



Classification	Item No.
Open	

Meeting:	Human Resources & Appeals
Meeting date:	10/12/2020
Title of report:	Support at Home – Emergency Response Service
Report by:	Andrew Crawford - Resource Manager (Sheltered Housing & Carelink)
Decision Type:	Council
Ward(s) to which report relates	N/a

Executive Summary:

This report proposes entering formal consultation with staff and trade unions regarding the establishment of a permanent emergency response service through the Support at Home Service. The service has operated since March 2020 as part of the Council response to Covid, and it is now proposed to formalise these arrangements and secure the delivery of the service for the longer term.

Recommendation(s)

That:

The Council enters formal consultation with staff and trade unions regarding the establishment of a permanent emergency response service through the Support at Home Service.

Key considerations

Background

The Support at Home Service provides Support to Older People, enabling them to continue living independently in their own home for as long as possible. The service in its current form has been in operations since 2008.

Over the last few years demand for the service has increased with a desire for more people to maintain their independence as long as possible and remain safe within their own homes, thereby reducing the demand on residential and other care provision.

As the Covid-19 pandemic started to impact, our Support at Home service users who needed an emergency response particularly to non-urgent cases (uninjured fallers), were in some cases waiting over 6 hours for an ambulance response. In one particular case a faller had to wait 14 hours for a crew to attend. Even under normal circumstances it is recognised that a non-urgent requirement for a paramedic crew to attend can take up to 4 hours.

In addition to this, Care Link staff which works in partnership with The Support at Home Team were also having difficulties getting the service users' representative contacts to respond to concerns being raised for their welfare, due to the risk of Covid transmission and family members /carers self-isolating and shielding.

In March 2020 an urgent decision was made by the Council and the new Carelink Emergency response service was launched.

The Support at Home Team now utilises a 'response vehicle' with a lifting cushion and is covered during office hours by staff from the Support at Home Service. Operating 24/7, the service responds to a wide range of calls from the CareLink service users including those living within their own homes, and those living in both Sheltered and Extra Care settings.

This type of response service has been provided in neighbouring Councils for a number of years.

The benefits of providing this service are as follows:

- Positive outcomes for Carelink Customers' and peace of mind for family members / Carers.
- Provide support to families/carers who may be unable or unwilling to respond to calls and may see residential care as the only feasible alternative.
- Reduce unnecessary Ambulance callouts by reducing demand on the Service freeing up valuable resources.
- Reducing demand on the Police Service who respond to Carelink customers when there is a concern for welfare and no contact is available to respond
- Unnecessary emergency admissions to hospital.
- Enhancing the Community Health Crisis response service.
- Deliver emergency personal care where appropriate making Customer comfortable and preventing the need for escalation.

- Enable quicker planned hospital discharge due to a response service being available which can help prevent bed blocking.
- Less pressure on NHS beds and capacity.
- Tenants that require wellbeing calls over Christmas and bank holidays can also now be supported by staff on call.

Since its launch in March 2020 the service has been a huge success and a major benefit to Support at Home customers and Health and Social Care services.

The proposal

The Service is now at the stage where it wishes to implement the Emergency Response Service on a more permanent basis. This proposal will involve 13 Support at Home Staff providing cover on a rota (2 members of staff will provide cover at a time) between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

When staff are on the rota to cover they will be undertake their normal duties; however when they receive a request from Carelink to respond to an urgent call they will be expected to respond within 30 minutes. One member of staff will be responsible for collecting the response vehicle and the other will make their way to the property to assist.

Although the Home Support Worker Job Description already states that staff must respond to emergency calls, the Service propose to update the wording to clearly reflect the new way of working. Other minor changes are also proposed to bring the Job Description up to date.

It is anticipated that the emergency response service can be delivered within the existing service budget.

Other alternative options considered

The Council could cease to deliver the Emergency Response Service; this would be a return to the status quo prior to the pandemic, lead to a reduced level of support for vulnerable service users, and place additional strain on partner organisations.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

Equality Impact and considerations:

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.*

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.

Equality Analysis	<i>Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.</i>
The proposal is designed to ensure a valuable service is continued to be offered to elderly and vulnerable residents of the borough, many of whom will be considered disabled, supporting them in maintaining their health and wellbeing.	

**Please note: Approval of a cabinet report is paused when the 'Equality/Diversity implications' section is left blank and approval will only be considered when this section is completed.*

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
If approval is not granted the service will return to its normal status and would lead to a reduced level of Support to our elderly and most vulnerable Tenants.	There is no alternative provision if permission is not granted.

Consultation:

It is proposed to enter into a period of formal consultation with employees and trade unions regarding the proposal prior to any implementation.

Legal Implications:

The purpose of the report is to agree to move to consultation, which is in-line with the proposals to amend job descriptions and the Council's policy/toolkit. Further consideration needs to be given to the possibility that staff do not agree to the contract variations and the possibility of moving to termination and re-engagement.

Financial Implications:

There are no cost arising from this proposal.

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Background papers:

Support at Home
Consultation Embed c

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning