

CABINET

8 JUNE 2010

GATEWAY 4 CONTRACT MANAGEMENT: CARERS SUPPORT SERVICES

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Tom Mason, Adult Services

Report from: Rose Collinson, Director of Children & Adult Services

Author: Kerry Tappenden, Contracts Officer

Summary

This report updates Cabinet on the contract performance/management of the Carers Support Service and Community Based Advisory Services for Carers.

The report highlights performance issues that are being addressed by the Social Care Commissioning Team and Care Management colleagues and seeks agreement for the continuation of these contracts, which are expected to run until 31 March 2012. Members are advised that the existing service specification for Carers Support Services (respite) has been varied in order to allow equity of hours and to accommodate the needs of those carers currently on a waiting list.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The decision is within policy and budget framework. The contracts support the priorities contained within Sustainable Community Plan 2010-2026 and are also consistent with the Medway's carers strategy and the National Strategy for Carers '*Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own*'.
- 1.2 These contracts have been categorised as high risk through the Risk Analysis Tool process and are therefore a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Contracts awarded in April 2009 were for the following services:
 - Carers Support Service: A respite service provided to informal carers within their own home. The contractor provides care workers to support the cared for individual whilst their main carer receives a break from their caring role. This service also provides short breaks to carers

such as group activities that enable carers to receive a break from their caring environment and to have an opportunity to relax and meet other carers.

- Community Based Advisory Services for Carers: An advisory service operated through a drop in centre and outreach within the community. The contractor provides free information packs to carers, training opportunities, benefits advice, signposting to other agencies, support groups and activities. This contractor produces a carers newsletter and facilitates the Carers Partnership Board and also provides support to young carers.

3. Management of the Contract/ Benefits Realisation

- 3.1 The two contracts for carers services were awarded in April 2009 and have been managed by the Social Care Contracts Team. During the mobilisation period of the contract Medway Council met with each organisation on a monthly basis to monitor performance against the terms and conditions of the contract, this arrangement was in place for 6 months, when meetings were moved to a quarterly basis. As well as regular meetings, each organisation provides monthly statistics to evidence the level of service that is being provided.
- 3.2 In the summer of 2009 the Medway Carers Centre in Canterbury Street, Gillingham was fully refurbished and the centre was relaunched to the public. The organisation held a launch event, which included a lot of positive media interest.
- 3.3 Crossroads Care Medway who provide the carers support service have also moved to more modern premises in Chatham allowing greater access for their care workers and informal carers.
- 3.4 To date there has not been any cost and volume variance from the original business case.

4. Variations Required During Contract Term

- 4.1 During the last 12 months some issues have arisen with regard to how carers are able to access respite services, which has resulted in a waiting list. This has arisen because hours of support were being allocated by the individual's care manager rather than the service itself. Although there is a waiting list actual support to individuals has been and continues to be of a good standard. In light of the difficulties, a review of how hours are allocated is being undertaken and to ensure equity of service, officers will be varying the contract specification to respond to this. Once actioned, the position will be closely monitored.
- 4.2 Members are advised that there is the potential for some carers to be dissatisfied at the level of support they receive as for some this may reduce as a result of the variation to contract. Conversely for other carers this should mean better, more responsive access to support.

5. Performance and Change Management

- 5.1 Over the course of the contracts to this point, it has been noticed that there has been a marked improvement to the Community Based Advisory Services for Carers. Part of this has been as a result of the refurbishment of the Medway Carers Centre enabling greater access to the service, and outreach support in the community.
- 5.2 This contract does allow for an additional 4 hours per week to be provided outside of normal office hours. Through performance monitoring, Contracts Officers have identified an issue with the use of these hours and are currently reviewing this, as fewer carers want to engage with the service outside of office hours.
- 5.3 The Medway Carers Centre is required to report against the following performance indicators on a monthly basis:
- A full breakdown of the number of carers/'cared for' individuals supported and breakdown of care needs/client category.
 - Details of ethnic origin, gender and age of both carers and 'cared for' individuals
 - Details of whether young carers are carers of adults or siblings
 - Number of individuals accessing benefits advice. Details of extra income achieved through benefit applications
 - Number of individuals attending training courses and brief description of courses attended
 - Number of service user support groups held
 - Number of carers accessing telephone helpline service
 - Number of carers receiving counselling support
 - Number of 'cared for' individuals receiving 1:1 support.
- 5.4 During the mobilisation of these contracts, the Voluntary Sector Grants and Contracts Manager and Contracts Officer met with each organisation on a monthly basis, these meetings are now held on a quarterly basis. Close communication with the organisations has ensured that any problems have been rectified and the service continues to run satisfactorily.
- 5.5 As noted above, the Carers Support Service is currently operating a waiting list and steps are being taken to reduce this to allow better access to the service.

- 5.6 Crossroads Care Medway is required to report against the following performance indicators on a monthly basis:
- A full breakdown of the number of carers/'cared for' individuals supported and breakdown of care needs/client category.
 - Details of ethnic, gender and age origin of both carers and 'cared for' individuals
 - Details of whether young carers are carers of adults or siblings
 - Total Number of breaks provided and number of hours these represent
 - Details of the support groups/activities/breaks provided per month
 - Details of the monitoring of outcomes of service plans
 - Details of annual reviews of the service plan, including date the review was completed and the outcome of the review (for example, hours decreased, remained the same etc).

6. Lessons Learned

- 6.1 Officers have established that close monitoring of the services provided is key to ensuring a good service for the individuals using it. Since the contracts were awarded in 2009 the Social Care Commissioning Team has recruited three Performance and Compliance Officers to make on site visits to the services and report back on the quality of service provided. Any issues are reported directly to either the Contracts Officer or the Social Care Commissioning & Voluntary Sector Manager, which has allowed them to deal more swiftly with any problems.
- 6.2 The role of Performance and Compliance Officer requires them to work with all social care providers to monitor and review performance against outcomes, including service reviews and safeguarding meetings, advising colleagues of contractual requirements and compliance enforcement options.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1 Future Variations / Amendments Required:
To vary the current service specification for Carers Support Services Contract so that a maximum threshold number of hours of 4 hours per individual per week is applied to allow equity of support hours.

7.2 Contract Extension Required:
Not required.

7.3 Service Improvement Plan / Continuous Improvement Plan
The services provided will be monitored on a quarterly basis over the next 12 months by the Social Care Commissioning team to ensure that they are continuing to provide an effective service to carers in Medway. The monitoring will include how the contract variation is impacting on service delivery. The services will also be subject to mystery shopping in order to ensure that the customer experience can be tested and is of a high quality.

8. Comments of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services

8.1 This report provides Members with a review of the contracts for Carers Services in Medway that were awarded in April 2009. These contracts include Carers Support Services and Community Based Advisory Services for Carers.

8.2 This report sets out details as to how the contracts have performed during that time and requests approval to vary the contract for the Carers Support Service.

9. Procurement Board – 31 March 2010

9.1 The Procurement Board considered this report on and supported the recommendation as set out at section 11.

10. Financial, Procurement and Legal Comments

10.1 Comments of the Chief Finance Officer (or designated deputy)
The cost of the contract is being met from within existing budgets, although additional demand is putting these under pressure.

10.2 Comments of the Head of Procurement (or designated deputy)
The contract has generally performed well and any issues/problems have been identified and rectified as part of the contract management strategy. There are some clear lessons to be taken forward in respects to output deliverables and effective contract management.

The lessons learnt thus far should be logged and reviewed on an ongoing basis including how issues have arisen and been overcome. These are key to informing and directing the future specification and procurement process. As the contract concludes 2012, consideration should commence Q4 of 2010 in respects to future procurement planning. During this time, dialogue should be considered with Children's services in respect to similar requirements, as there seems to be potential synergies in respects to requirements for carer's support service. There may be an opportunity for a more internally collaborative contract in the future and potential to exploit economies of scale.

- 10.3 Comments of the Monitoring Officer (or designated deputy)
While this review has identified some important lessons to be learnt particularly a requirement for the close monitoring of the service provision under the contracts, it is clear that on the whole the contracts deliver high quality services that also provides value for money to the Council. The proposed variation of the Carers Support Service contract together with the continued close monitoring of this service should also help to reduce any unnecessarily high waiting times.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 The Cabinet is recommended to approve the continuation of the given contracts and approve the variation to the Carers Support Services Contract, as set out in section 7.1.

12. Suggested Reasons for Decision(s)

- 12.1 The continuation of these services are vital in enabling vulnerable adults to remain independent within their community. It is widely recognised that the caring responsibility can place great pressure on the carer. Therefore providing services that support carers by giving them a meaningful break, or providing advice, information and support that is responsive to their specific needs is essential in supporting carers and relieving pressures of the caring role.

Report Originating Officer:	Kerry Tappenden	☎ 01643 333041
Chief Finance Officer or deputy:	Mick Hayward	☎ 01643 332220
Monitoring Officer or deputy:	Julien Browne	☎ 01643 332154
Head of Procurement or deputy:	Gurpreet Anand	☎ 01643 332450

Background papers

Description of document	Location	Date
Report to Cabinet: "Carers Advisory and Support Services Contract Awards – Gateway Three"	Report available on the Council website: www.medway.gov.uk	Report to Cabinet 16 December 2008