

11 July 2016

Agenda Item:4

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR MID NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PATHWAYS END OF LIFE SERVICE FOR CARERS

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides an update on recent changes and interim arrangements for the Pathways Service and requests approval to progress stakeholder consultation and re-tender of the service.

Information and Advice

Pathways End of Life Service for Carers background

2. As part of Nottinghamshire's Joint Carers Strategy, Nottinghamshire County Council and the six county Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) jointly commissioned Central Nottingham Clinical Services (CNCS) to deliver the Pathways End of Life Service for Carers. The Council is the lead commissioner for the service which is funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF). The original contract period was from 1 July 2014 to 31 March 2017.
3. The aim of the Pathways Service is to provide practical, emotional, spiritual and social support, as well as respite, to the carers of people deemed to be within the last year of life. This will enable the person cared for to remain at home for as long as that is their preferred place of care, avert hospital admissions due to carer breakdown (as opposed to an unanticipated change in the patient's condition) and facilitate discharge home from hospital where that is the agreed plan. This approach supports Nottinghamshire's End of Life Care Pathways (all diagnoses), as well as the Cancer Reform Strategy for people who have entered a palliative phase of treatment.
4. In July 2015, the Public Health Team led an extensive 'Pathways Evaluation Report 2015-16', which investigated how well the outcomes were being met and how carers rated the Service. Overall the outcomes were being met and carers rated the Service positively. Some of the comments made by carers were as follows:

"I was given my life back."

"Nothing is too much trouble for them to help you."

"I felt that the support was good when I felt I needed to talk to someone."

"To know I didn't have to struggle on alone."

"I really receive excellent care. I would recommend your service highly."

5. The Council undertook regular contract monitoring meetings with the Pathways Service. Outcomes from the service were positive. An improvement action plan had been agreed to improve the geographical spread of the service which was concentrated on the Mansfield and Ashfield area, with other areas making little use of the service.

Current situation

6. On 13 May 2016, with 48 hours' notice to the Council, CNCS went into administration. CNCS staff within the Pathways Service were issued with redundancy notices the next working day. As soon as the administration was publically announced Council officers worked with the Pathways team to identify carers the service was working actively with, in order to ensure that no carer was left without the support they needed or had their anxieties raised due to being unsure as to what would happen following the CNCS announcements. At that point, Pathways were actively supporting approximately 40 carers across the County, most of whom were accessing respite. The Pathways team were extremely professional at this difficult time and telephoned as many carers as possible in the short period of time available to inform them of the changes.
7. Letters were sent to all the carers supported by Pathways, to inform them in writing of the situation and advise that for any queries they should call the Nottinghamshire Carers Hub (run by the Carers Trust) who were briefed and prepared to respond. CNCS had sub-contracted the provision of respite care to a small number of providers with whom the Council negotiated short-term, direct spot contract arrangements, in order to ensure continuity for those carers currently using them.

New interim provider

8. In order to ensure carers can continue to receive support whilst a competitive tender is completed, an interim arrangement has been made via a contract variation with an existing provider, the Carers Trust (East Midlands), who also run the Nottinghamshire Carers Hub. This will run from 1 June to 30 September 2016.
9. CNCS employed five staff in the Pathways Service, most of whom have been re-employed on a temporary basis by the Carers Trust.

Future arrangements

10. Discussions with the six CCGs are planned in order to re-tender the service and identify a provider from October 2016. There is a good evidence base for the current model and it is therefore expected that there should be minimal need for changes to the existing specification. The specification is for a countywide service. This aspect did require improvement on behalf of the provider as coverage across the County was inequitable. In the interim the Carers Trust is seeking to address this.

Other Options Considered

11. Alternative options considered are to terminate the contract in October 2016, or to tender this service as a lot within the homecare tender.

12. Terminating the contract is not the recommended option as the Pathways Service can demonstrate positive outcomes for carers who are at a very difficult point in their life and it receives good feedback from those using the service. The scheme supports key strategic objectives and is also held in high regard and valued by GPs and clinicians in the areas where it is well used.
13. The Pathways Service could have been re-tendered as part of the forthcoming tender for homecare services. This has, however, been discounted as there are no significant benefits from doing this. A separate tender is more likely to reach a wider range of providers and therefore assist in securing the most cost effective and quality service.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

14. The Pathways service provides support and respite care to carers who are in difficult situations. This support enables those who are cared for to remain at home for longer (if they choose to do so). This reduces the demand on social care and health provision by requiring less use of residential care, fewer hospital admissions due to carer breakdown and facilitating discharges from hospital. This is in line with the Adult Social Care Strategy, promoting independence and reducing the need for care. There is evidence that those who have used the service have valued it highly, as have those professionals who have made referrals to the service. An independent evaluative report by Public Health colleagues confirmed that the service delivery model was effective.
15. Following consultation with carers and stakeholders, if, as envisaged, there are no significant changes to the model and specification, it is recommended that the Pathways Service proceeds to re-tender without needing to return to Committee for a further decision.

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 NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, 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.

Financial Implications

17. The contract can continue to be provided within the existing budget and this funding has been approved by the Better Care Fund Programme Board. On advice from the Corporate Procurement Team the contract value is not included in this report as it is deemed commercially sensitive due to the pending procurement exercise.

Implications for Service Users

18. The recommended approach aims to ensure continuity of service for carers and service users.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Committee:

- 1) notes the changes and interim arrangements for the Pathways Service
- 2) gives approval for officers to progress stakeholder consultation and re-tender of the existing Pathways Service, assuming no significant changes to the existing model are required in which case a further report will be brought to Committee.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 15/06/16)

19. The proposals set out in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

Financial Comments (KAS 21/06/16)

20. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 17 of the report.

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.

Pathways Evaluation Report 2015-16

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

ASCH409