

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
2	Date:	16 June 2014
3	Title:	The Future of Carers' Support Services
4	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5 Summary

Earlier this year DLT endorsed a report detailing the need to undertake a comprehensive review of carers services. The review was commissioned to establish the future requirements in the delivery of support to primary carers across the Borough of Rotherham.

This report will set out ways in which we can improve support to carers in Rotherham including:

- How we can improve the quality of information we provide to carers through the Council Website.
- An analysis of support services delivered from Carers Corner and options for the future delivery of this function.
- Ways in which the Local Authority could maximise partnership working with Health and third Sector Organisations in the future delivery of services to support carers.

6 Recommendations

Cabinet Members are asked to:

Receive this report and consider the options for ways in which support services to carers could be delivered in the future. The options contained in this report reflect the outcome of the recent Scrutiny Review undertaken on Carers Support Services.

- **Endorse Option 3 for the reconfiguration of support services delivered by the Carers Corner function. This will maximise ways in which we meet the needs of hard to reach carers living in the Borough of Rotherham whilst still maintaining a Town Centre location with the potential for increased footfall by co-locating the service with Age UK .**
- **Endorse proposals for improvements to the range of information provided to primary carers on the Councils website and ways in which links with Health and 3rd Sector partner agencies can be improved.**

7 Proposals and Details

Background Information

The census in 2011 shows that Rotherham continues to have a higher rate of people with limiting long-term illness than the national average of 17.6% - 56,588 (21.9% of the population). It also revealed that Rotherham's population is ageing faster than the national average with a 16% increase in the number of people aged over 65 (from 2001 – 2011). Those aged over 85 increased at over twice this rate (+34.6%). This population profile impacts on the numbers of people needing care now and potentially in the future.

In 2011, 31,001 people in Rotherham said that they provided unpaid care to family members, friends or neighbours with either long-term physical or mental ill-health/disability or problems related to old age. The number of carers has increased only slightly from 30,284 in 2001 but still equates to 12% of the population and is higher than the national average of 10%. One noticeable change is that compared to 2001 fewer people are now providing 1 to 19 hours of care a week (19,069 in 2001 down to 17,400 in 2011) but more are providing care for 20 or more hours per week. The number of people providing 20 to 49 hours care has increased (3,828 to 4,736), as has the number providing 50 or more hours (7,387 to 8,865).

Given the backdrop of this information, the demographic trends emerging and the future legislative requirements that will be imposed on the Local Authority in April 2015 (The Care Bill) there is a need for the Local Authority to consider ways in which it can improve the ways in which it supports primary carers in Rotherham.

Information, Advice and Support to Carers

This part of the review provides an evaluation of the ways in which carers receive information:

- Through **Carers Support Officers**
- Via the **Council Website**
- At **Carers Corner**

From the analysis undertaken carers are positive about the range of information and support they receive from **Carers Support Officers** and particularly like the workshops delivered in local communities at health centres, community centres and recently at Rotherham District General Hospital. Feedback from staff attending the recent event at the hospital stated that the session had been particularly useful in meeting eight carers who had only just started to provide support to a family member in a caring capacity. This enabled the staff to offer appropriate levels of information, offer support to the carers and signpost them to health and 3rd sector support services to aid them in their caring role.

At advice sessions in the local community staff have found the number of carers attending these events has been greater than the day to day footfall to carer's corner. Average attendance at these sessions has been approximately 10 to 15 people at each session. This is in the main because carers do not have to travel into central Rotherham to seek this support it is

provided in their own locality. This enables carers to plan for the support of their family member in the knowledge that they are able to attend the event safely and can return home quickly in the event of an emergency. Staff have advised during consultation sessions with senior management that these sessions should be increased as carers have stated that they find the sessions informative and accessible to attend as they are in their local community.

It is proposed that these sessions be increased across all local communities in Rotherham by reconfiguring other elements of carers support services to increase staff time and availability to carry out this function. These sessions could be delivered in a variety of settings to enable officers to advise and support carers to better effect as follows:

- Sessions in Council Service Centres across the Borough
- Dedicated sessions in health centres, GP surgeries and the hospital
- Increase the number of carers receiving an assessment and support services which will be a legal requirement once the Care Bill is enacted.
- From discussions with colleagues in EDS it is possible to hold sessions in libraries and the mobile library service. The latter would be an opportunity to engage with hard to reach carers in outlying areas of the Borough. EDS would be receptive to this new way of working if this proposal was endorsed.
- These sessions could be advertised in the local free press on a weekly basis and on the Council website at no cost to the Council.
- This approach would enable the Council to have a **“Virtual Carer’s Corner”** in all areas of the Borough reaching a wider audience and potentially providing greater levels of support to carers as a result.

Review of Council Website

This review has found that it is difficult to search for information relating to support to carers and that there is a need for this part of the website to be updated. This is a good time to be undertaking this task as the Council website is currently under review corporately and scheduled to be updated in 2014. Discussions at the task and finish group have concluded that the website needs to be more interactive with a suggestion that this part of the website be **rebadged as “Carers Corner”** with interactive buttons that can be clicked to access a range of information about carers support services or for signposting to health and 3rd sector organisations for additional information and support.

If endorsed this proposal would help build closer working arrangements with external organisations who also undertake a support role to carers in Rotherham. The main benefit however will be that the Council provides information to carers in an easy and accessible manner via this method.

Information Provided by Partner Agencies

A recent survey undertaken by Health colleagues across GP practices in Rotherham also identified ways in which we could improve the way in which we provide information and advice to carers as follows:

- Dedicated notice boards in GP surgeries for carers. GP practices are receptive to this idea and would be happy to post information on our behalf
- Provide support group sessions to patient participation groups around specific long term condition management. This could be undertaken in partnership with health and 3rd sector colleagues to evaluate the impact on carers and how they can be supported in their role.

Carers Corner Review

During the last year there has been a serious decline in the number of people visiting this centre for support. During this period 95% of visits have related to advice on welfare benefits. As an indicator between June 2013 and September 2013 of this year the Centre only received 25 carer enquiries which equates to 2 carer enquiries per week. Clearly this level of footfall is not sustainable and this report sets out options to address this issue.

The staffing of the centre continues to be fraught with difficulties due to the inadequate budget that has been set to manage this service. This has resulted in staff from other services having to be deployed to the centre to ensure it can open and can be staffed in a safe manner. This has had a detrimental impact on other services reducing their capacity to carry out their day to day activities, decreasing staff productivity and reducing our ability to work with carers in the outlying areas of Rotherham. This approach to staffing this centre is no longer sustainable and the following options are therefore proposed for the consideration of DLT. (See Appendix 1 of this report)

Option One – Invest in Current Service

To resolve the staffing deficits in this service would require additional funding for this service of £50,658. This would ensure that we maintained staffing levels at an appropriate level at all times to meet health and safety requirements. This level of investment would alleviate the current need for good will on the part of other teams called upon to provide cover and provide stability and enhanced quality of support to carers. Staffing levels will be adequate to provide a service from Monday to Friday during normal working office hours.

This option is not achievable given the current financial situation within the Council

Option Two – A Virtual Carers' Corner

Close Carers Corner and deliver advice and support sessions on a Borough wide basis through Council Service Centres, Community Centres, Health Centres, and Libraries (including mobile libraries) and create “**virtual carers corners**” throughout the Borough. These sessions would be scheduled a year in advance and staffed by Carers Support Officers and a Carers Support

Services Coordinator. This would require a new post to be developed from the existing staffing budget with the potential for financial efficiencies. This will require two part time posts currently on Band F and I to be disestablished and a new full time post created at a level of Band G. Both these posts will be vacant from the end of March 2014 which will assist in these transitional arrangements.

These sessions would be advertised on the Council Website, through the posting of notices in the buildings to be used for these sessions and by advertising in the local free press. This advertising can be achieved at minimal cost.

The sessions could also be undertaken in conjunction with 3rd Sector and Health colleagues thus providing a one stop shop form of support and information to carers.

This option will provide the Local Authority with greater flexibility in reaching out to carers in historically hard to reach areas. It will also free up Carers Support Officer time to undertake assessments of Carers needs which will become a statutory requirement when the Care Bill is enacted without the need to increase staffing levels to meet these requirements. Financial efficiencies of £52,773 would be achieved if this option is endorsed. A breakdown of these efficiencies is as follows:

Building Costs - £41,113

Staff Grade Changes and reconfiguration – £19,652

Total = £60,765

Option Three – Relocate Carers' Corner

Move Carers Corner to the Age UK information and advice shop in the Old Town Hall Building. The current footfall arrangements at the current building are not sustainable and by co-locating to a building with Age UK it is anticipated footfall will increase. The building will be better suited for the delivery of training and support sessions to carers and ensure existing support groups using Carers Corner can also be accommodated. Staffing levels required would be for one staff member to be present at any given time due to the presence of Age UK staff, thus meeting health and safety requirements and the rest of their time would be spent supporting sessions across the Borough of Rotherham in conjunction with Carers Support Officers. It is proposed that staff would be available for 5 mornings per week, Monday to Friday to enable **a reduced version of Option Two to be developed alongside this newly reconfigured service.**

This would require a new post to coordinate these activities to be developed from the existing staffing budget with the potential for financial efficiencies. This will require two part time posts on Band H and I to be disestablished and a new full time post created at a level of Band G. The allocated staffing budget will be adequate to support this option, produce financial efficiencies and reduce demands on other staff groups to support Carers Corner.

This option has been discussed with Age UK who are receptive to this joint working arrangement. However, the existing Age UK accommodation would

not support this service model. They have proposed to relocate to another unit in the Old Town Hall if this initiative is to be supported, with an estimated annual rental cost of £20,000 plus procurement costs for utilities etc.

The anticipated costs associated with this proposed development are as follows:

Annual rental costs - £10,000

Utility /procurement requirements – £19,323 indicative costs

Staffing – No additional cost with some potential for financial efficiencies if this proposal is endorsed.

This Option will provide an indicative efficiency for the Council on building and procurement costs of approximately £22,790 and £11,660 on the staffing budget. A potential financial efficiency of £34,450 to the Council.

This option is a cost effective approach to support carers and will deliver service improvements in support to carers in hard to reach areas on a Borough wide basis.

8 Finance

If the option to close Carers Corner or relocate the service is adopted financial efficiencies can be achieved as detailed in Section 7 of this report.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

Rotherham has a significant number of carers, many of whom are older people who may themselves have underlying health conditions, and with an ageing population it is vital that support is in place to ensure that carers maintain a good quality of life. This review has established a range of options for the delivery of support services required to assist carers in Rotherham to carry out their caring role.

Through access to appropriate and timely information carers will be enabled to access support services which meet any specific needs they have as carers. This will assist the Local Authority to reduce potential risks in support arrangements to customers in receipt of support by their primary carer and the breakdown of these care arrangements.

10 Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Care Act 2015, when implemented, will reform the law relating to care and support for adults and the law relating to support for carers, it is currently progressing through parliament and will impose new statutory duties upon the Local Authority once enacted. Currently our performance on providing information to carers is excellent however we need to increase the number of assessments and support services to meet the needs of carers and fulfil our statutory obligations. Option Three, if adopted, will free up Carers Support Officer time to attend community based support sessions and undertake additional assessments of carers needs.

RMBC Corporate Plan Priority:

Ensuring care and protection are available for those people who need it most.

- Carers get the help and support they need
- People in need get help earlier before reaching crisis
- People in need of support and care have more choice and control to help them live at home

11 Background Papers and Consultation

Background papers considered include:

Rotherham Carers' Charter 2013
Joint Action Plan for Carers 2013-16
2011 Census data

Consultation has been undertaken with Carers as part of the Scrutiny Review of Carers Support Services and with staff employed in carers support services. Trade Unions are aware of the review that has been undertaken and further consultation with Trade Unions will be required if the proposed reconfiguration of Carers Corner is endorsed.

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