

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

13 June 2023

**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health:
Cllr Matt Golby,**

Report Title **Reablement Commissioning Intentions**

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To outline Adult Social Care intentions to commission and procure contractual arrangements for a sustainable and affordable supply of Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered

reablement homecare services for people aged 65+, people with a physical disability and for individuals with a diagnosed Mental Health condition.

- 1.2. To seek Cabinet approval for the Executive Director of People Services in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to have delegated authority to tender, procure and award a new framework for CQC registered reablement homecare to commence in October 2023.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) currently accesses a supply of CQC registered reablement homecare services via a short-term contract with a single provider. This contract was initially commissioned during the winter pressure period at the end of 2022 as a trial of externally provided services to supplement in house services where we had struggles to recruit the required capacity.
- 2.2 The existing contracts are due to expire mid-October 2023 and the Council proposes issuing a competitive, open tender to appoint a long-term provider of reablement having proven the value and benefits of the arrangements and the capacity and flexibility this gives us.
- 2.3 A recommissioning project is underway to plan, design and procure a new long-term contract for reablement homecare which meets the needs of individuals and recognises the post covid market conditions. as well as changes to National Strategies and priorities like Home First and a greater focus on returning people to their normal; place of residence post hospital stays and helping them stay at home and independent for longer following a fall or crisis.
- 2.4 The project has undertaken substantial engagement and design work during the past few months seeking the views and input of key stakeholders. This has helped shape the model and future contract requirements within an outcome-based delivery model, which will be the basis for procuring new reablement homecare arrangements for delivery from October 2023

The stakeholders have included:

- Reablement West (in house services)
- The local (and national) provider markets including the current provider
- wider Adult Social Care colleagues
- Corporate Services colleagues

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves:
 - a) the procurement and implementation of a framework for the purchasing of additional capacity of reablement home care services, to be introduced from 18 October 2023.
 - b) the duration of the framework to be 2 years with an optional break at the end of year 1 and an inclusive option to extend for a further period of up to 12 months; resulting in a framework for a maximum duration of 3 years.
 - c) the commencement of a competitive procurement process.

- d) the delegation of authority to the Executive Director for People Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the above recommendations.

4. Reason for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Care Act 2014 places a statutory duty on WNC to provide care and support to people that have assessed and eligible social care needs
- 4.2 The Council's strategic objective, through the existing Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, is to support people to live independently within the community for as long as possible.
- 4.3 The primary aim of the new arrangements will be to improve the customer experience of commissioned reablement home care by ensuring the timely availability of quality care throughout the West Northamptonshire area.
- 4.4 The competitive procurement process will ensure the Council is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 015 and WNC's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 4.5 It provides the Council with the ability to surge and flex its capacity as required in a way that is harder to do with an employed internal service.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 In January 2023, WNC commissioned a pilot with a single provider to bolster the capacity of WNC's Reablement West (RW) service.
- 5.2 In many Local Authorities reablement homecare is provided by a mixed delivery approach of in house and external providers working alongside each other to deliver the best outcome for individuals, this is the model recommended for WNC.
- 5.3 The Council wishes to deliver reablement services via a mixed economy of provision which ensures flexibility of capacity and avoids a single point of failure for reablement.
- 5.4 The rapid increases in the National Living Wage during the past few years and the expected continued rise of this is very welcome, particularly in a sector which has traditionally been undervalued and under rewarded. However, when combined with constrained funding for Adult Social Care and the current levels of inflation it can be difficult for LA's to sustain both traditional and reablement homecare.
- 5.5 The proposed model therefore seeks to ensure longer term sustainability for reablement homecare which is a central feature of Discharge to Assess (D2A)

6. Issues and Choices

6.1 Demand for Reablement in WNC

Based on a snapshot taken w/c 24 April 2023:

- 6.1.1 WNC is providing approximately 760 hours per week to 31 residents through the externally provided services.
- 6.1.2 The total spend on external reablement homecare is c.£18,000 per week or c.£936,000 per annum.
- 6.1.3 This is in addition to 500 hours per week to 50 residents from the in-house service at a cost of c.£31,000 per week or c.£1,600,000 per annum.

6.2 Supply Chain

- 6.2.1 Supply in rural areas, particularly Daventry and South Northamptonshire continues to be more difficult to broker than urban areas such as Northampton Town.
- 6.2.2 Providers across WNC are local SMEs with smaller numbers of regional or national providers. In WNC's area some national providers deliver predominantly "self-funder" care and are unwilling or unable to deliver on behalf of the Council.
- 6.2.3 Reablement homecare attracts a higher premium than traditional homecare and there is confidence that the tender will attract bids.
- 6.2.4 The reablement tender will be issued at a similar time to the allocation of the new homecare framework and it will be mandated that providers successfully appointed to any of the nine Local Area Partnerships (LAPs), or Zones cannot also bid to be the provider of reablement in West Northamptonshire.
- 6.2.5 The rationale for this tender condition is that it could lead to a conflict of interest or lack of commitment to either of the contracts if a provider were appointed to both.
- 6.2.6 In WNC there are currently 76 Homecare Providers registered with CQC.

Table 1

CQC Registered Homecare Providers				
Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Not yet inspected	Total
2	31	20	23	76

6.3 Fair Cost of Care (FCoC)

- 6.3.1 In recognition of the imminent Adults Social Care Reforms [Proposed reforms to adult social care \(including cap on care costs\) - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#) WNC, alongside several other East Midlands local authorities, commissioned the services of Care Analytics (CA), a specialist in the financial analysis of care markets and the cost of care, to undertake a 'Fair Cost of Care' (FCoC) detailed cost analysis exercise.
- 6.3.2 All providers operating in the domiciliary home care market within the area of the local authority were sent a detailed survey designed to capture the necessary operational and contextual detail to draw out the inherent costs of delivering care in the local market.
- 6.3.3 In compliance with the latest language contained within the guidance and resulting grant conditions for additional funding WNC is committed only to "moving towards" the calculated FCoC rates (including any future inflationary uplift as negotiated).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023-guidance/market-sustainability-and-fair-cost-of-care-fund-2022-to-2023-guidance>

- 6.3.4 The rates to be advertised for reablement homecare are above the medium average rates published by WNC in its FCoC report

[Home Care FCoC Report - Publication 01.02.23 0.pdf](#)

6.4. Proposed approach

- 6.4.1 The current reablement homecare pilot contract is due to end in October 2023.
- 6.4.2 The new Reablement Home Care Contract will align with the new Home Care Framework, and it is expected that the appointed provider for reablement will work closely with the appointed home care providers and in partnership with RW.
- 6.4.3 Amongst several key deliverables, the new model will support an additional focus on outcomes:
- - a. supporting people to remain independent for longer in their own homes
 - b. increasing the available capacity of services and support
 - c. making it easier for people to find support and participate in their communities
 - d. helping people to manage their own conditions for example, through peer support, using digital solutions for assistive technology.
 - e. presuming, maximising, and supporting "single handed care" where achievable
- 6.4.4 Commissioning of reablement homecare will also integrate closely with WNC's successful 3 Conversations Model and seek to achieve strengths based commissioning and progressive delivery.
- 6.4.5 Within the specification workstream work has been undertaken with WNC's Reablement West, Providers, Adults Social Care teams and Brokerage to ensure that the ethos of home first and

strengths based reablement are embedded within ongoing service delivery by independent providers.

6.5 Specific Deliverables of the Reablement Commissioning Project (RCP)

- a. A compliant procurement exercise via competitive tender
- b. New approach and model for commissioned reablement home care services
- c. New Service Specification for commissioned reablement home care services
- d. New Contract for commissioned reablement home care services
- e. New approach to quality assurance including outcome focused KPI's
- f. Improved customer experience including a mandated requirement for a single provider rated GOOD by CQC as a minimum being appointed to deliver reablement homecare
- g. Technology as standard throughout the end-to-end homecare process
- h. Better pay and terms and conditions for care workers
- i. Increased support for providers on recruitment and retention
- j. A reduction in the environmental impact of service delivery via an increase in walking runs and electric vehicles
- k. The introduction of the mandatory use of Electronic Rostering and digitised Care Planning systems
- l. New opportunity for providers to embrace the 3-conversation model and deliver strengths-based services
- m. New opportunity for community assets and the community themselves to become part of delivery
- n. Increased individualised outcomes linked to three conversations, increase in satisfaction with the service. and a subsequent reduction in demand
- o. Improved efficiency of service delivery including reduced travel time
- p. Increased collaboration between providers and WNC at a strategic and operational level
- q. Single handed care requirement.

Alternative options

1. An entirely in-house solution for the provision of reablement home care; this is not recommended due to the continuing inability to recruit to full staffing in Reablement West, despite several campaigns, one off incentive and changes to terms. This option would also diminish WNC's aspiration for a risk sharing around periods of demand and surge and allow a more mixed approach to delivery.
2. Partially insourcing the provision of reablement home care for rural packages. While this could address the challenge of providing commissioned care in rural areas it would also require the addition of travel time and expenses to be sustainable. This is not recommended; insourcing rural packages would increase the cost of reablement home care. It would also reduce the amount of commissioned reablement homecare by around 25% as care providers based in rural areas generally employ care workers who live in the geographic area of the service thus reducing travel time and increasing productive contact time. Insourcing the rural packages would fragment the overall activity and could undermine the operational and financial viability of the appointed provider and make the tender less attractive to the market.
3. An open approved "call off" list could be introduced as an alternative to a single contract. This is not recommended because this could increase the likelihood of a high number of very small

providers of reablement home care packages with each having the overhead, management and other costs (as see in the home/domiciliary care market) and which would further erode provider's operational and financial viability for the council as this in seen often to increase the hourly rate needed to sustain the business.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1 It is not anticipated that the proposed framework will have any impact on the current resources available. The new arrangements should reduce any delay in the provision of reablement home care. This will also ensure the resources of the RW service are focussed on reablement and hospital discharge.
- 7.1.2 The council's annual gross expenditure on commissioned reablement home care during the 2023/24 financial year is estimated at c.£1 million funded from the Discharge Funding agreed via the Integrated Care Board. The expenditure will continue the strength-based ethos to ensure people receive the right amount of care at the right time in the right place.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 WNC has a statutory duty to provide care and support for people who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the Care Act 2014 and supporting legislative framework. WNC has a duty to provide or arrange services that help prevent people developing a need for care and support and/or delay people deteriorating where they would need ongoing care and support. WNC may meet that duty by providing the care and support itself or by arranging for an alternate suitably qualified provider(s) to provide this service.
- 7.2.2 The competitive procurement process will be undertaken pursuant to the Public Contract Regulations 015 and WNC's Contract Procedure Rules. Advice and support will be provided by WNC's Legal and Procurement Services.

8 Risk

- 8.1 If the recommendations described in the report are not approved, it will result in the council not having appropriate arrangements in place to purchase reablement home care services. This means the council could fail to meet its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014 when the current contract expires in October 2023.
- 8.2 The introduction of a framework will enhance the customers experience by improving provider's operational and financial viability linked to an improved service specification and suitable contract.
- 8.3 Providers may choose not to apply, or their application may be unsuccessful. Many providers, in West Northamptonshire already have a mixed customer base of WNC and self-funding customers people who fund their own care. Therefore, it is doubtful that any significant discontinuity of service provision or provider failure will occur directly because of the introduction of the contract.

8.4 It should be acknowledged that all commissioning of homecare (including reablement) exercises does come with the risk of some potential disruption to individuals and the Council. The risks associated with this project are acknowledged and detailed within an ongoing Risk Register which has been/will be reviewed regularly throughout the project.

Table 2

8.5 Risk Register

Risk	Score	Proposed Mitigation	Score
Lack of interest from providers in the new arrangements	MED	Providers may not bid for this opportunity and focus their activity on self-funders. There are currently no indications that there will be insufficient interest in this opportunity.	LOW
Disruption to continuity of service provision for customers	MED	Reablement is a short term (generally up to 6 weeks) intervention with a continually changing base of customers. It is unlikely that any customer would see disruption as a result of the introduction of this new contact.	LOW
Damage to the council's reputation as a result of enforced changes of service provision to individuals who receive care as a result of the tender	MED	A communication plan is in progress which will ensure customers and stakeholders are aware of the process and outcome of the tender. All measures to minimise any disruption will be taken.	LOW
Delay in awarding the contract as a result of challenge from applicants regarding the delivery and /or outcome of the tender process	MED	The tender process will be compliant with legislation and council processes. In the event of delay it would be likely that the current pilot provider could/would continue to deliver the service until new arrangements are in place.	MED

Low	Monitor, as necessary
Medium	Medium, potential to cause the project some difficulties – regular monitoring needed
High	High Excess of project risk – action needed to redress; very regular monitoring needed

8.6 Consultation

- 8.6.1 Homecare Approved Providers – Providers have been engaged on the project via WNC Provider Forums.
- 8.6.2 All Member Briefing Session will be arranged if required
- 8.6.3 Adult Social Care Operations have been actively involved in the project
- 8.6.4 Political Groups Consultation. All Councillors will be included in a future Political groups' communication

8.7 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 8.7.1 The appropriate Scrutiny Committee can review the Reablement Commissioning Intentions report

8.8 Climate Impact

- 8.8.1 The project will have a golden thread to the Corporate Plan 2021-2025.
- 8.8.2 The overarching project and the products it delivers (including a redesigned service specification and contract for reablement homecare) will place particular emphasis on linked priorities within the Corporate Plan:
 - 8.8.2.1 Priority 1, Green and Clean
In recognition of the environmental impact of homecare (particularly in the rural zones, via travel by care workers), the specification will include performance measures linked to reduced mileage, efficiency of rotas, progression towards the use of electric vehicles and an increase in the use of walking and cycling care rounds.

8.9 Community Impact

- 8.9.1 Priority 2, Improved Life Chances
In recognition of the prominence of homecare in the daily lives of some of our most vulnerable residents, the redesigned approach will deliver improved outcomes using community assets and creating strengths based and technology led care located at the geographic centre of communities to ensure delivery with localised context.
- 8.9.2 Priority 3 Connected Communities
The project will deliver an improved use of transport networks, increase the use of electric vehicles, and encourage geographic, zone-based recruitment to minimise travel. The increased use of technology (mobile and fixed) in both the frontline delivery of care and the operational aspects of care delivery such as rostering and call monitoring will connect communities more closely with the service, build resilience and increase access to support networks.
- 8.9.3 Priority 4 Thriving villages and towns
High quality care often derives from being localised geographically and by recognising the cultural and demographic conditions of an area. A care worker who lives in the area that aligns with the zone in which they work can make an enormous difference to the quality of care and empathy that an individual receives. Simple things such as a care worker being able to speak in the individual's first language which may not be English and being able to chat about local news

issues whilst in the customers home can make the individual feel continued connection to their community. Villages and smaller towns benefit from a cluster of care workers who concentrate their delivery within the area and the new contract will encourage local recruitment bringing employment and revenue to communities.

8.9.4 Priority 5 Economic Development

Health and Social Care are often one of the largest employers in a local authority area and contributes hugely to GDP in West Northants. The reablement homecare project has an estimated value of c.£1 million per annum (c.£3 million overall) and sustains and creates employment for 100's of people. The homecare sector currently has recruitment and retention issues, and the project will deliver increased numbers of care workers and increased revenue in all areas of West Northants.

8.9.5 Priority 6 Robust Resource Management

The project will seek to reduce the number of care providers that WNC contract manages, and quality assures. Creating economy of scale and efficiency from both increased volumes with a single provider and reducing overheads of operating care, the new contract will use council resources more effectively and proactively.

8.9.6 The project will also link to the Councils Anti-Poverty Strategy; good, high-quality, sustainable reablement homecare can be an enabler to help support people out of poverty, for example: -

8.9.7 The Anti-Poverty Strategy states *“There is still a strong association between unemployment and poverty, along with a significant rise of in-work poverty.*

Some people living in higher working households comprised 17% of people living in poverty in 2018/19, compared to 14% 10 years earlier and 9% in 1996/97.

People living in lower work intensity households comprised 47% of people living in poverty in 2018/19, compared to 42% 10 years earlier and 35% in 1996/97.”

Better employment conditions and an increase in employment opportunities for care workers can support people to move out of the position of living in poverty whilst in work.

8.9.8 The Anti-Poverty Strategy also states, *“Lone parents, large families, carers and care leavers are more likely to experience poverty than people without children or caring responsibilities.”*

8.9.9 A deliverable of the project is that good, high-quality, sustainable reablement homecare will support family carers to enjoy more fulfilled and active lives in the knowledge that their relative is safely supported at home during recovery.

8.10 Communications

8.10.1 Communications must effectively inform all those affected by the recommissioning and support in the increase of further engagement with providers. To achieve this a robust communication and engagement plan is being developed.

8.10.2 The communications and engagement plan will align with key project milestones with a focus on targeted communications to identified audiences, including current and prospective providers, stakeholders, members of the public, service users and stakeholders.

9 Background Papers

N/A

Appendix A- Map of West Northamptonshire's Homecare Zones