

**OFFICER DELEGATION SCHEME  
RECORD OF DECISION**

**TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

<b>Date:</b> 19 October 2024	<b>Ref No:</b> 2253
<b>Responsible Officer:</b> Caroline Malvern, Commissioning Manager	
<b>Type of Decision (please refer to MO Guidance):</b>	
<b>Key</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Non-Key</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Freedom of Information Status:</b> <i>(can the report go in the public domain)</i> No restrictions	
<b>Title/Subject matter:</b> <b>Early Intervention &amp; Rehabilitation Service for adults with loss of vision or vision impairment (statutory duty)</b>  <p>The purpose of this report is to seek permission to go out to tender for the provision of an Early Intervention &amp; Rehabilitation service for adults with loss of vision or vision impairment, for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028, with an option to extend for a further 12-month period.</p> <p>The contract value is currently £75,949.20 and will change to £85,000 per annum. Total value over 4 years is £340,000.</p>	
<b>Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance:</b>	
(i) Is the decision within an Approved Budget?	Yes
(ii) Is the decision in conflict with the council's policies, strategies or relevant service plans?	No
(iii) Does the decision amend existing or raise new policy issues?	No
(iv) Is the decision significant and/or does it meet the £100,000 threshold for recording?	Yes

<p>(v) Has the s151 &amp; MO been consulted? (Please attach any advice)</p>	
<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment</b> [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? <b>If yes</b> – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]</p>	

## **1. Background**

The core purpose of adult social care, as supported by the Care Act 2014, is to help people achieve the outcomes that matter to them.

The Care Act 2014 retains the duty for local authorities in respect of its eligible population which have been assessed as requiring mobility and orientation training and any other rehabilitation intervention, or equipment and adaptations to support them with the onset of visual impairment.

Bury currently commissions a service for adults with complete or complete loss of vision and visual impairment delivered by Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People (BBS).

The overall purpose of the service is to enable people to achieve maximum potential, to stay at home living as independently as they can and with the best possible quality of life.

The contract delivers the statutory duties of the Council by:

- maintaining a register of people who are severely sight impaired and sight impaired.
- enabling people to stay at home, living as safely and independently as possible.
- undertaking specialist assessment of needs and care planning.
- providing minor aids and adaptations up to the value of £1,000.
- delivering a visual impairment early intervention and rehabilitation programme.
- providing mobility and orientation training.
- Offering advice, information, and support.

The existing contract expires at the end of March 2025. Extension options have been exhausted and as a result, a tender exercise needs to be undertaken.

## **2. Rehabilitation Service**

The rehabilitation service is a short-term vision specific support service providing specialist assessment and rehabilitation to adults with a visual impairment who would benefit from a period of rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation is provided irrespective of an individual's eligibility for social care services.

It is designed to help people with a non-corrective eye condition to maintain their independence through relearning practical daily and mobility skills.

The service also includes providing equipment and minor adaptations where appropriate and in accordance with assessed need, to support to maintain independence and therefore reducing and delaying the need for social care services.

Examples of equipment include:

- Canes
- Roller ball tips
- Magnification software
- USB's
- Gadgets for the kitchen
- Talking clocks
- Lighting
- Screen readers
- Liquid level indicators

### 3. Sight Register

An eye specialist (Ophthalmologist) determines eligibility to be certified as sight impaired or severely sight impaired.

The Ophthalmologist will complete a Certificate of Vision Impaired (CVI) and forwards a copy of the CVI to the Council. The current contract arrangement is that the CVI is passed on the provider, who contacts the individual to ask whether they want to be added to the Sight Register, this contact also initiates the offer of support from the service, such as an assessment to find out what help is required to remain independent, support, information, and advice.

Registration to the Sight Register is not compulsory and will not restrict access to the service. However, it can help get a range of benefits to help with costs relating to disability.

#### **The Bury SSDA902 Return to NHS Digital – Registers of people who are blind or partially sighted (2022 - 23):**

Age Group	Blind/severely sight impaired persons and partial sight/sight impaired persons – Numbers on the register and new registrations			
	Blind/severely sight impaired persons registered as at reporting period end.	New registrations of blind/severely sight impaired persons during the reporting period.	Partial sight/sight impaired persons end.	New registrations of partial sight/sight impaired persons.
0 – 4	1	0	4	1
5 – 17	26	1	28	1
18 – 49	74	4	34	2
50 – 64	49	4	45	3
65 – 74	44	4	42	4
75 and over	179	17	177	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>24</b>

Note: The number of adults with certificates of visual impairment on the register may be lower than the total number of certificates issued because some people choose not to register their certificate.

#### **4. The Care Act 2014**

The Care Act elevated the importance of preventative services, and the prevention duty also recognises the clear benefits of vision rehabilitation support.

Section 2 of the Care Act 2014 'Preventing, Reducing or Delaying Needs' states that rehabilitation services for people with a visual impairment should not be restricted to six weeks and should remain free of charge. The guidance defines rehabilitation as including daily living skills and mobility training for people with visual impairment.

Maintenance of a Sight Register is a statutory requirement for Bury Council. Under Section 77 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities are legally required to establish and maintain a register of sight-impaired and severely sight-impaired adults who are ordinarily resident in their area.

The current service also reflects the requirements set out in the ADASS Position Statement on Vision Rehabilitation (May 2016) in the context of personalisation, which aims to ensure that severely sight impaired and sight impaired people remain independent by putting them in control of decisions that affect their lives.

#### **5. Performance**

The quarterly contract meetings, case studies and engagement with Bury residents, has provided reassurance that outsourcing the statutory duties externally to a provider in the community has delivered a service above current statutory minimum and has had a distinct role to play, in helping to reducing inequalities and enhancing inclusion by supporting some of Bury's most marginalised residents.

The offer available to clients through the current contractual service and charity funded wellbeing support and activities, has been designed to provide practical, emotional, and specialised help at every stage of the sight loss journey. For the majority, this journey will continue and evolve as their own circumstances change.

The service model focuses upon an individual assessment of needs. This enables the team to provide appropriate tuition and necessary equipment to assist residents to maintain and develop the daily living skills to maximise and make effective use of their residual vision.

In general, most people requiring support due to vision, are referred to BBS in the first instance, rather than traditional adult social care support.

#### **6. Future Demand**

Estimating the numbers of adults in Bury with a visual impairment is not easy because definitions which rest on a clinical diagnosis can provide underestimates and not all people who have sight loss will be known to / eligible for Adult Social Care support.

The RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool reports that by 2030, there is expected to be 7,210 people living across Bury with sight loss.

All research indicates that the older you are, the greater your risk of sight loss, which is why the population aged 75 and older offers a good indication of the demand for sight loss services.

The data sets from the 2021 Census on Population change indicate that in Bury, there has been an increase of 19.8% in people aged 65+, an increase of 1% in people aged 15-64 years and an increase of 5.2% in children aged under 15 years.

Using the above indicators, it suggests the demand for these specialised services will increase overall.

## 7. Options Considered

Alternative options have been considered, including:

- ❖ Spot purchase the service.
- ❖ Deliver a service in-house.
- ❖ Continue to procure the service externally.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Outcome
Spot purchase the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saves on the resources required to undertake commissioning activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No clearly defined contract terms or specification used to ensure quality and consistent outcomes for people.</li> <li>• Resources required for maintenance of the Sight Register.</li> <li>• Resources required to deliver minor aids and adaptations.</li> <li>• Lack of control over service costs.</li> <li>• Risk to the council meeting our statutory requirements.</li> <li>• Less opportunity to demonstrate that value for money is being achieved.</li> </ul>	Rejected
Deliver a service in-house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control over service delivery</li> <li>• Opportunity to upskilling employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost – commits to a potentially unnecessary level of resourcing and spend.</li> <li>• Restricts the choice of support to that provided by the council.</li> </ul>	Rejected

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No element of social value.</li> <li>• Missing out on the specialist knowledge, skills and connections provided by a community-based provider.</li> </ul>	
Continue to procure the service externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses expert skills and knowledge of local specialist providers.</li> <li>• Allows specialist providers to lead innovation in supporting people to maintain or improve their independence.</li> <li>• Opportunity to benefit from Social Value</li> <li>• Control over service delivery and quality.</li> <li>• Supports the development of organisations supporting the people with visual impairment in Bury.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources required to procure and manage the contract.</li> <li>• Risk that providers decline to take part in the procurement process.</li> </ul>	Recommended

The recommended option is to continue to procure the service externally to a specialist community provider.

## 8. Conclusions

By procuring the early intervention & rehabilitation service for adults with a non-corrective eye condition, Bury have benefited from reduced prices, higher quality, and innovation.

Based on the last procurement of the service, the suggestion is that the market is an extremely restricted one, due to the very specialist nature of the service.

The contract value for this service has not changed in several years and has not increased in relation to inflation and increased costs. This runs the risk of destabilising existing services being delivered under the contract.

## 9. Financial Implications

The contract value has remained at the same level of £75,945 per annum for many years and has not increased in relation to inflation and increased costs.

To continue the excellent quality service for future requirements it is recommended the contract value be increased to £85,000 per annum.

## 10. Recommendations

The Chief Executive is asked to consider and endorse the following recommendations:

- 1) Commence formal procurement activity to deliver a community support services for adults with a non-corrective eye condition, for a maximum period of four years (3 + 1) and
- 2) Increase the funding allocated for the early intervention and rehabilitation service to 85,000 per annum.

**Wards affected:** All wards

**Consultations:** current provider, Bury residents, user forum, satisfaction feedback, case studies.

**Scrutiny & Review Committee Interest:** N/A

**Options considered:** Section 7 outlines the options considered.

**Decision** *[with reasons]*

<b>Decision made by:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Chief Executive		4 November 2024
Executive Director – Health and Adult Care	NA	
Section 151 Officer	NA	
<b>Members Consulted</b> <b><i>[see note 1 below]</i></b>		
Cabinet Member	For noting only – noted	7 November 2024
Lead Member	NA	

Opposition Spokesperson	NA	
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**Notes**

1. Where, in accordance with the requirements of the Officer Delegation Scheme, a Chief Officer consults with the appropriate Cabinet Member they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained if required, to confirm that he/she has been consulted. Please refer to the MO Guidance.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**
3. Where there is any doubt, Corporate Directors should err on the side of caution and seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer.