

Committee: Community and Housing

Agenda Item

Date: 21 January 2010

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Title: OUT OF HOURS AND WEEKEND
SHELTERED HOUSING SERVICE

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report outlines the findings of the recent consultation that has been carried out with sheltered tenants about how the Council can provide a more efficient and robust service.

Recommendations

2. The committee agree the recommendations of the Task Group (minutes attached) to implement a more personalised level of support to service users, including the provision of a 'Handy Person'.
3. Implement a full out of hours and weekend response service to all Sheltered and Lifeline subscribers by Carecall on a trial basis for one year.

Background Papers

4. All background papers are available from the author of this report on request. Previous Committee reports, Task Group minutes are available on the Council's web site.

Impact

5.

Communication/Consultation	The Task Group promotes consultation with service users, partner agencies, staff and the wider community
Community Safety	Lifeline and Sheltered Housing provides security and peace of mind to service users and their families
Equalities	The Sheltered and Lifeline Service must be applied without discrimination of any kind
Finance	Officers have been working closely with the finance team
Health & Safety	Providing a full out of hours response service will stop officers, who have already been working a full day, having to respond

	and attend emergency call outs
Legal implications/ Human Rights	The way the current service is provided conflicts with the European Time Working Directive
Sustainability	The service has reached a critical point and cannot be sustained in its current format for much longer
Ward-specific impacts	Covers the whole of the Uttlesford District
Workforce/Workplace	Consultation is continuing with staff, Unison and the HR partnership

Situation

6. Officers have completed the initial round of consultation with service users, to which their family/friends and carers were invited to attend. It became apparent that not everybody felt they wanted/needed the same level of service. Most people felt they would like to see a 'handy person' who could attend the sheltered schemes on a regular basis and carry out minor repairs and health and safety checks. This in turn would free up valuable time for the Sheltered Housing Officers (SHOs) to spend with people who need additional support and to organise more activities.
7. Officers are now in the process of carrying out one to one consultation with service users to discuss the weekend/out of hours response service and finalise exactly what level of support they would like to receive.
8. At present we have the equivalent of six full time weekday SHOs. There should be five weekend SHOs however there are currently only four.
9. The current Sheltered Housing service has reached a critical point whereby we cannot recruit weekend staff because of the fact that people are expected to cover the out of hours, when they have already worked a full day. This is not only going against the European Working Time Directive by the amount of hours they are expected to work but could also have health and safety implications.
10. Whilst it is important to improve the service we provide to our most vulnerable client group, it is equally important that we look after our Sheltered Housing Staff by providing better working conditions, which is vital for the future recruitment and retention of staff.
11. Based on the initial consultation, it is anticipated that to run the service efficiently and effectively, we would need seven full time SHOs to provide the following levels of service:

- Daily visit from a SHO, including full access to pull cords/pendants and any additional telecare solutions
- Weekly visit by a SHO, including full access to pull cords/pendants and any additional telecare solutions
- No visits by a SHO but must have full access to pull cords/pendants and any additional telecare solutions. **NB there would still need to be some checks built in to ensure the service users circumstances have not changed**

The current estimated costs against the three levels of service would be as follows:

- The charge for a daily visit would not change from what it is now £14.13
 - Weekly visit £12.50
 - No daily visit £10.00
6. Implementing the above choices for services users will ensure that support is targeted where it is needed most.
 7. When Officers discussed the weekend service with service users, it is fair to say there were some mixed views and opinions. Whilst the majority felt that it wasn't necessary for a visit as they have family available during the weekend they could call upon in an emergency others felt they would miss the personal contact.
 8. It is important to note that as peoples circumstances change they will be able to move up and down through the above levels of service. Clear service standards will need to be written to ensure that service users understand and know exactly what they should expect to receive.
 9. Our current Careline provider, North Herts, provide a monitoring only service for our lifeline and sheltered service users. The current contract with North Herts is due to expire at the end of March 2010. Officers as a matter of good practice are looking at all other options to see if we are getting the best possible service and value for money before deciding whether to renew our contract. Initial investigations have shown that many other service providers do not have equipment that would be compatible with our systems. It should be noted that Supporting People are also currently carrying out a review of Control Centres across Essex.
 10. Carecall in Braintree have been operating for 28 years and have a proven track record of providing high quality services to their service users. Carecall is a community alarm service which provide a 24 hour monitoring and response service for approximately 2,000 clients in Sheltered Housing schemes and to people within their own homes. In 2003 Carecall became part of Witham, Braintree and Halstead Care Trust (WBHCT). In 2006 WBHCT

merged with Maldon and Chelmsford Primary Care Trusts to become Mid Essex PCT which is the only PCT with an in-house Careline.

11. Carecall has also been accredited with the Telecare Services Association (TSA) since May 2006, which involves maintaining strict adherence to Code of Practice standards. In June 2009 they were audited and gained the new TSA Codes of Practice accreditation for: Monitoring, Installing, Responding and Service Tailoring.
12. Carecall can provide a full out of hours and weekend response service. They will employ local staff who can respond immediately in an emergency. They would have training on all our sheltered sites and meet the residents, to ensure not only that they would be familiar with our schemes but equally important, that service users get to know who might be attending their home if there is an emergency.
13. Whilst this review has not been purely based on trying to make financial savings, officers have to ensure service users and the council get value for money. If this new improved service is implemented, officers have identified some potential savings. The cost of running the current weekend out of hours service is in the region of £62,791.00 (this includes salaries, travelling, overtime payments for the out of hours call outs and associated on costs). Carecall can provide this service for £43,900.00 therefore a potential saving of £18,891.00 could be made for this part of the service.

Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Service users do not feel that they have been listened to or their views taken on board	3	3	Members agree that Officers can offer service users more choice as to the level of service they receive, including an out of hours and weekend response service

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project