, safe in the knowledge that they will be alerted if the person they care for is in need of help. This service also provides some items of equipment such as automatic medication dispensers and reminder devices which are currently being

used in the Short Term Assessment and Reablement Team (START) service to help people in the early stages of dementia better manage their own care needs.

- Just Checking – a system which uses movement and door sensors in the home to help with assessments of how well a person with dementia is managing their independence at home. The system often shows that people with dementia are managing at home much better than originally thought by family and professionals.

## **Benefits of Telecare**

6. A number of Assistive Technology studies have demonstrated that it can help to provide more cost effective care for vulnerable older and disabled people, including people with dementia and learning disabilities. For example, a 2011 report, *Telecare and Telehealth: Progress and Opportunities in the East Midlands*, commissioned by the East Midlands Joint Improvement Partnership examined the impact of telecare provided to 642 people across the region. The report found that annual savings for social care were between £449,512 and £499,458.
7. Since this regional report, Adult Social Care and Health has refocused its Assistive Technology services from October 2011 to target cases where its use can:
  - prevent or delay an admission to residential care
  - avoid or delay carer breakdown, where a carer is providing regular and substantial care to a vulnerable adult
  - avoid or delay the need for increased social care support within the next 12 months.
8. Since the report to the Adult Social Care and Health Committee in October 2012, changes have also been made to streamline the referral pathway for telecare and the standalone Assistive Technology services, reducing bureaucracy for frontline social care assessment staff and ensuring that referrals can be received in a timely manner, for example to facilitate a hospital discharge. Nottinghamshire County Council has also worked in partnership with Nottinghamshire NHS Healthcare Trust to ensure that from April 2013 there has been access to Just Checking Dementia Assessment systems across all community mental health and adult social care assessment teams in the County.
9. The refocused services are making an important contribution both to providing cost effective care and improving service user outcomes. During the period October 2011 to November 2013, the benefits of Assistive Technology use have included:
  - £427,600 gross saving through avoiding an immediate or imminent need for an admission to residential or nursing care for 72 people.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Actual NCC cost of support at home compared to average £496pw residential care placement. Further savings are likely from the Standalone AT service but this data is not currently available.

- £88,000 saving on community care expenditure by using Assistive Technology to manage risks at home which would otherwise require higher and more intrusive levels of staff support for 128 people.
- 134 cases where the provision of telecare has been used to prevent an immediate or imminent breakdown in carer support to a vulnerable adult
- 57 cases where the use of telecare has facilitated a timely hospital discharge, saving a minimum of £14,250<sup>2</sup>.

10. Given the important contribution to both improved service user outcomes and efficient care provision, the Council is seeking to tender for a new Assistive Technology service as the current contract is due to expire in April 2014.

### **Non Eligible Service Users**

11. Telecare has an important role in providing reassurance and peace of mind to people with lower level needs who are not eligible for support, and their carers. Although there have been some service developments both locally and nationally, it remains the case that the market provides limited options for the people of Nottinghamshire to purchase their own telecare solutions. In light of this, Nottinghamshire County Council intends to work with the newly appointed service provider and other organisations to increase the choice and availability of telecare solutions for people with lower level social care needs who wish to self fund. To avoid barriers to take up of a service which charges high up-front fees for equipment, the County Council will seek to work with providers to establish a service model where people will have the option to rent or pay over time through a service charge for the equipment.

### **Other Options Considered**

12. The option of the Council providing telecare equipment to people with lower level social care needs as part of the new tender specification has been considered. However, this would expand the current service provided by the Council at a cost of approximately £75,000 per year and would not be in line with the medium term financial strategy.

13. The option of not providing Assistive Technology services has been considered. However, evidence shows that the costs of providing Assistive Technology services are offset by savings for the authority and enabling more people to remain living at home independently for longer.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

14. It is recommended that in order to enable people to remain living at home for as long as possible the Council arranges Assistive Technology for those people who are Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) eligible and in some cases where Assistive Technology can prevent people from needing costly long term support. This would include supporting carers who provide regular support to a service

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<sup>2</sup> Using standard NCC Public Health assumptions that a delayed hospital discharge costs £250 per day.

user who, without that support, would meet the FACS eligibility criteria for social care services.

15. To progress a tender for a new Assistive Technology service (which provides equipment, installation, maintenance and telecare monitoring) as the current contract is due to expire in April 2014 and a new tender for Assistive Technology services provides an opportunity to work in partnership with the service provider to establish a countywide low level preventative telecare service for people who wish to self purchase, without any additional cost to the County Council. The tender will also provide an opportunity to offer a wider range of Assistive Technology solutions, to ensure that more people can be supported to remain in their own homes. The tender will be for one year with an option of a second year.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Implications for Service Users**

17. Providing funding to progress the tender and maintain Assistive Technology service provision will ensure continuity of service for existing service users and enable new eligible service users and carers to continue to benefit from a range of equipment to support them to:

- remain independent in their own homes for longer
- avoid or delay the need for residential care
- return home more quickly following a stay in hospital, and avoid a future admission
- support carers

18. Working with an Assistive Technology service provider and the wider supplier market to offer self funding options for telecare, will enable greater choice for vulnerable service users and carers in Nottinghamshire, who currently have limited or no options available.

## **Financial Implications**

19. The costs for the delivery of an Assistive Technology service in 2014/15 are £219,000 per year. £180,000 has been committed from Supporting People funding for 2014/5. Costs comprise of the following:

- Extension of 2 existing posts for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 (1 fte Assistive Technology Project Manager, Band D, and 1 fte Assistive

Technology Project Assistant Post, Scale 4) at an annual cost, including related employment expenditure, of £78,000.

- Assistive Technology equipment, installation, maintenance and telecare monitoring costs at estimated annual cost of £141,000.

20. Funding for the shortfall of £39,000 for 2014/15 will be sought from the community care support budget, in order to enable delivery of the service identified in the report. If this is not available, provision of the service will be limited to the available budget.

### **Human Resources Implications**

21. This report proposes to extend the following existing posts from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015:

- 1 fte Assistive Technology Project Manager, Band D, scp 42-47 (£45,475.74-£51,234.92). Post to carry approved car user status.
- 1 fte Assistive Technology Project Assistant, NJE Grade 4, scp 19-23 (£22,561.63-£25,676.12). Post to carry approved car user status.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

22. Telecare can help to reduce doorstep crime by enabling service users to call for assistance from the 24 hour telecare monitoring centre. Conversations with doorstep callers can also be recorded if the service user presses a discreet button, and these recordings can be used as evidence in criminal prosecutions for doorstep crime. Reminder devices can also prompt vulnerable people to be vigilant when answering the door to unknown callers.

### **Ways of Working Implications**

23. The above posts are already established on a temporary basis and therefore are already accommodated within existing office resources.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

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

- 1) The continued provision of Assistive Technology services from April 2014 and agree a tender for a one year contract with an option of a second year. There is funding from Supporting People reserves committed for 2014/15 of £180,000.
- 2) Extension of 1 fte Assistive Technology Project Manager, Band D, scp 42-47 (£45,475.74-£51,234.92) on a temporary basis from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. Post to carry approved car user status.

- 3) Extension of 1 fte Assistive Technology Project Assistant, NJE Grade 4 (subject to job evaluation as changed post), scp 19-23 (22,561.63-£25,676.12) on a temporary basis from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. Post to carry approved car user status.
- 4) That the tender specification for a new Assistive Technology service provider includes working with the successful bidder to develop a telecare service model for self-funders with low level social care needs, which has low up-front costs.

**PAUL MCKAY**

**Service Director for Promoting Independence and Public Protection**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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**Constitutional Comments (NAB 16/12/13)**

24. The Adult Social Care and Health Committee has authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

**Financial Comments (KAS 20/12/2013)**

25. The financial implications are contained within paragraphs 19 and 20 of 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. [Report to the Adult Social Care and Health Committee on 29 October 2012 – Use of Assistive Technology to Support Vulnerable People and Carers](#)
- b. Job Descriptions for the posts.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All.

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