

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet:

Directorate and Service Area:

Social and Community Services, Joint Commissioning

What is being assessed:

The impact of a reduction in spend on services for carers in Oxfordshire

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Kate Terroni, Deputy Director Joint Commissioning

Date of assessment:

August 2015

Summary of judgement:

In the context of continual financial pressure the council is proposing an option to reduce the overall funding for direct support services to carers over the life of the next contract. The reduction would be achieved via a tapering of the budget payable to providers over three years. The reduced budget represents a targeting of available resource on carers most at risk of breakdown, and those for whom timely support can prolong their caring role. The reduction would largely be achieved via rationalisation of current services into a more streamlined model, combined with the expectation that providers will attract additional funding to maintain the level of service throughout the life of the contract.

This option poses some risk in that carers have less opportunity to feed into the delivery and design of services which affect them, particularly as a result of decommissioning of the Carers Voice service. In order to mitigate this risk the council will explore alternative processes in the community for carers to feed their views to commissioners and service providers.

The requirement that providers raise additional funds to maintain an agreed level of service carries a risk of diminishing services if providers are not successful. This is partially mitigated by the meetings with current and potential providers in advance of the Invitation to Tender to discuss how this might be achieved.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

The purpose of this assessment is to consider the impact of a reduction in spend on services for carers in Oxfordshire.

This assessment fulfils the council's requirements under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 as set out below.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ("the 2010 Act") imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person's disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Social Value

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934¹ might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

Context / Background:

Oxfordshire County Council is continuing to face significant financial pressures, and the amount of savings required in the next few years will require widespread and fundamental organisational change. We propose to continue to provide support to carers beyond our statutory obligations. As well as universal information and advice to all carers through a variety of channels we will provide focused face to face support to the most vulnerable carers including those at risk of breakdown and those who have been caring for a significant number of years.

Existing arrangements have been reviewed and a proposed option developed for a rationalised service that is deliverable within the reduced budget available. Our aim is to make the best use of available resources so that we continue to address the priorities in the Carers Strategy 2013-16.

In addition the Care Act 2014 gives all carers a right to a social care assessment and a support plan to meet their eligible needs. Carers' needs and eligibility for support are now measured against national criteria and those meeting the criteria are to be offered a support plan which may include a Personal Budget.

To reflect the legislative changes Oxfordshire County Council has developed a more consistent and transparent policy and procedure to support carers. Newly commissioned carers' services must support this process.

Proposals:

The council currently provides a number of distinct services for carers broadly divided into the provision of information and advice, and the provision of direct

¹¹ [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

support. Opportunities exist to rationalise elements of the direct support services, and at the same time, enhance services to those carers who are at most risk of breakdown. This would involve simplifying the way peer support and training for carers is offered whilst offering a wider range of carers a means of making their voice heard in the development of services. This can be achieved without significantly compromising the availability of information and advice and without compromising the systems and services which support our implementation of the Care Act 2014. If taken forward, this proposed option would generate a saving in the region of £160,000.

The key elements of the new service would be:

- Provision of Information and Advice via website and telephone, quarterly newsletter, and leaflets;
- Processing of carers' self-assessments with telephone assistance if required and support planning;
- Face to Face support for vulnerable carers including assistance with self-assessment and support planning;
- Provision of short breaks through volunteer befriending;
- Specialist support for carers of people who have a mental health condition;
- Support for carers to meet together for mutual support, training and making their voice heard with commissioners and service providers;
- Provision of annual workshop for carers, commissioners, providers of services.

Evidence / Intelligence:

The development of the service proposal has been informed by an internal review of the current services looking at their effectiveness and value for money. The review made use of national reports, data from the National Carers Survey, views of providers and work done in other Local Authorities.

Alternatives considered / rejected:

Three options were considered:

1. Do nothing. This would mean that further cuts would need to be made in other areas of Adult Social Care in order to make up the shortfall.
2. Make all the proposed reductions at the start of the new contract. This was considered too risky and some services would be decommissioned abruptly leaving no time for alternative methods of supporting carers to be implemented
3. Make the proposed reductions on a tapered basis over three years allowing providers time to generate alternative funding to maintain the same level of service throughout the life of the contract. This method of implementing a reduction was preferred.

Impact Assessment:

We assess the impact of decisions on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on:

- Groups that share the nine protected characteristics
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
 - religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - marriage and civil partnership
- Rural communities
- Areas of deprivation

We also assess the impact on:

- Staff
- Other council services
- Other providers of council services
- Any other element which is relevant to the policy or proposed service change
- How it might improve the economic, social, and environmental of the area affected by the contract **if** the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

Groups with protected characteristics:

Age and Disability

The majority of carers in the county are aged 65 or over and a significant percentage of them have a long term health condition or disability themselves. This is also true of people cared for. If the chosen provider is not able to raise sufficient funds to maintain the required level of activity through the life of the contract, the impact of a reduction in direct services for carers will be felt most acutely by these sections of society. Other channels of information and support will be used wherever possible to maintain a consistent level of support for carers.

Risk	Mitigation
Reduction in awareness raising may result in fewer carers coming forward for support and under identification of carer safeguarding concerns	<p>Broader promotion of carers rights under the Care Act as part of the overall information and advice offer.</p> <p>Community Information Networks to be fully briefed with local information to identify and support carers including</p>

	<p>signposting to Carers Oxfordshire</p> <p>Providers of client based services required to assist with carer identification and signposting to Carers Oxfordshire</p> <p>Work with Adult Safeguarding Board to develop further campaigns in relation to carers.</p>
Carers wait longer for face to face support.	<p>Increases to service capacity will be funded in the first year.</p> <p>Provider to seek additional charitable funding to maintain increased capacity.</p> <p>Support directed to those in greatest need and those who can be enabled to continue most effectively.</p> <p>Emergency Carers Support Service provides peace of mind for carer and provides short term support for cared for.</p> <p>Increased information provision on telecare and other equipment.</p> <p>Community Information Networks to direct carers to locally based sources of support.</p>
Carers less able to meet with other carers for mutual support	<p>Peer Support groups modelled to be self-sustaining</p> <p>Targeted input into vulnerable groups as appropriate</p>
Carers less able to access training in their community	<p>Greater use made of existing peer support groups to deliver training</p> <p>Promotion of e-learning</p>
Carers feel unable to make their voice heard in the design and delivery of services which affect them	<p>Forum facility to be added to Carers Oxfordshire website</p> <p>Work with existing groups to provide channel for carers input into service design and delivery.</p>
Carers wait longer for short breaks befriending service	<p>Increases to service capacity will be funded in the first year to allow the provider to develop alternative ways to support service longer term.</p> <p>Provider to seek additional charitable</p>

	<p>funding to maintain extended service.</p> <p>Service targeted to those in greatest need.</p> <p>Service to promote use of telecare and other equipment to assist carers.</p> <p>Homecare service provides assistance for carers.</p> <p>Community Information Networks briefed to offer local information and sources of support.</p>
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At this stage, no differential impacts have been identified on groups that share protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership beyond those given above.

Rural Communities and Areas of Deprivation

The reduction in funding to support training and peer support is likely to be felt most acutely in rural areas and areas of particular deprivation where carers groups are least likely to become self-sustaining.

Risk	Mitigation
Carers less able to meet with other carers for support.	<p>Community Information Networks cover all areas and will be briefed to offer locally based support including information on local transport schemes.</p> <p>Promote greater use of alternative methods of contact, such as telephone and social media, as a means of accessing formal and informal support</p>
Carers less able to access training in their community	<p>Greater use of e-learning to be developed by provider</p> <p>Community Information Networks cover all areas and will be briefed to offer locally based support including information local transport schemes.</p>
Carers feel less able to make their voice heard in the design and delivery of services which affect them	<p>Forum facility to be added to Carers Oxfordshire website</p> <p>Greater use to be made of technology to communicate including social media.</p> <p>Existing groups widen the reach of carers' input into service design and</p>

	delivery.
Carers groups do not become self-sustaining as hoped and some cease to run, meaning carers do not have a local group to attend.	Community Information Networks will be briefed to offer local information and sources of support

Impact on Staff:

A reduction in carers' preventative services may result in carers reaching crisis point sooner, leading to increased workload for locality based operational staff finding replacement care at short notice. This can be partially mitigated by effective targeting of resources and referrals to specialist organisations.

Risk	Mitigation
Locality based operational staff will experience increased work load as wait time for community-based support lengthens and carers' situations become critical.	Support for carers targeted at a) those most vulnerable and b) those who can most effectively be supported to continue caring. Referrals to be made to Dementia Advisors and other specialised support where appropriate.
Increased call on professional staff caused by Carers' reduced access to specialist support services.	Focus remaining services on the most vulnerable carers Increase awareness of alternative services including signposting and as part of overall information and advice offer

Impact on other Council services:

There are no identified impacts on other council services.

Impact on providers:

Providers will be required to attract additional funding after year 1 of the contract to maintain the same level of service.

Risk	Mitigation
Need for external funding to support service delivery financially destabilises provider organisation	Commitment to gaining additional funding forms assessed part of tender evaluation. Information and advice offered by the Council on alternative sources of income.

Providers unable to raise sufficient funds over the life of the contract to sustain activity at constant level	<p>Commitment to gaining additional funding forms assessed part of tender evaluation.</p> <p>Information and advice offered by the Council on alternative sources of income.</p>
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Staff in provider organisations may be required to work under greater pressure and to target their time to those in greatest need. Some may find this unacceptably stressful and leave their role in which case their skills and experience will be lost. To mitigate this risk, providers will be briefed on the tapering budget and asked at tender stage to propose how they will maintain the level of service by attracting funds from elsewhere.

Risk	Mitigation
Staff providing all forms of direct support to carers will see an increase in their workload over the life of the contract as more carers come forward and level of need increases.	<p>Higher levels of funding provided in first year</p> <p>Provider may seek charitable funding to sustain activity levels</p>
Staff and volunteers providing short breaks will see increase in workload	<p>Funding to enable recruitment of more volunteers will be provided in the first year.</p> <p>Provider may establish new structure to support growth of the scheme</p> <p>Provider may seek charitable funding to further expand direct support of carers</p>
Staff will feel less able to meet the need as work load increases and may become disillusioned and leave the service.	<p>Funding to enable recruitment of more volunteers will be provided in the first year.</p> <p>Provider may establish new structure to support growth of the scheme</p> <p>Provider may seek charitable funding to sustain level of service.</p>

Social Value

If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?
 Basic information and advice on benefits and entitlements will be offered to carers' assisting them to maximise their income. Helping to maintain a cared for person at home maintains their economic activity in their community.

How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?

Not applicable

Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
Briefings to related services on need to embed needs of carers in their service provision	30 November 2015	Commissioning Manager
Briefing to potential providers on need for additional funding to maintain level of service	August 2015	Commissioning Manager
Develop a proposed implementation plan, including a communications plan	Ongoing	Commissioning Manager
Decision on whether to take forward this proposal	February 2016	Council Members
Review and update the SCIA	February 2016	Commissioning Manager

Monitoring and review:

This Service and Community Impact Assessment will be reviewed following confirmation of the available budget for carers' services.

Person responsible for assessment: Commissioning lead

Version	Date	Notes (eg Initial draft, amended following consultation)
V1	13/08/2015	Initial draft
V2	October 2015	Updated draft
V3	January 2016	Updated draft