

Public Report
Delegated Officer Decision

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Delegated Officer Decision – 28 July 2026

Report Title

Re-commission of a Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Spicer, Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Grant Terms associated with the Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service reach their term on 31 March 2027.

The service makes a positive contribution to the Council's duty under the Care Act 2014 to promote wellbeing and prevent, reduce and delay the need for care. The people who benefit from the service are living in their own homes in the community.

The Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service also supports unpaid carers, in line with the commitments made in the Borough That Cares, All-Age Carers Strategy 2026-31, and people who are experiencing the symptoms of dementia.

The Service is well established in Rotherham.

This report outlines the proposal for the Council to continue to secure the services going forward under a further grant agreement arrangement.

Recommendations

1. That approval be given to commence a competitive grant process for the re-commissioning of a Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service under a grant funded service level agreement. The Grant opportunity will be offered in accordance with the provisions of the Rotherham Compact, prior to the

termination of the current arrangement on 31 March 2027 to secure a provider to continue the service for a period of 3 years until 31 March 2030.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Record of Officer Executive Decision

Appendix 2 Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service – Survey Summary

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Re-commission of a Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service

1. Background

1.1 The Carer Support Worker and Dementia Café Service was developed in 2010, following Cabinet approval in 2020. The service is currently delivered via a grant agreement, and over this period has been successfully provided by two local VCS providers.

1.2 Output:

This service receives around 230 new referrals per year, up from 160 in 2022/23. In 2025/26, the service provided:

- 1,435 Dementia Café attendances at 65 Cafes
- 130 new attendees
- 991 hours of 1:1 support with carers - 385 hrs face to face interventions, 198 hrs of telephone support, 203 hours of home visits, 205 hrs of support via email and letter.
- 32 volunteers providing 1787 volunteer support hours at Dementia Cafes.

1.3 Objectives:

The overall service objective is to support unpaid carers in their role and aims to prevent carer fatigue and breakdown by offering:

- Respite from their role.
- Peer support.
- Practical advice and information on coping.
- Opportunities to identify carer stress and prevent escalation.
- Access to specialised support.
- Regular, sustained and flexible contact.
- Opportunities for quality time with the person they care for in an appropriately supported environment.
- Personalised service tailored to the needs of the unpaid carer.

1.4 Match funding and community activity:

The current provider has supplemented the grant monies to further develop each service with funds raised through their charity fund-raising activity.

They have actively fund raised to provide additional activities and services such as outings for carers and the people with dementia and also provided a hardship fund for carers. In addition, they currently deliver a complementary service 'Carers Time for U days', currently funded from £50,000 raised by one of their volunteers.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service grant agreement reaches its current term on 31 March 2027 and there are currently no ongoing arrangements in place for the continuation of this service.
- 2.2 The service contributes to the commitments made in the Borough that Cares All Age Strategy 2026-2031 and forms part of our offer to Carers living in the Borough and also supports people who are experiencing the symptoms of dementia.
- 2.3 The Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules allow for grant applications to be invited from the Voluntary and Community Sector alongside the terms of the Rotherham Compact.
- 2.4 The grant offered will be in line with the allocated budget of £97,485 per annum.
- 2.5 By offering the Grant to an established and experienced VCS provider, with a substantial understanding of the needs and challenges facing people with dementia, it is expected that they will provide the required service alongside their usual business and enhance the offer, over and above what is funded, with additional resources and expertise.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 **Option 1** (not recommended) – Undertake a competitive procurement process on the open market.
- 3.2 **Option 2** (recommended) – Invite the local voluntary and community sector to participate in a competitive grant process via the Rotherham Compact.

3.3 Recommended proposal – Option 2:

For reasons detailed at 1.4 and 2.4 above, prior to the termination of the current grant agreement on 31 March 2027 and in accordance with the provisions of the Rotherham Compact, the Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service be offered via a competitive grant process to the local voluntary and community sector market, to secure an ongoing provider for a period of 3 years until 31 March 2030.

- 3.4 Through a competitive grant process undertaken in compliance with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and the Rotherham Compact, applicants will be questioned on their track record and their ability to:
 - Engage with all people, including those with disabilities or disadvantage.
 - Collect and analyse data and use this to effect change.
 - Utilise and manage volunteers to expand the service reach.
 - Engage local citizens in the work of the service.
 - Train and manage staff.

- Understand local Safeguarding Procedures and how they will safeguard those people they come into contact with.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 A survey undertaken in June and July 2026 received 74 responses from carers, people living with dementia, professionals, volunteers and community representatives. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating the significant value of both the Dementia Café and the Carers Support Worker Service to local people affected by dementia.
- 4.2 The Dementia Cafés were consistently described as welcoming, friendly, inclusive and supportive. Respondents highlighted the café's role in reducing social isolation, providing opportunities to build friendships, share experiences and access information, while also improving wellbeing through social activities, music and entertainment. Attendees particularly valued the supportive atmosphere created by staff and volunteers, who were frequently praised for their compassion, knowledge and commitment. Many respondents described the cafés as a "lifeline" and an essential source of community support.
- 4.3 The one-to-one Carers Support Worker Service was also highly regarded. Respondents emphasised the importance of personalised support for carers, particularly during periods of crisis, uncertainty and bereavement. Support was reported to provide practical advice, emotional reassurance, signposting to wider services and assistance with accessing benefits and other forms of help. Those who had used the service described it as extremely helpful and credited it with improving their confidence, resilience and ability to continue in their caring role.
- 4.4 Overall, the survey identified strong evidence that these services help people living with dementia and their carers remain connected, informed and supported within their communities. The clear message from respondents was that the services make a meaningful difference to quality of life and should be sustained for the future.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 If agreed, the grant opportunity will be published in August 2026 and will be awarded in October 2026 to allow any transition to a new organisation to take place by 1 April 2027.
- 5.2 A further Officer Decision will be recorded to award the grant to the successful applicant once the process is completed, if approved.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The Dementia Café Grant to Making Space is funded by revenue budget and there is £97,485 available on cost centre 124710.

- 6.2 As the recommendation is to proceed with the Service via a grant agreement, there are no direct procurement implications as grants do not fall within the scope of procurement legislation (Procurement Act 2023).

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The application to the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health to commence a competitive grant process for the re-commissioning of a Dementia Café and Carers Support Worker Service under a grant funded service level agreement is appropriate.

The proposal is for the grant option to be offered in accordance with the provisions of the Rotherham Compact, prior to the termination of the current arrangement (which takes place on 31 March 2027) in order to secure a provider to continue the service for a period of three (3) years until 31 March 2030.

- 7.2 The grant-funded service in question is the Dementia Café Service and Carer Support Worker which is currently secured via a grant agreement operating since 2020. The service is currently provided by a local VCS provider. Section 1.3 of this report explains the motivation for the provision of these important services in providing support and respite for the carers.
- 7.3 The proposal described in this report is to undertake a competitive grant process to continue the service following the expiry of the current service 1 March 2027. The process will be regulated in accordance with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and the Rotherham Compact.
- 7.4 A suitable grant agreement will need to be identified and circulated to applicant service providers, then agreed by the successful provider and signed off with assistance from Legal Services. This agreement will contain all the necessary provisions to enable continuation of the service while protecting the integrity of the grant, including remedies for the Council in the event of service defaults or grant misuse.
- 7.5 Under the Council's Constitution and Contract Procurement Rules the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health has powers to permit the grant funded service provision process outlined in this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no implications for the Council. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE), may apply from the existing provider to the new provider should they not be successful. The Council would not be directly involved in this process but would ensure that the TUPE information is available at the point of publishing the grant opportunity.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The services outlined in this report make a positive contribution in supporting vulnerable adults in Rotherham. As the report recommends continuing the services long term there are no negative implications envisaged.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 The recommendation to sustain the services outlined in this report has positive implications for people with protected characteristics including people with disabilities, mental ill health and unpaid carers.
- 10.2 The service is expected to provide equalities data as part of the contract monitoring requirements.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The carbon impact assessment undertaken in 2020 demonstrated minimal impact. There are no further implications from this recommendation.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The services described in this report complement those provided by our health partners and assist in reducing demand on more formal services.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) may apply which may affect an organisation's ability to put forward a financially viable application to provide the service. Without any effective engagement with interested parties, then the grant opportunity may fail due to insufficient interest.
- 13.2 In order to mitigate the risk of a lack of interested bids TUPE information will also be sought to clarify the position. Our commissioning intentions will be shared with the market prior to advertising the grant to let potential providers know about the Rotherham context, requirements and expectations to encourage credible bids.

14. Accountable Officers

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