

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 19 March 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Cllr. Bobby Feeley

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Title: Young Carers Regional Collaboration

1. What is the report about?

This report relates to the development of a regional Young Carers Service in collaboration with North Wales Authorities and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Due to the potential overall cost of a regional contract being above £1 million, agreement is required from Cabinet to take forward options for the development of a regional/sub regional collaboration for the provision of Young Carer Services

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Cabinet give their approval for work to be taken forward to develop regional/sub regional collaboration for the provision of Young Carers Services across North Wales Authorities and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB).

4. Report details.

4.1 Background

4.1.1 All Local Authorities have statutory responsibilities in relation to Young Carers. Each local authority in North Wales commission services for young carers, each of these commissioned services is supported at the local level by additional funding from BCUHB. These services are provided by two organisations with 5 of the 6 Local Authorities having the same provider.

4.1.2 As part of the work being undertaken under the Families First initiative in North Wales services for Young Carers were identified for consideration for cross authority collaboration. A working group has been established which includes the six North Wales Authorities and representatives from BCUHB. The work is being led by Conwy County Borough Council.

4.1.3 A detailed analysis of the usage, delivery and cost of the current contracts across North Wales has been undertaken based on information provided by the current providers. There are variations in the number of Young Carers using the services across the authorities with Denbighshire being one of the lowest. There are also

variances in costs and service provision across the authorities.

4.1.4 Using the information provided costings for a regional service have been calculated based on current usage and delivery. Taking account of management and staffing costs a percentage has been apportioned to each authority which has shown significant savings if a regional contract was sought across all six North Wales Authorities.

4.2 Key Benefits

4.2.1 As indicated above the working group has identified significant variation across the Authorities and potential scope for service improvements by collaborating with neighbouring authorities and BCUHB. Benefits of collaboration are listed below:

- Streamlining the services for health and other regional bodies
- Improving the consistency of services across North Wales, which can improve the experience of Young Carers who move from one county to another.
- Streamlining of referral systems can make the process more efficient for referring agencies.
- May result in improved standards and sharing of innovative practice, although there is a risk that the service falls to the lowest common denominator which needs to be managed.
- Can set minimum standards across North Wales, which can help referrers, such as teachers, understand what services should be available and provide clear pathways for Young Carers and professionals.
- A large single service may have additional influence to help raise the profile of the needs of Young Carers
- A regional service should produce financial savings for each partner.

4.3 Current Position

4.3.1 The next stage of the project needs a financial commitment from each local authority. Due to the scale of the contract, which will be in the region of £300,000 to £350,000 per annum, the proposal needs to go through each local authority's political process for approval.

4.3.2 We are awaiting confirmation from other authorities as to whether they are committed to taking a regional approach to a Young Carers Service. Currently commitment has been made from Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham, all subject to political approval. There has been no indication from the other three authorities as to their position.

4.3.3 Should the other authorities not choose to be part of a regional contract it is proposed that we enter into a sub regional contract between Denbighshire, Conwy and Wrexham which is also likely to deliver cost savings as well as benefits in service delivery. Amendments would be made to the current budget sheet to reflect changes and identify what savings would be possible.

4.3.4 As stated above in 4.1.3 Denbighshire have the lowest number of Young Carers. In order to ensure we identify as many Young Carers as possible work is being undertaken through the Partnership team in collaboration with Education and Social Services. The first part of this work is underway to place a tick box on the annual

school returns form completed by parents asking if they consider their child to be a young carer. A definition of a Young Carer will also be included to assist parents. The forms are currently being amended to enable us to have data from this September. This is likely to significantly increase the number of Young Carers we are aware of which will impact on the services being delivered.

5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1 *Improving performance in education and the quality of our school buildings –* Identifying and supporting young carers will enable support to be provided to assist them in their educational attainment.
- 5.2 *Vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible –* Raising the profile of young carers will enable us to provide the most effective support to vulnerable children and young people who are young carers.
- 5.3 *Modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers -* Through collaboration there is potential for efficiency savings and an improved streamlined service for young carers.

6 What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1 An analysis of current service provision and financial commitments has been undertaken by collating information from each of the 6 North Wales Local Authorities. Early indications suggest that the cost of a regional service provision can produce financial efficiencies for most if not all the partners. This work has provided a benchmark for the tendering process if we are to proceed to regional commissioning.
- 6.2 The overall cost of the project on a regional basis would be approximately £300,000 per annum and it is proposed to consider both a 3 and 5 year contract.
- 6.3 The current cost for a Young Carers service in Denbighshire is £91,374 split between £41,374 from Children and Family Services and £50,000 from Families First funding. The projected figures for cost savings based on current services show a significant decrease in budget if all six authorities were to collaborate with the Denbighshire sum being £51,195 a potential saving of £40,000. However this is subject to change should we contract on a sub regional level.
- 6.4 With regard to the ongoing work in Denbighshire to identify Young Carers mentioned in 4.3.4 once this is complete we are likely to have a higher number of Young Carers requiring a service. It is proposed that some of the savings could be used to create more capacity if required.

7 What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken by Conwy County Borough Council as lead authority for the working group as the project develops.

8 What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 Representatives from each of the six North Wales counties and Health (Health are providing a contribution of £26,000 in total across the six authorities) are on the working group and the Planning and Commissioning Learning Set (Families First).

Consultation with Young Carers will need to take place, and will be organised once commitment to the process has been made by each local authority. Consultation with all relevant stakeholders may also be necessary.

9 Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 Any costs and potential savings should become clearer as the project develops. Costs must be contained within existing resources.

10 What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1 Commitment from each authority and agreement regarding the collateral agreement are needed by February 2013 to enable the process to be completed by March 2014. There is an option to commission sub-regionally if all counties cannot commit at this stage. Adjustments will be made to the financial assessment to reflect any changes.

- 10.2 There is also a risk that suppliers are not able to tender for this value of contract. There is an option to joint commission with a smaller number of counties, perhaps three contracts covering two counties each. There is also the option for providers to submit a joint tender. We will work with the respective voluntary services within each authority and Business Wales help manage the risk.

- 10.3 A risk assessment will be developed and up dated as the project progresses

11 Power to make the Decision

Power to make a decision is held under Part 25.4 (c) of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules