

Meeting:	Director of Adults and Communities
Meeting date:	Tuesday, 29 January 2019
Title of report:	Direct award of contract for Technology Enabled Care service (TECS)
Report by:	Head of wellbeing commissioning

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To approve the direct award of contract for one year to the current provider to deliver the management of a telecare monitoring service (Careline). There are no further options for extension within the current contract and therefore a direct award is the most effective and appropriate way to ensure continuation of this service.

The call monitoring service supports the provision of technology equipment to many hundreds of people living in the community, providing a helpline function. The provision of Technology Enabled Care (TECS) equipment is managed separately through another contract. Reviews and redesign of community equipment and TECS pathways and services are commencing and will consider options for future delivery. The current contract expires on the 31 March 2019 and extending the service will allow consideration of a wider range of options and potential alignment with provision of equipment. The community equipment contract is expected to conclude in March 2020

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) a contract be awarded to Herefordshire Housing Limited (Connexus) to deliver the management of a telecare monitoring service from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 to a maximum value not exceeding £46k.

Alternative options

1. Not to continue the service. This option is not recommended as it would leave vulnerable people without potential vital support, and would undermine or invalidate the provision of much TECS equipment. This would lead to potential harm to individuals and potential increases in admissions to hospital or long term care. The council would also find itself in breach of duties under the Care Act 2014.
2. To obtain competitive quotes to supply the service. This option is not recommended as a change of provider would cause disruption during a short period of review and redesign. Re-procuring for a single year of interim service delivery would involve disproportionate time and process and furthermore, the risk of challenge is low in light of the short timescale and low financial value.

Key considerations

3. Herefordshire Housing (Connexus) is the current provider of this service and delivery and performance have been satisfactory. The service was originally commissioned as part of a much larger service, incorporating re-ablement provision. When the re-ablement service was brought into direct management by the council in 2016, the call monitoring service was continued separately. The current contract will expire in March 2019, with no further options for extending the contract.
4. The council is committed to using TECS to its full potential to help transform people's experience of care and support. It can help target support to the most vulnerable people by predicting risk and crisis, promote independence and reduce reliance on formal, cost intensive packages of care. The review and development of a new technology strategy will be accompanied by innovative new pathways to maximise appropriate use of technology. This work will also incorporate a review and redesign of existing, established TECS services.
5. The council commissions two different services currently to deliver telecare and assistive technology: NRS Healthcare for the provision of telecare equipment and Herefordshire Housing for the management of a telecare monitoring service (Careline). The contract for the provision of equipment with NRS Healthcare is being extended to 31 March 2020 to facilitate a review of pathways and services prior to re-procuring. Extending the management of the telecare monitoring service will also provide for a whole service review to ensure that telecare and assistive technology is being commissioned in the most effective way possible to support people in their own homes, prevent hospital admissions and delay the need for long term care.
6. A call monitoring service is required to provide security and peace of mind for vulnerable adults within Herefordshire by raising an alert in the event of an incident and arranging the appropriate response. Without the provision of this service some vulnerable adults would not safely be able to remain in or return from hospital to their own home. The service is provided to disabled people, older frail people and those at risk of falls, along with learning disabled people and those with sensory impairment. It gives those individuals and their carers confidence and assurance that they can be safe whilst living independently.

Community impact

7. The proposed continuation of telecare call monitoring supports priorities in the council's corporate plan, including enabling residents to live safe, active lives and to enjoy their home and neighbourhood. Understanding Herefordshire, the joint needs assessment (JSNA) provides detailed information about the numbers and distribution of vulnerable older and disabled people, the rates of admission to and discharge from hospital. These all support the optimisation of effective and appropriate TECS provision, including call monitoring and response.
8. There are no particular implications for looked after children or care leavers or for the council's role as corporate parent.
9. The council is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all individuals affected by the council's activities. Therefore the council seeks to ensure that the work it and its partners undertake, does not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of vulnerable adults or the workforce supporting them. The commissioning of a call monitoring service supporting use of TECS equipment is designed in part to protect the health and safety of residents in their own homes.

Equality duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
10. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
 11. There are no specific implications for equalities arising from this decision. The proposed contract award provides for a continuation for one year only of existing essential support to disabled people with no change to delivery. It is intended that the service will be reviewed, redesigned and in some form re-procured with effect from April 2020. Governance to authorise the recommissioning TECS and community equipment services will be accompanied by a full equality impact analysis in 2019.

Resource implications

12. The implications of this proposal for resources are as follows
- i. The revenue costs of the service are derived from unit costs of calls on a spot purchase model. The standard unit cost per call is £0.43. The estimated cost for 2018/19 is £37.5k. There has been a notable increase in activity in the current year to date but the costs for 2019/20 may exceed slightly the budget of £40k. Whilst it is not practicable to cap the spending under the spot purchase arrangements, it will be monitored closely. Any overspend will be highlighted and alternative funding identified from wider budgets for technology enabled care.
 - ii. Expenditure on the service is incorporated into budget planning for the Adults and Communities Directorate and accounted for in medium term financial strategy targets.
 - iii. There are no capital costs of the service.

Legal implications

13. The constitution at paragraph 4.6.2 provides that the council is subject to EU law with regard to public procurement, which requires all contract procedures to be open, fair and transparent.
14. Paragraph 4.6.17 states that an exemption is permission to proceed without complying with one or more of the rules, and that the exemption must be approved in advance of any action taken.
15. Under paragraph 4.6.18 a waiver may be approved in certain situations where the normal process to be followed is considered inappropriate. Such waivers must be fully supported with justifiable reasons.
16. The reasons outlined in the report justify an exemption and the decision will not be implemented until the approved exemption is in place.

Risk management

17. The risks arising from not adopting the recommendation in this report include;
- the closure of the service in March 2019, resulting in potential harm to many vulnerable individuals, increased admissions to hospital and long term care and a breach of statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, along with associated reputational harm to the council.
 - Continued funding of the service by the current provider, without a documented contract in place. This would represent a breach of procurement regulations and the council's own contract procedure rules.
18. Risks arising from the recommendations in the report are limited.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Challenge by a third party provider of call monitoring services under procurement	The risk of challenge has been identified as very low, in view of the term of the award being only one year, the low financial value and the intention to review and redesign the

regulations in light of the decision not to undertaken an open procurement process

service before a full open procurement. No further extension of the waiver will be sought.

19. Risks will be managed at a service level, in liaison with commercial services.

Consultees

20. None

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified