

**TO: DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND HOUSING
10 MARCH 2016**

**SUPPORT WITH CONFIDENCE
Chief Officer: Older People and Long Term Conditions**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to re tender the 'Support with Confidence' service. This service coordinates and manages a register of approved personal assistants (PAs) which people with support needs can use to arrange their support.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Director approves the procurement plan to re tender the 'Support with Confidence' service.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The current contract with Action for People (previously the Family Resource Centre) ends on 30th September 2016. In accordance with the council's contract standing orders, this service should now go out to tender. Approval of the procurement plan is within the Director's authority.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not to re tender this service, however, this is not considered a suitable option:
- As potentially some people would be deterred from taking a direct payment, as they do not want to take on the responsibilities of being an employer. This could increase the number of people requesting that the council brokers care on their behalf, which would put pressure on an already stretched domiciliary care service
 - People would find it more difficult to source a suitable PA
 - People who did choose to make their own arrangements could be at risk by not undertaking appropriate checks on PAs e.g. references, DBS checks

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Support with Confidence scheme was developed by Oxfordshire County Council, and is now operated by Surrey County Council. The scheme is aimed at providers and PAs who are currently unregulated by formal inspection regimes, who provide a wide range of care and support services that people buying their own care might be seeking. This would include home and garden maintenance, shopping, cleaning and accompanying to leisure and other facilities, and transport. The scheme is a joint initiative between Trading Standards and Adult Social Care.

Unrestricted

- 5.2 To provide the scheme locally, the council would need to enter into a licence agreement with Surrey County Council. There is no charge attached to this. Nine other LAs in the region are signed up to Support With Confidence scheme.
- 5.3 PAs who would like to register as members of the Support with Confidence Scheme must satisfy a range of minimum requirements before being approved, demonstrating that they have undergone the appropriate training and met background checks, for example, qualifications and experience, customer service and compliance with legal standards.
- 5.4 Approved workers are audited before they join. They agree to:
- ensure that they are properly trained for their work
 - undertake any appropriate training
 - submit criminal records checks and clearance
 - provide references as part of their application
 - respond promptly and appropriately to customer complaints

If workers do not uphold these standards, they will be removed from the register.

- 5.5 There are currently 209 people who receive a direct payment. Of these, 58 employ a PA (27.8%) This usually involves writing the recruitment papers, advertising the post, interviewing and appointing as well as on-going management.
- 5.6 Some people use self employed PAs. The rates are set by the individual PA and vary between £10 to £20 per hour. The administrative burden on the people looking for support is reduced whilst continuity of support is maintained.
- 5.7 Some people choose to hire PAs through an agency. This reduces the administrative burden to a minimum, however the agency may well supply a number of different workers to cover various shifts.
- 5.8 Using the 'Support with Confidence' PA register, people would:
- be able to access a number of pre-approved, self employed PAs
 - receive support to select a PA to provide their support, if required
 - not have to go through a lengthy recruitment process (which may reduce recruitment support needed from the council's in-house Self Directed Support Team)
 - not have to take on employment responsibilities
- 5.9 There are a number of benefits to self employed PAs who register with the scheme. This includes eliminating the need for repeated DBS clearance for each person purchasing their services (if asked), increase their exposure to demand without the expense of recurrent advertising, access to specialist and free training.
- 5.10 There are currently 42 PAs registered on the scheme. Whilst the scheme does not record the details of people using the service (as to do so could suggest an employment relationship between PAs and the provider), Action for People report that anecdotal information gleaned from PAs during routine monitoring indicates that (all figures are approximate):-
- 270 people regularly use the services of PAs registered on the scheme, with possibly 180 people funded by the council

- Service delivery is circa 3792 hours per month

These figures do not include incidental/short term usage by people, often following a hospital visit.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The Borough Solicitor's concerns and advice have been incorporated in the procurement plan.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The maximum contract value is equivalent to what the Council is currently paying, therefore there will be no budgetary implications as long as the contract value remains within this limit.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Attached

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 None

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 none

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 none

Representations Received

- 7.3 N/A

Contact for further information

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