

To seek approval from the Director of Adults and Health to allocate funding for the Time for Carers Grant Scheme and to direct award a grant to Carers Leeds

Date: 23 June 2021

Report of: Deputy Director, Integrated Commissioning, Adults and Health

Report to: Director of Adults and Health

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

- The purpose of this report is to seek authority from the Director of Adults and Health to allocate £107,250 to the Time for Carers Grant Scheme in 2021/2022 and to award a grant to Carers Leeds with a value of £107,250 for the period 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2022.
- The Time for Carers Grant is a well-established, successful and popular scheme which primarily provides carers with a small one-off payment in order that they can take a short break from caring. It is also an effective way of reaching high numbers of carers, including those previously unknown to either Carers Leeds or Adults and Health.
- Increasing the number of carers who have a short break from caring is a key objective in the Leeds Carers Partnership Strategy “Putting carers at the heart of everything we do” which in turn:
 - Supports the Best Council Plan ambition of Leeds being a Compassionate City by setting out the priorities and objectives that, when taken together, will promote the health and well-being of carers and young carers in Leeds, and reduce the health and financial inequalities that carers experience due to caring.
 - Supports the Leeds Health and Care Plan system-wide focus on prevention and early intervention through a ‘Leeds Left Shift’. This essentially means moving resources (e.g. time, money, activities) towards support that promotes carer health and wellbeing and prevents carers from experiencing ill-health and financial disadvantage.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Adults and Health is recommended to allocate £107,250 to the Time for Carers Grant Scheme in 2021/2022
- b) The Director of Adults and Health is recommended to approve the award of a grant to Carers Leeds with a value of £107,250 for the period 1st July 2021 to 31st March 2022
- c) The Director of Adults and Health is recommended to note the Head of Commissioning (Integration) will be responsible for implementing this decision

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 Carers are people who look after someone who otherwise couldn't manage without their help because of illness, frailty, disability, a mental health need or an addiction. The care that carers provide is unpaid and as such this definition does not extend to care-workers who are paid professionals who work in a variety of settings, from home care agencies and residential care facilities to nursing homes.
- 2 The provision of unpaid care is an important issue because it not only makes a vital contribution to the supply of care, but it can also affect the health and wellbeing, employment opportunities, finances and social and leisure activities of those people providing it.
- 3 Carers help to maintain the health and wellbeing of the person they care for, and therefore play a significant role in preventing, reducing or delaying the point at which the people they care for become dependent on formal care and support, which is why it is important to promote carer wellbeing and prevent carers from developing needs for care and support themselves.
- 4 The impact of COVID-19 has led to increasing numbers of carers taking on responsibility for more intensive levels of care, and evidence suggests that many carers feel exhausted, isolated, under-valued, taken for granted and overlooked. This combination further impacts upon the physical, mental and economic health and wellbeing already experienced by many carers.
- 5 It is widely recognised that having a short break from caring provides positive outcomes for carers and can prevent carers from developing needs for care and support themselves. Short breaks can enable carers to maintain social contacts, to pursue work, education or leisure opportunities, or simply to recharge their batteries
- 6 The Time for Carers Grant is a well-established, successful and popular scheme which provides carers with a small one-off payment in order that they can take a short break from caring. It is also an effective way of reaching high numbers of carers, including those previously unknown to either Carers Leeds or Adults and Health.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: All

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 7 The funding will enable a minimum of 375 carers to receive a Time for Carers grant to support them to have a short break from caring. Examples of how carers have used the grant in 20/21 include:
 - Weekend break
 - Day trips
 - Gym membership
 - Relaxation therapies
 - Hobbies
- 8 Carers can apply for a Time for Carers grant irrespective of whether they and/or the person they care for meet the eligibility criteria for care and support as laid out in Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2014. This means that the funding reaches carers who are less likely to engage with statutory services.

- 9 The Time for Carers application process invites carers to request additional support from Carers Leeds, for example contact from a Carer Support Worker, information about support groups, receive a quarterly newsletter. Around 50% of grant recipients go on to receive further support from Carers Leeds which in turn can reduce demand on statutory health and care services.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 10 Supporting carers to have access to a break from caring was a key theme identified by carers and professionals during the engagement in developing the Leeds Carers Partnership Strategy.
- 11 Feedback from carers who receive a Time for Carers Grant is overwhelmingly positive.
- 12 Carers Leeds state that “The Time for Carers funding makes a huge difference to the lives of carers across Leeds. By carers applying for this funding to help them get a break from their caring responsibilities, we are able to welcome and engage the carer into our service. So, not only does the funding benefit carers wellbeing it is also a very useful ‘door opener’ for carers to get to know about Carers Leeds and the scope of the services and support we offer”.
- 13 The Executive Member for Adults and Children Social Care and Health Partnerships has been briefed on the contents of this report.

What are the resource implications?

- 14 Research undertaken by the University of Leeds estimates the cost of replacing unpaid care with paid care to be around £1.4billion per year in Leeds. Short breaks for carers which promote their wellbeing and enables them to continue caring therefore makes economic sense as it helps to manage demand on health and care services.
- 15 The funding requested in 2021/2022 is £107,250. Funding is within the adult carer’s budget and is a reduction of £42,750 from 2020/2021 due to a combination of:
 - A reduction in the contribution from Children’s Directorate to Adult Carers budget (£6,400)
 - An underspend in 20/21 as there were no grants awarded to carers in quarter 1 due to the sudden change in working arrangements at Carers Leeds brought about by the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. This underspend will cover the first quarter costs in 21/22.

What are the legal implications?

- 16 The decision highlighted in this report will be taken by the Director of Adults and Health in line with the officer delegation scheme as detailed in Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution.
- 17 The decision will be classed as a Significant Operational Decision and will be required to be signed-off by the Director of Adults and Health.
- 18 The decision will be published to ensure transparency and accountability in relation to decision making within the authority.
- 19 There are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential under the Council’s Access to Information rules.
- 20 As the Council would be entering into a grant arrangement with Carers Leeds who wish to operate the “Time for Carers Grant” the Council will have no contractual control over enforcement of the terms. The only sanction available with grant payments is for the Council to claw-back grant monies unspent.

- 21 There is a risk of challenge that a grant payment is not a grant. Legally there is some confusion about when a grant can and cannot be used as there is a fine line between a grant (which is not caught by the procurement rules) and a contract for services (which is caught by the procurement rules). Although no longer directly applicable to the UKs departure from the European Union the preamble to EU Procurement Directive 2014/24/EU (from which the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 were transposed into English law) is still persuasive and the directive makes it clear at paragraph (4) that “the mere financing, in particular through grants, of an activity, which is frequently linked to the obligation to reimburse the amounts received where they are not used for the purposes intended, does not usually fall within the scope of the public procurement rules”.
- 22 As such, unconditional grants are unlikely to meet the definition of a contract set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). However, where grants are used with strict qualification criteria and an obligation to pay back money if certain targets are not reached, the position is less straightforward and it is possible that an arrangement referred to as a grant could actually meet the definition of a contract set out in the PCR 2015 and, if it does, the PCR 2015 may apply. It is therefore extremely important to ensure that, if providing grants, the process followed does not fall within the definition of a “public contract” as set out in PCR 2015 which states –“contracts for pecuniary interest concluded in writing between one or more economic operators and one or more contracting authorities and having as their object the execution of works, the supply of products or the provision of services”
- 23 It is unlikely that the grant payments proposed will fall foul of the subsidy control rules.
- 24 Funding from which any grant payment is made must be designated as “grant” money. If the Council wish to make a grant, the money must be in the “grant” block. If it is not, it can normally be moved from other blocks in the Council budget into the grant block.
- 25 As this is a grant it is not subject to the council’s Contracts Procedure Rules or within the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, but good practice and transparency will be observed throughout.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 26 The application process includes a supporting statement from a health or social care professional to confirm that the applicant is a carer.
- 27 Carers Leeds maintain records of applications received and grants awarded and submit quarterly reports to Leeds City Council.
- 28 Carers are required to submit receipts to Carers Leeds to confirm that the grant has been spent in accordance with the application.
- 29 Funding will be transferred to Carers Leeds on a quarterly basis. Historically, there have always been more applications than funding available. However, any unspent funding will either be recovered or carried over to the following year.
- 30 This work will be reported to the Leeds Carers Partnership which has strong representation from carers, voluntary and community sector organisations and statutory sector partners

Does this proposal support the council’s 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

- 31 Increasing the number of carers who have a short break from caring is a key objective in the Leeds Carers Partnership Strategy “Putting carers at the heart of everything we do” which in turn:

- Supports the Best Council Plan ambition of Leeds being a Compassionate City by setting out the priorities and objectives that, when taken together, will promote the health and well-being of carers and young carers in Leeds, and reduce the health and financial inequalities that carers experience due to caring.
- Supports the Leeds Health and Care Plan system-wide focus on prevention and early intervention through a 'Leeds Left Shift'. This essentially means moving resources (e.g. time, money, activities) towards support that promotes carer health and wellbeing and prevents carers from experiencing ill-health and financial disadvantage.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

32 Carers Leeds are a key third sector partner and have a contract with Leeds City Council to deliver information, advice and support services for adult and parent carers until 31st March 2024 with options to extend the contract up to a further two years (DN358659). Administration of the Time for Carers Grant Scheme is included in the specification for this service. The specification reads "*The service will provide administration of the Time for Carers Grant which can provide a cash sum for a carer to promote their own health and wellbeing. The amount of funding available, the maximum grant award and grant criteria will be agreed each year with the lead commissioning manager for carers*".

b) How will success be measured?

33 Each quarter Carers Leeds will provide quantitative information

- Number of carers receiving a Time for Carers Grant
- Personal details of carers receiving a Time for Carers Grant
- Amount of grant awarded
- Numbers of carers who receive additional support from Carers Leeds

34 Each quarter Carers Leeds will provide at least 3 brief case studies to demonstrate the positive impact of the Time for Carers Scheme

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

35 The grant will commence 1st July 2021. The infrastructure within Carers Leeds to administer the grant is in place.

Appendices

36 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Inclusion screening is appended to this report.

Background papers

37 None.