

CABINET REPORT

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Commissioning Strategy for Carers' Support Services in Camden (SP/2024/06)	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Cabinet	DATE: 9 th October 2024
STRATEGIC CONTEXT <p>We Make Camden is our joint vision for the borough, developed in partnership with our community. Supporting Carers help meets the ambitions of this vision by better enabling them to feel supported in their community, prevent social isolation and to live well in their communities.</p> <p>The Way We Work is the Council's response to We Make Camden. This report helps meet the commitments to enable strong and open communities where everyone can contribute, and by supporting Carers to live well, and age well in Camden.</p> <p>The Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance gives clear duties to local authorities to identify unpaid Carers, assess their needs and prevent, reduce and delay future need for support. These duties have influenced the Supporting People Connecting Communities strategy¹ which aims to ensure that Camden residents, including Carers, live independently in the place they call home, doing the things that matter to them. It has specific aims to ensure Carers feel valued and supported.</p> <p>The Health and Care Act 2022 gives clear duties to the NHS at both national and local Integrated Care Board (ICB) level to ensure engagement and involvement of carers on a strategic level and in commissioning decisions. It also makes it a duty to ensure that carers are involved in discussions and planning about the person they care for and consideration is given to their ability to provide and continue to provide care.</p>	
SUMMARY OF REPORT <p>This report outlines the plans to commission a new Carers service in Camden. The current Carer support contracts end on 31 March 2025 and the proposal is to commission a new service for Carers that supports identification of Carers, increased access to a range of support including advice, information, statutory</p>	

¹ <https://www.camden.gov.uk/supporting-people-connecting-communities>

Carer assessments and peer support to enable Carers to remain connected to their community. Following a period of co-design with Carers to produce a Camden Carers Action Plan, the service will reflect the voice of Carers and embody the principles of the action plan. The service will be based around a neighbourhood footprint in line with the developing health and care integrated neighbourhood teams and neighbourhood networks.

The contract will run for four years from 1 April 2025 with an option to extend for an additional three years to March 2032 at a total cost for the seven years of £6,314,798.

Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information

No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.

Contact Officer:

Stephen Bahooshy,
Strategic Commissioner
Adult Social Care Strategy and Commissioning
5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG
Tel: 020 7974 3470
Stephen.Bahooshy@camden.gov.uk

RECOMMENDATIONS

That, having considered the results of the equalities impact assessment at Appendix 1, and having due regard to the obligations set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, Cabinet is asked to agree:

1. The procurement strategy as set out in this report for a Carers Service contract with an initial contract term of four (4) years, plus an additional three (3) year extension for an estimated aggregate value (including extensions) of £6,314,798.
2. That the award of contract is delegated to the Executive Director Adults and Health.

Signed:



Date: 26/09/2024

CABINET REPORT

1. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Camden has a strong reputation regionally and nationally for commissioning high quality support services for unpaid Carers who live in Camden or provide care for someone who lives in Camden. The current Carer support service contracts will end in March 2025 and this report forms the commissioning strategy for a future Carers support service in Camden.
- 1.2. The 2021 Census estimates that 14,605 Carers live in Camden. This means around 7% of Camden's population are providing some level of unpaid care and support, most often for their family or friends. Caring can have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of a Carer and a 2021 report published by Public Health England concluded there was mounting evidence that unpaid caring should be considered a social determinant of health; and that people with caring responsibilities often experience poor mental and physical health and have their own unmet care needs². In acknowledgement of the impact of caring, the Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance gives clear duties to local authorities to identify unpaid Carers and assess their needs.
- 1.3. Over the last 18 months, officers have been working with Carers in Camden to co-produce a Carers Action Plan for adult Carers who care for adults in Camden. Carers have identified core principles that should be at the heart of how health, social care and the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) relate to Carers. They have identified priority areas that have been built into an action plan that identifies where health and social care services could better support Carers. The action plan will transform over time in line with changing priorities. A multi-agency Carer Partnership Board will oversee the plan and ensure outcomes are achieved.
- 1.4. The knowledge and ambitions derived through the co-production of the Carers Action Plan have also informed a new model for Carer support services. Carers' views have been key in considering how the future services will be structured. The new service reflects the values that the Council and health partners place on the contribution Carers make, and their commitment to supporting and empowering Carers.
- 1.5. The current Carer services are delivered by two providers that offer a wide range of support including statutory Carer assessments, information, advice, support at hospital discharge, Carer health and wellbeing checks and a range of activities that offer Carers time away from their caring role. Digital support has been an increasing feature since the pandemic.
- 1.6. The substantive Carers service contract commenced on 1 April 2018 and, with permitted extensions, will run for seven years until 31 March 2025. Despite challenging periods during the pandemic when services were adapted and

^{2 2} <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/caring-as-a-social-determinant-of-health-review-of-evidence>

moved online, the service has consistently delivered positive outcomes for Carers.

- 1.7. The second contract offering digital support for Carers commenced during the pandemic in 2020 as an alternative option for Carer support when face to face support was challenging. This contract has been extended to 31 March 2025 to align the two contracts in readiness for a new combined service.
- 1.8. The Carer support services offer a menu of interventions and Carers speak highly of them, but demand for some of these services is high which can cause delay to support or limit access. Some services are not tailored enough, and appeal to some Carers but not to others. For example, male Carers draw on many of the services far less than female Carers.
- 1.9. Some of the key themes arising from discussions with Carers on how the service could improve include:
 - Identifying and providing support to seldom heard groups and those currently not accessing the services.
 - Quick and easy access to key information that Carers need to fulfil their caring role or maintain the caring role alongside other life commitments.
 - Bringing support closer to home.
 - Maximising choice and flexibility in the support offered.
 - Reducing waiting times for key services.

Consideration has been given to how these themes can be built into a new Carer service contract and how the service can maintain a strong Carer voice in the delivery and design of the service.

- 1.10. Support services for Carers are not in scope for any Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) savings.

2. PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1. The natural end of the Carers service contracts provides an opportunity to redesign the service. The proposal is for a single Carer support service combining all Carers support so that the digital approach sits within the wider Carer support offer. The service will operate on a neighbourhood footprint in line with the changing health and care landscape and will run from 1 April 2025 for four years with an option to extend for an additional three years to 31 March 2032.
- 2.2. To ensure that the service remains responsive to Carers' voices and priorities within the Carers Action Plan, it will be a requirement that a joint review is undertaken during year three of the contract between the provider, Council and Carers, and any recommendations will be embedded into the contract during the extension period.

CABINET REPORT

2.3. Based on feedback from Carers and colleagues, some of the key elements of the new Carer Support service will:

- Be a key partner on the Carers Partnership Board and in developing and implementing the Carers Action Plan.
- Work in partnership with the integrated neighbourhood teams and local community to deliver services in each neighbourhood.
- Develop an equalities strategy to ensure the service reaches all of Camden's Carer populations and offers tailored interventions and culturally competent engagement.
- Co-produce the service with Carers to ensure services are flexible and responsive.
- Embed best practice into ways of working by taking a holistic, strengths-based, trauma-informed and flexible approach.
- Support Carers at hospital discharge, raise awareness and embed good practice of Carer support with Camden health partners.
- Provide a digital offer that will improve the reach of the service.
- Ensure access to information that Carers need, in the format that works for them to enable Carers to self-serve where appropriate.
- Advocate on behalf of carers, individually and in general as required, for example with housing, welfare benefits etc.
- Undertake statutory Carers' assessment, support planning and reviews and work in partnership with the Council to ensure that these Care Act duties are conducted in a timely manner
- Prioritise health and wellbeing, undertake Carer Health and Wellbeing checks.
- Offer peer support, befriending services and Carer focussed training.
- Offer a Young Adult Carer (YAC) service which includes peer support, creating opportunities for YAC to reach their full potential.
- Work in partnership with Adult and Children's services to support development of the Young Carers Strategy (for carers under 18 years) with particular reference to the transition of young carers to the YAC service
- Develop partnerships to deliver employment support targeted at Carers, enabling them to achieve paid, competitive and sustained employment around their caring role.

2.4. Service Outcomes

2.4.1. The overarching strategic outcomes framework for the new service will be developed through a combination of the Good Life Camden framework, Supporting People Connecting Communities, and the 'I' statements developed by Think Local, Act Personal (TLAP) in 2019 as part of the LGA review of the national High Impact Change Model (HICM)³.

2.4.2. The service will enable Carers to be better supported using a strengths-based approach that will be aligned to the integrated neighbourhood and the Carers Action Plan. This will create opportunities for improved joined up working with key partners and

³ TLAP website – [Home - Making It Real](#).

community groups. Impact will be measured through collaborative quality assurance processes to be co-designed with the new provider and key partners.

2.4.3. Social Value outcomes will include a minimum of 3 apprenticeships over the life of the contract, 2 work placements, offering 3 community and cultural activities per annum and ensuring that at least 5% of the contract value is spent with local businesses or community organisations.

3. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

3.1. The following options were considered in relation to this commissioning strategy:

Option 1: Reprocure services in their current form with no re-design

Although the services would continue with minimal disruption, this option would not bring opportunity for innovation or a commitment to fully align with emerging neighbourhood partnerships and structures which are key elements of the Carers Action Plan. Although the service will be outsourced, making it able to reduce barriers of access for Carers, there would be a reduced focus on redesign and making best use of resources

Option 2: Re-design, combine the two contracts into one service and procure a new combined service

The combining of the two Carer services will require a re-design and will provide greater opportunity to invigorate this service area and meet evolving needs. Outsourcing the service will most likely lead to bids from the VCS sector, which is known to reduce barriers to access for Carers to seek support.

A competitive process will allow the Council to choose the provider with the most effective approach and offer value for money. There is greater potential to offer more dynamic services that works in partnership with neighbourhood statutory and community services and embeds the voice of Carers in design and delivery.

Option 3: In-source Carers Services

This option would bring Carer services in-house to be delivered primarily by Camden's Adult Social Care directorate. Carers would be directly supported by Camden Council. Although there is potential to have a greater focus on Carers within the Camden workforce and alignment with developing integrated neighbourhood teams, there is potential that the focus on Carers will be lost and priority shifts to the cared for person. Most importantly, Carers would lose their access to an independent support service, which could be a barrier to access. In addition, to replicate the range of services available through a commissioned service would require much greater investment alongside the financial impact of TUPE or redundancies.

CABINET REPORT

Option 4: Do nothing and do not commission a Carer service

This option would allow the current Carer contracts to end on the 31st March 2025. The Council would be obligated to maintain Carer support as directed by the Care Act 2014. The outcome of this option would be the equivalent of in-sourcing Carer services as in Option 3.

- 3.2** Option 2 is the recommended option as this would bring the potential for greater innovation, redesign and best use of resources. The service will be tendered through a competitive process with Price/Quality Split of 40/60. The quality aspect of the evaluation will focus on asking how the applicant will deliver key elements of the service such as reaching under-represented groups of residents, effective partnership working, using resident feedback to continually improve the service and staffing model and skills. Residents will form part of the evaluation panel who will mark tender submissions and will develop their own question to ask submitting organisations. The remaining 40% of the evaluation will be based on price ensuring value for money and an efficient service.
- 3.3** Local suppliers will be encouraged to participate in the procurement process and the process will be designed to ensure there are no unnecessary barriers or restrictions in place which may deter local small and medium organisations from participating.

4. WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

4.1 Please see table below outlining the key risks and mitigation measures.

Risk	Impact	Mitigation strategy
Low Market response to tender.	Lack of competition may affect quality.	Ensure a streamlined procurement with an emphasis on quality.
Contract is partially funded from the Better Care Fund (BCF), national funding is allocated by NHS England on a bi-annual basis and is then subject to Council and ICB jointly agreed spending plans.	If funding is reduced or withdrawn the contract will be severely impacted and would need to reduce and/or end some elements of the service.	The contract will include a clause that stipulates it is dependent on continued funding streams and that financial and contract arrangements can be altered in line with appropriate notice periods.
Assumption that the BCF budgets will be uplifted on an annual basis by 2.5%.	If there are no increases to the BCF budget, there is a risk that the General Fund budget will need to absorb the whole uplift,	The uplifts are small relatively small amounts, but the contract terms will enable the Council to reduce the budget if funding is unavailable from the BCF.
Increasing inflationary costs.	Possible reduction in service provision.	Commissioners will work with the provider to ensure services

		are deliverable within budget and include an uplift clause in the contract.
--	--	---

5. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. Officers have been working to co-design the Carers Action Plan since Spring 2023. The knowledge gained from this co-design has fed into the commissioning strategy. In addition, a number of focus groups with specific groups of Carers, such as male Carers, LGBTQ+ Carers, Bengali Carers has also taken place to bring in the voice of seldom heard Carers. A bi-annual Carers survey (Survey of Adult Carers in England) led by NHS Digital offered further insight on how Carers in Camden experienced the support and services available to them.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS (EQIA)

- 6.2 A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken to review the impact of both the Carers Action Plan and the prospective Carers service.
- 6.3 The Carers service will likely engage with people with protected characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religion, age, sexuality, disability. Providers will be asked to demonstrate their ability to take into account individuals' unique identities and addresses disparities that arise through intersectionality. It is clear from co-design of the Carers Action Plan that the current Carer service is not always easily accessible to all Carer communities. The contract specification will require the successful provider to develop an equality plan to ensure that the service identifies and is accessible to all Carers including those with protected characteristics. This plan will be monitored by officers and progress will be reported to the Camden Borough Carers Partnership Board.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The Council is required to carry out its procurement activities in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders ("CSOs") and Public Contract Regulations 2015, as amended, ("PCR").
- 7.2 Legal Services have reviewed this report in light of CSOs and the PCR.
- 7.3 The report relates to a procurement strategy to commission a contract for Carer Support Services which will run for four years from 1 April 2025 with an option to extend for an additional three years to March 2032 at a total cost for the seven years of £6,314,798. In with CSO 3.4, given the estimated

CABINET REPORT

contract value is over £5 million it is required that the proposed strategy is considered and the final decision of approval is granted by the Cabinet.

- 7.4 Legal Services have assessed the strategy set out in this report and consider the recommendations set out in this report and consider them to be in compliance with the CSOs and the PCR.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. This report seeks pre-tender approval for the procurement strategy for Carer services in Camden. The proposed service is scheduled for an initial term of four years, with an option to extend for an additional three years, totalling a maximum period of seven years. The initial annual contract value for this service is £836,682, with a total potential contract value of £6,314,798, inclusive of the extension period and a projected 2.5% annual inflationary uplift.
- 8.2. The 2024/25 budget for the Carer's support services includes £322,407 from the General Fund, £333,593 from the Better Care Fund (BCF) (partnership funding with the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB), £62,000 from the BCF for digital support, £23,275 for the Dementia Action Alliance, and £75,000 from the Better Care discharge fund. This budget is sufficient to cover the proposed annual cost of the contract. However, it should be noted that the usage of BCF funds is subject to a detailed annual review and agreement with the ICB. If there is a reduction in BCF funding, or insufficient BCF inflationary funding, then the contract delivery would need to be reviewed to reflect the new funding envelope. There is also an implied assumption that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy will include an inflationary increase of 2.5% and that there are no savings requirement applied to this contract. If funding is not available either the contract delivery would need to be reshaped or reductions elsewhere would need to be identified.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Council's neighbourhood vision means that support is delivered to Carers and residents nearer to their homes and that our services better utilise existing local infrastructure such as libraries and community centres. Consequently, moving towards a neighbourhood model will better enable people accessing services and employees to reduce their carbon footprint because they will have to travel less, or be able to walk to services. In addition to this, the service will be contractually encouraged to recruit staff who live in Camden.
- 9.2 The successful provider would also be contractually encouraged to digitise their administrative functions in order to reduce the amount of paper used, and where paper is required, they must use sustainable sources of paper and recycle their waste. Furthermore, they will be prohibited from the use of single use plastic in the office and during events / activities for Carers in Camden, e.g., the use of plastic cups, cutlery etc.

- 9.3 The service will need to respond to the wishes of Carers in Camden, however we will encourage the development of a Carers gardening project, to better support young adult Carers (and older Carers) in growing their own fruit and vegetables and how they can take practicable steps in their own lives to reduce, reuse and recycle, thus making Camden a cleaner and brighter place for all.
- 9.4 The service will provide training for unpaid Carers in Camden, this would include on issues such as how to reduce energy bills, improve energy efficiency and how to improve resilience towards excessive heat.

10. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Key milestones	Indicative Date (or range)
Cabinet Decision	9 th October 2024
Tender advert	21 st October 2024
Deadline for submission of tenders	3 rd December 2024
Tender evaluation and clarification period	4 th December 2024-13 th December 2024
Contract Award (TG2) – CPB	January 2025
Contract Award Report – Councillor Wright	January 2025
Winning Tenderer’s Social Value Delivery Plan logged	January 2025
Alcatel (10-day standstill procedure)	Mid-January 2025
Contract signature / sealing	February 2025
Transition to the new arrangements	February 2025
Contract start date	1st April 2025

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – EQIA

REPORT ENDS