

**Key Decision Report of the Director of Adult Social Care**

<b>Officer Key Decision</b>	<b>Date: 9 December 2021</b>	<b>Ward(s): All</b>
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<b>Delete as appropriate</b>	Exempt	
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**THE APPENDIX TO THIS REPORT IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION**
**SUBJECT: Contract Award for Islington’s Carers Hub**
**1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 This report summarises the outcome of a procurement process for Islington Carers Hub in accordance with Rule 2.7 of the Council’s Procurement Rules.
- 1.2 The service will provide a varied package of support to assist informal carers in their caring role as well as enabling them to live fulfilling lives and maximise their individual wellbeing. The procurement of the offer proposed will enable carers to be supported throughout and beyond the time of their caring role, responding to their multiple needs whether these be financial, social, emotional, psychological or physical.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To approve the award of the contract for Islington’s Carers Hub to Age UK Islington for a period of three years with the options to extend for a total seven years if all optional extensions are used).

**3. Date the decision is to be taken:**

9 December 2021

## 4. Background

### 4.1 Nature of the service

Carers, also known as informal carers, family carers or unpaid carers, look after an adult in their life who would not be able to manage without their support. Carers may look after an ageing partner, a disabled adult child, support an elderly neighbour or a friend with substance use issues.

Nationally, 6.8 million people provide unpaid care for a disabled, seriously-ill or older loved ones in the UK, saving the state £132 billion a year.<sup>1</sup> Despite it being a statutory requirement that carers receive the same level of focus as the cared for or service user, this is often not the case with the emphasis often still remaining on the cared for person.

This contract will support the Council in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities as outlined in the Care Act 2014.

Ahead of re-procuring the carers' service, the Adult Social Care commissioning team led a detailed review of the current provision for carers in the borough, both in terms of council support for carers, external support and the wider opportunities to make Islington a more carer friendly borough. This included listening to carers about what matters to them, through a variety of means including a carers survey, focus groups, discussions with carers' groups and one to one phone conversations; and a carers coproduction group to co-design the service specification and tender documents; and meetings with a wide range of other stakeholders. and.

From our engagement, it is clear that a carers' service must be able to respond to diverse and changing needs and therefore needs to be dynamic, adaptable and innovative.

The objectives of the new carers hub are to:

- Ensure the wellbeing of carers, through a personalised strength-based and outcome focused approach
- Identify more carers and link them up with appropriate support and services
- Offer a variety of opportunities, support and services to meet differing needs
- Encourage greater partnership working in the borough for the benefit of carers

### 4.2 Estimated Value

The Carers Hub will continue to be funded through a pooled budget between Islington Council (91%) and North Central London CCG (9%) via section 75 agreement.

The advertised budget for this contract was £2,450,000 for the life of the contract (3+2+2 years). The annual value of this contract will be £348,985. This is £1015 less than the budget envelope per year.

#### Budgetary considerations

An adequately funded carers hub is important for a range of reasons. We are aware that there are many 'hidden' carers, a reduction in funding will preclude many currently hidden carers

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics taken from Carers UK

from being identified and offered support. Also maintaining this level of investment in carers demonstrates the council’s commitment to carers and recognition of the vital role they play.

In addition to the statutory requirement, providing adequate support to carers is key tool to achieving a healthy health and social care system. Supporting carers and preventing carer breakdown means that less people will need access to formal care – whether that be for the carer or for the cared for. This is beneficial on a personal level for both, carer and cared for but also provides financial benefits, reducing or delaying the need for more costly statutory services.

The new service will extend the remit of the current Carers Hub to ensure greater value for money and improved outcomes for carers, building strengths and maximising independence within the existing budget envelope. For example following the review of Islington’s carers offer, the Carers Hub will be expected to offer emotional wellbeing support in the form of talking therapy that carers can access promptly and to strategic champion carers interests in the borough. They will continue to undertaking carers’ assessments to ensure carers receive assessment and support in a timely way. We want to ensure we make best use of the resources across social care and the wider system.

### 4.3 Timetable

Contract Award	Nov 2021
Mobilisation	Dec 2021 – Feb 2022
Contract Start Date	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2022

### 4.4 Options appraisal

We considered 4 options and option 4 was chosen

Procurement Option 1: In-house service delivery	
<p><b>Benchmarking</b> Nationally, the vast majority of carers’ services are externally commissioned and from the local authorities consulted for this project, no examples were identified of in-house provision. The impact of this option on quality and resident outcomes, therefore, is unknown.</p>	
Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures the services share Islington’s vision and take a strengths-based approach to transform outcomes.</li> <li>• Ensures ‘good’ jobs for employees, with good T&amp;Cs plus guaranteed opportunities for development/progression.</li> <li>• Enables full utilisation of the council’s local knowledge and relationships to improve community participation.</li> <li>• Allows for improved integration with other services in ASC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management capacity, expertise and specialisms could not be established quickly enough to maintain service quality and prevent disruption for residents.</li> <li>• Cannot benefit to the same extent from the experience and connections of (largely) VCS carer specialist providers within the borough, across London and nationally.</li> <li>• Would not be able to take advantage of benefits from social value.</li> <li>• Cannot benefit from the innovation offered by the specialist providers in this area.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council controls service strategy and retains flexibility to change it.</li> <li>• Ability to have greater control of social value.</li> <li>• Council retains full control to drive efficiencies/economies of scale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-house service delivery could alienate and stigmatise carers who have had negative experiences of the council or who may not wish to be perceived as council 'service users'.</li> <li>• It would require high set-up and staff costs.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	Not recommended

### Procurement Option 2: Direct negotiation

**Benchmarking**  
Our market engagement reflects an interest in providing the carers hub for Islington.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-produce the service so it reflects both Islington's and the provider's vision.</li> <li>• Ability to have greater control of social value.</li> <li>• This approach may afford the council a greater control to drive efficiencies/economies of scale.</li> <li>• Opportunity to elicit additional or innovative offer via increased Social Value weighting for evaluation as per new Progressive Procurement Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are numerous organisations that offer carers support so there is little need for a direct negotiation.</li> <li>• A direct negotiation would close off the possibility of unique approaches that we may not have considered.</li> <li>• Any benefits gained through social value would need to be shared or not Islington specific.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	Not recommended

### Procurement Option 3: Re-procure with another borough

**Benchmarking**  
Benchmarking did not identify an instance of two boroughs procuring their carers service together. It also did not indicate another local borough who wished to procure a similar offer to our proposed offer.  
However, the pilot with Mobilise is currently being run in collaboration with the London Borough of Camden so there may be opportunities for continuing to deliver certain aspects of the offer in partnership with other boroughs.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to share best practice and learning.</li> <li>• Opportunity to commission more specialist services and agree reciprocal arrangements for referral into these services.</li> <li>• Potential for increased value for money, achieved via economies of scale or wealth of resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timescales for procurement do not match up with those of other boroughs.</li> <li>• Less direct influence on service design and configuration.</li> <li>• Reciprocal arrangements onerous to set up and maintain due to complexity.</li> <li>• Other borough may not share our vision</li> <li>• It could be a disincentive for the market as it could be more complicated to mobilise.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	Not recommended

## Procurement Option 4: Re-procure via competitive tender

**Benchmarking** This approach has been successfully adopted in Islington previously and by other boroughs.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full transformation to a strengths-based approach leading to improved outcomes for residents.</li> <li>• Advertised procurement likely to deliver competitive prices.</li> <li>• Opportunity to invigorate this service area with new providers.</li> <li>• Management capacity, expertise and specialisms likely to be established quickly enough to maintain service quality and prevent disruption for residents.</li> <li>• Benefit from the experience and connections of VCS providers within the borough, across London and nationally.</li> <li>• Benefit from the innovation offered by the specialist providers in this area.</li> <li>• Carers may have had negative experiences of the council or not wish to be considered a 'service user'. Easier to offer support in less stigmatising ways through VCS organisation or organisation independent to the council</li> <li>• Likely to be awarded to a VSC with added value of existing open access services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared values/priorities reliant on developing strong relationships with providers.</li> <li>• Less control over the service model and quality, again relies on strong specification and relationships with the providers.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<b><u>Recommended</u></b>

### 4.5 Key Considerations

#### Social and economic benefits

The service will help people lead healthier, more fulfilling lives in the community, reducing social isolation and maximising life opportunities and choices:

- Improving carers' wellbeing and choice through a strength based approach;
- Preventative/early intervention: if carers are supported in their role as care givers this will allow both, carer and cared for, to continue as they wish and reduce pressure on the social care system;
- Reducing social isolation of carers which will lead to improved mental health
- Including service users in service design and ongoing service development
- Support and promote employment opportunity in the borough and working with the Council's iWork service to provide opportunities to local residents, advertising on the Council's new Islington Working employment search site.
- The service will provide voluntary and employment opportunities for young carers and carers who wish to re-enter the workforce.
- Maintaining offices in Islington and contributing to the local economy by paying council tax etc.

### Social value

20% of the award criteria was allocated to the provider's commitments to social value. Bidders were asked to choose three measures from the social value framework and provide a detailed account of how they will deliver each area. The successful bidder made the below commitments:

- *Initiatives taken or supported to engage people in health interventions or wellbeing initiatives in the community, including physical activities for adults and children.* They will deliver a continuation and extension of the wellbeing initiatives and activities run by the Hub and Age UK Islington (AUKI) such as wellbeing checks, events, activities and activity coordination and work in partnership with other organisations to deliver a range of regular social activities, special events and discounted activity offers.
- *Initiatives to be taken to support older, disabled and vulnerable people to build stronger community networks.* They will pilot a befriending service initially for carers, and then extended to other AUKI clients.
- *Volunteering time provided to support local community projects.* They will expansion of number and type of volunteer roles to support carers (and other Age UK Islington clients).

### London Living Wage

LLW will be a condition of this contract.

### Best value

The service will implement a robust performance-monitoring framework so that value for money, quality, outcomes and cost effectiveness can be assessed. The monitoring framework will include activity levels, evidence of outcomes achieved, as measured against the desired service KPIs outcomes in the service specification. Expenditure against the service budget will also be required. Regular contract monitoring reviews will take place and the provider will submit information on the service on a quarterly basis. This process allows for continuous improvement and service development. The service specification and tender documents included provisions to ensure the provider offers continuous improvement against delivery targets, and works with commissioners and service users to co-produce a service where innovations can be quickly implemented.

## 4.6 Evaluation

The tender was carried out using the open procedure. The evaluation panel consisted of a Commissioning Manager (chair), Contract Officer, and Senior Practitioner (senior social worker). For the section assessing proposed approach to engagement and coproduction, a carer from the carers' coproduction group that co-designed the service specification and wrote the question for this section joined the panel.

Three organisations submitted tender returns and passed the compliance checks and suitability assessment stage.

The procurement used the Most Economically Advantageous Tender based on the criteria of 90% Quality including 20% Social Value; and 10% Cost, broken down as follows:

<b>Tender Award Criteria</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Quality – made up of</b>	<b>90%</b>

Proposed approach to service delivery	25%
Proposed approach to social value	20%
Proposed approach to strategic partnerships and innovation	20%
Proposed approach to engagement and coproduction	15%
Proposed approach to quality management and performance outcomes	10%
<b>Cost</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the bidders' method statements, two of the organisations' tenders met the minimum requirements in order to be awarded the contract, the other provider failed to meet the minimum requirements. The incumbent provider, Age UK Islington achieved the highest combined score for quality and cost (a breakdown of their scores can be found in Appendix A).

Our recommendation is to award the contract to Age UK Islington. The commissioning team will work with Age UK Islington to ensure the new service specification is implemented seamlessly. As the successful bidder is the incumbent provider TUPE will not be applicable.

#### 4.7 Business Risks

Business risks and opportunities were assessed in the procurement strategy approved by the Executive Member for Health and Social Care on 22 July 2021.

4.8 The Employment Relations Act 1999 (Blacklist) Regulations 2010 explicitly prohibit the compilation, use, sale or supply of blacklists containing details of trade union members and their activities. Following a motion to full Council on 26 March 2013, all tenderers will be required to complete an anti-blacklisting declaration. Where an organisation is unable to declare that they have never blacklisted, they will be required to evidence that they have 'self-cleansed'. The Council will not award a contract to organisations found guilty of blacklisting unless they have demonstrated 'self-cleansing' and taken adequate measures to remedy past actions and prevent re-occurrences.

4.9 The following relevant information is required to be specifically approved in accordance with rule 2.8 of the Procurement Rules:

<b>Relevant information</b>	<b>Information/section in report</b>
1 Nature of the service	We intend to procure a service provider who will run an extensive and innovative offer to support unpaid carers in their caring role in line with the local authorities' responsibilities as outlined in the Care Act 2014. See paragraph 4.1
2 Estimated value	The value per year is £348,985  The agreement is proposed to run for a period of 3 years with an optional extension of 2+2 years.

	See paragraph 4.2	
3 Timetable	Details as described within the report. See paragraph 4.3	Aug
4 Options appraisal for tender procedure including consideration of collaboration opportunities	Details as described within the report. See paragraph 3.4	Sep
5 Consideration of: Social benefit clauses; London Living Wage; Best value; TUPE, pensions and other staffing implications	Details as described within the report. See paragraph 4.5	Nov
6 Award criteria	Details as described within the report. See paragraph 4.6	1 <sup>st</sup>
7 Any business risks associated with entering the contract	Details as described within the report. Please see paragraph 4.7	
8 Any other relevant financial, legal or other considerations.		

## 5. Implications

### 5.1 Financial implications:

The Carers Hub is currently funded from the Carers Pooled budget to which both Islington Council and Islington CCG contribute. Islington Council contributes 91% and Islington CCG contributes 9% of the total expenditure budget.

The total annual value of the Carers Hub contract is anticipated to be £348,985. The current budget for this service is £350,000. Therefore the new contract will not create any budgetary pressures.

The expectation is that this tender will be met within this budget. If any additional pressures are incurred, management actions will need to be identified to cover this.

The value of this contract over the seven-year period will be £2,442,895.

Payment of London Living Wage is a requirement of the contract and should not result in any additional costs.



## **5.2 Legal Implications:**

The services being sought were to procure a service provider who will run an extensive offer to support unpaid carers in their caring role. The council has statutory duties and powers to meet needs for care and support under the Care Act 2014 (Sections 18-20). The council may enter into contracts for services for carers under section 1 of the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997. The Corporate Director has authority to award contracts for using revenue money over £2,000,000 of Islington Council spend where authorised to do so under the constitution or by a specific Executive decision (Procurement Rule 18.1.3). The Executive has duly delegated the authority to award this contract to the Corporate Director by virtue of a Procurement Strategy report dated 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The services procured are subject to the light touch regime set out in Regulations 74 to 77 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations). The threshold for application of this light touch regime is currently £663,540.00. The value of the proposed contract is above this threshold and therefore required advertisement on the Find a Tender Service (FTS) and Contracts Finder. The Council's Procurement Rules require contracts of this value to be subject to competitive tendering. In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations and the Council's Procurement Rules, the contract has been procured with advertisement on the Find a Tender Service (FTS) and on Contracts Finder.

Bids were evaluated in accordance with the evaluation model and the contract was awarded based on the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT). Accordingly, the contract may be awarded to Age UK Islington as recommended in the report. In deciding whether to award the contract as recommended the Corporate Director should be satisfied as to the competence of the service provider to provide the services and that the tender price represents value for money for the Council.

## **5.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:**

Report completed and sign off by energy services.

## **5.4 Resident Impact Assessment:**

The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

A Resident Impact Assessment was completed on 26 February 2021. The main findings can be found below and the full document is attached as an appendix (Appendix C).

Expectations of the new carers' hub will centre around building strengths, ensuring wellbeing, and addressing inequalities. Inequalities may be due to being a carer or inequalities or due to the protected characteristics of some carers. The carers' hub will be tasked with working with partners to challenge and reduce discrimination, harassment and victimisation of disabled carers; and, by providing support for the caring role and for carers' own wellbeing including the provision of mental health support and assistance with their own disabilities or health conditions. Furthermore, the contract will require that the provider incorporate a broad range

of ways for carers to access support, reducing discrimination caused as a result of inaccessibility to resources and support.

Moreover, the intention to procure a carers hub which offers core services, such as information and advice, Carers Assessments and financial support, alongside a responsibility for developing partnerships with other organisations that provide more specialised support, the contract will ensure a focus on an inclusive offer that considers and develops services that respond to the strengths and needs of carers with a range of protected characteristics. The contract will include a requirement to consider the negative impacts of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity.

## **6. Reasons for the decision:**

6.1 This report recommends awarding the new contract for Islington Carers Hub to Age UK Islington to start in March 2022, when the current contract ends. This will allow the outcomes from the review and carers' feedback in particular to shape the development of the offer. It will enable value for money and a better offer for Carers to be achieved by increasing the scope of the service.

## **7. Record of the decision:**

7.1 I have today decided to take the decision set out in section 2 of this report for the reasons set out above.

## **Signed by:**

Director Adult Social Care

Date:

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Winning bid score breakdown (Exempt)
- Appendix B – ICH Procurement Strategy
- Appendix C - Resident Impact Assessment (RIA)

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