

Report: Extension of Contract for the Peri Team from 30 September 2022 to 31 March 2023

Date: 28 June 2022

Report of: Head of Service

Report to: Deputy Director – Social Work and Social Care Services

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?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

This report is to request an extension for continuation of the peripatetic team that has been in place since April 2021. Demand continues to rise especially within the hospital and other system flow settings such as reablement and community care beds. Continued restrictions on ability to recruit are having a negative impact on the ability of the social work teams to deliver their services in a timely way. The peripatetic team has been a valued part of our response in recent months and has enabled the provision of a risk based response to people waiting for support from Adult Social Care. This team has provided support in reducing the accumulated back logs which while they remain high due to service demand and staffing capacity issues within the staff teams are now more manageable. The pressure in LTHT and system flow settings is significant, and we now plan the use the peripatetic team resource to address these areas.

These proposals support our council strategic focus to provide needs-led, asset-based approaches based on early intervention and prevention, supporting the people and places most in need.

Recommendations

The Deputy Director of Social Work and Social Care Services is recommended to -

Approve the variation to the contract to enable the continued funding of the Peri Team. The current funding ends on 30.9.22 and is not recurrent. This report is seeking ongoing funding for a further six months. The funding source for this will be from slippage on staffing budget caused by recruitment delays to the expansion of staffing structures outlined above.

1 Why is the proposal being put forward?

The overall picture in Leeds is reflective of the national landscape following the impact of Covid on adult social care services.

Leeds has the second lowest numbers of social workers per 100,000 in comparison to other core cities, and 4th lowest when compared to CIPFA and regional authorities. This data does not account for the proportion of the Leeds social work numbers that are wellbeing workers (un-registered social workers), which when considered would put Leeds further below the average. The service currently has a 70:30 split of social workers and wellbeing workers.

Overall staffing position means that our ability to flex and respond to the cyclical challenges from LTHT and the continued challenge for system flow settings is minimal – continuation of the peripatetic team would allow us to focus on outflow from system flow settings to the benefit of the wider system.

2 What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

Due to the high vacancy levels, it is important to note the current demand on the area teams and hospital teams workloads and the impact this is having on the health and wellbeing of staff. The proposed expansion of additional staff will assist with these pressures. It will all ensure that team sizes are manageable so managers can adequately support the growth in team sizes.

Sickness is the highest it has been at 17.5 days per staff member and turnover is higher than it has been traditionally at 12.5% from an average of 9%.

3 What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Consultation on this proposal has been made with Trade Union and HR and finance colleagues.

4 What are the resource implications?

Continuation of the Peri Team for a further 6 months is £319,042.

5 What are the legal implications?

This is a significant operational decision as it is under £500k, therefore not subject to call in.

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

Every effort is being made to ensure the LA contract is the first option for backfilling vacancies where possible.

There is a national recruitment/retention issue impacting on the social care workforce. Further discussions are being held at a regional level to address the issues aligned to the differential use of agency rates between local authorities.

The further funding of the Peri team will ensure the back logs are more manageable and the time to respond to referrals within the system flow settings is managed in a more timely way.

7 Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- Supporting the city's economic recovery from COVID-19 and building longer-term economic resilience
- Ensuring support for the health and social care sector to respond to and recover from COVID-19
- Supporting self-care, with more people managing their own health conditions in the community
- Working as a system to ensure people get the right care, from the right people in the right place
- Strengthening digital and data 'Smart City' infrastructure and increasing digital inclusion

8 Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

In terms of staff retention, various options and actions have already been put in place to try and alleviate the staffing pressures. These options include:

- Offering permanent posts to staff that are currently on temporary contracts because they are backfilling for existing social workers who have been seconded to other posts on fixed term contracts.
- The CCG have also funded some agency social work posts to meet with the demand in the hospital setting. There has been some slippage in the fund which has enabled these resources to be secured until August 2023.
- Although the service runs a rolling recruitment process for social workers, following the last recruitment in March the service was unable to fill all the vacant posts which is resulting in a reliance on agency staff to fill these gaps.
- The service also provides agency cover for maternity leave so options are also being considered to keep these posts on when the maternity period is complete as this will be another opportunity to expand the staffing numbers and support with the transformation activities. Where possible the aim will be to offer people, LA contracts as opposed to the use of agency staff.
- Further options are being explored to support Senior Social Workers (SSW) going through progression to be automatically upgraded without waiting for SSW vacancies to become available. This will improve retention through recognition of social worker's progression and career development and prevent them leaving to seek promotion opportunities elsewhere.
- Further options being explored to offer Social Work apprentices permanent positions once qualified. We currently have around 3 places every two years. 3 SW apprentices are due to qualify in July 2023.

b) How will success be measured?

The delivery of the budget action plans will be monitored by the service Budget Review Group and the oversight and monitoring of the transformational activity will be monitored by the promoting Independence Steering Group.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

The service is currently undertaking a rolling recruitment process, and this will enable vacancies to be filled more regularly as well as providing capacity for staff to be released to undertake the transformational activity.

9 Appendices

Variation to Contract – for the extension of the Peri Team (attached).

Equality Assessment.

10 Background papers

None.