

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Re-procurement of Herefordshire Carer Support Service by way of an open tender process
Date of decision:	17 th October 2024
Decision maker:	Hilary Hall Corporate Director Community Wellbeing, Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	The decision taken by Cabinet to approve the All Age Carers Strategy (July 2024) also included delegated decision making for all operational decisions pertaining to the All Age Carers Strategy. Decision - Herefordshire All Age Carers Strategy 2024-2029 (previously known as 'All Age Carers Strategy') - Herefordshire Council
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	<p>During September 2024 an online survey took place to seek the opinions of unpaid carers about our intention to re-procure the Herefordshire Carer Support Service, asking for comments about the key areas we wished to include in the new service specification (as detailed below in this document). Where comments and suggestions were made by respondents, these will all be considered and where appropriate be included in the final service specification.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing was also consulted on this proposal – 10/10/2024</p>
Decision made:	To re-procure, by way of an open tender process, the Herefordshire Carer Support Service, for a period of 2 years with an option to extend the contract for up to an additional 12 months. The annual cost of this provision will be £160,000.
Reasons for decision:	<p>As the existing contract with our provider for Carer Support Service comes to an end in March 2025, it is necessary to re-procure the service, in line with Public Contract Regulations 2015.</p> <p>We are updating the service specification, taking into account the key priorities identified within the new All Age Carers Strategy. Alongside the fundamental expectations of the provision (advice, guidance and sign-posting), the service specification will also highlight our requirement that the successful provider will take a lead role in highlighting, promoting and responding to the key priorities of the All Age Carers Strategy.</p> <p>These priorities are:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value and recognition: The Herefordshire Carer Support service will play a key role in raising awareness and championing the important and valuable role that unpaid carers provide. • Young Carers: The Herefordshire Carers Support service will provide services to carers of all ages; however, we recognise that young carers and young adult carers are not always easy to identify. • Assessments and support: The Herefordshire Carer Support service will undertake assessments of carers to help identify what support or information/guidance would be most helpful to them on an individual basis. This will include ensuring all appropriate financial support (e.g. Carers Allowance) has been applied for. (This will not replace the councils statutory duty (Care Act 2014) to carry out carer assessments if requested to do so • Supporting good health and wellbeing: Unpaid carers will often put the needs of the cared-for person ahead of their own health and wellbeing. It is important that carers are encouraged and supported to look after their own health needs and identify ways of managing and maintaining their own emotional and physical wellbeing. • Information, advice and guidance: Although this element is a requirement within the Care Act 2014: ‘Councils must provide and maintain an information and advice service for all carers...’, there is an ever present need to ensure these fundamentals of carer support are kept up to date, and that carers of all ages know how to find and access the information or support they need. <p>Under each of the areas above key performance indicators will be in place to ensure that the service meets with the expectations set out in the All Age Carers Strategy. In addition the new Herefordshire Carers Partnership Board will have oversight of the carers support provision, and help the service to develop and adapt to the needs of our unpaid carer population.</p>
<p>Equality Considerations</p>	<p>Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:</p> <p>A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; ○ advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; ○ foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The decision does not discontinue any service and has no detrimental impact to eligible service users under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

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. All partners are aware of their statutory requirements in regards to equality legislation.

This proposal will contribute to providing support and improving the quality of life to unpaid carers of all ages and protected characteristics

When we undertook consultation meetings with individuals, groups and organisations, we gathered diversity data. We also gathered data from the 2021 census about unpaid carers.

- **Disability** –According to data from the 2021 Census, the majority of the unpaid carers of Herefordshire were not disabled, 28% (4,615) were disabled under the Equality Act. (This figure is significantly higher than the proportion of disabled people in the general population of Herefordshire which is 17%). Almost a half of these carers (1,705) provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care a week. This is similar to the proportions reported for England and Wales. Some of the unpaid carers who themselves have a disability, may also have eligible needs for support under the Care Act 2014.
- **Gender** – According to 2021 census data, there are more females (9,940 – 60%) providing unpaid care than males (6,640 - 40%). Similar to nationally, the majority of these carers are aged 50 years or older.
Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care. More women than men also provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work.¹
- **Age profile** - n Herefordshire, the number of unpaid carers below the age of 50 is lower than the average for England and Wales - (30% compared with 40% for England and Wales). However, from 50 years upwards, the percentage of carers in Herefordshire begins to increase noticeably, with Herefordshire reporting 69% of carers over 50 compared to 59% for England and Wales. This is not surprising, as we know that the population of the county is getting older. According to the 2021 census, the number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by just over 5,000 (an increase of 24.4%) since the previous census in 2011 while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by around 6,000 (16.0% decrease).
- **Ethnicity** – In 2021, 8.9% of the county's total population identified themselves as being of an ethnicity other than 'White: British' - which is very low compared to nationally (26%).Of the total number of unpaid carers identified in the 2021 census, 98% (16,250 respondents) identified themselves as White. This would include people who are White but non-British. Despite these low numbers, we need to remain mindful that some carers may need additional support, for example language barriers or cultural differences

¹ Carers UK – [Key facts and figures about caring](#)

<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>There are clear legislative duties, both from a Children’s and Families point of view as well as an Adult Social care prospective, requiring support for carers.</p> <p>The Care Act 2014 recognises that supporting carers is as important as supporting the people for whom they care. Adult carers under the Act has the right to seek support which can include information, advice, preventative services, have their own carers assessments and support to meet their needs based on the eligibility criteria. The Act goes further to place a duty on identifying Young Carers and providing support as they became adults. The Children and Families Act 2014 covers the rights of both Young Carers and Parent Carers.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>Alternative option 1: Allow the contract to expire and bring the service into the council’s control (not recommended). Providing an in-house carer support service would require setting up a new team, employing suitable staff. This would not only take a long time to properly organise with the council structure, there would be no financial benefit to doing this, and there would be a risk that unpaid carers may be less willing to use the service, as it could be perceived as less independent and therefore unlikely to advocate properly on their behalf.</p> <p>Alternative option 2: Do nothing and allow the contract to expire (this is not recommended and could be in breach of the Care Act 2014 regulations). Councils must provide and maintain an information and advice service for all carers about what can be done to help them (and those they care for) prevent, reduce or delay the development of longer-term needs for care and support, and to help them look after their own wellbeing.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date:

Please ensure that signatures are redacted before publishing.