

## **Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement**

Meeting to be held on 12 October 2012

Electoral Division affected: All
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### **Progress on the Proposal for a Carers Break Fund**

Contact for further information:

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#### **Executive Summary**

At the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on 31 May 2012, a report was presented on Optimising the Review Process for Carers.

It was reported that carers' assessments and reviews were primarily associated with the provision of short break vouchers and that work was underway to prepare a proposal to replace the voucher scheme with a Carers Break Fund which would improve our offer to carers as a result of an assessment or review. The Carers Break Fund could be reviewed annually and would not be tied into the financial year.

It was recommended that a pilot be undertaken to test out any proposed changes and this report gives an update on the progress of the proposal for a Carers Break Fund.

#### **Recommendation**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report.

#### **Background and Advice**

In line with self directed support, giving customers more choice and control, a working group made up of representatives from Personal Social Care, Care Navigation and Finance within the Adult and Community Services Directorate has been looking in to how we can deliver support to carers in more flexible ways offering them choice over the services they receive as we do with service users.

The work of the group has been delayed in 2012 due to the review of the structure within Personal Social Care (PSC) and IT developments. The PSC structure was reviewed in May 2012 and revisions agreed. Implementation of the revised structure has been dependent upon a recruitment exercise and will take place on 1 November 2012. In addition, the replacement for the current IT social care records system will need to be in place to effectively pilot and deliver any proposed changes. The date for the replacement of the IT system has not yet been agreed.

The group has consulted with carers at the Lancashire Carers Forum to seek their views to inform the preparation of a proposal for a scheme which would replace current Short Break Vouchers as it is felt that the current scheme limits the choice of options for users and carers to traditional services. The proposal will recommend that a "fund", of an identified amount of money, based upon the current costs of respite vouchers, is held by the County Council, to be drawn on as services identified in the support plan are purchased. Details of how the fund could be used would be detailed in each individual carers support plan.

The new Carers Break Fund would:

- Allow service users and carers to exert full choice and control as to how they receive and use the monies allocated for carers breaks which fits with the personalisation agenda.
- Assist with more accurate monitoring of spend as the systems would be updated as the service is booked rather than dependent upon providers processing requests for payments.
- Remove the need to print and issue vouchers at the beginning of each financial year as the fund can be reviewed and allocated in line with assessments and reviews.

Issues that would need to be addressed to implement the changes are:

- Configuration of IT systems which may not be possible in view of the current system replacement project.
- Decision with regard to the charging policy options for service users and carers.
- Planning for a pilot in a geographical area to test out the proposed changes. The proposal is due to be presented to the Directorate's senior management team in November 2012, however, it is felt that due to the current IT replacement project, it would not be feasible to introduce the Carers Break Fund until the new IT systems are in place.

## **Consultations**

N/A

## **Risk management**

If the issues noted above are not addressed, implementation of the Carers Break Fund would be at risk, however, respite for carers would continue to be provided by the Short Break Voucher scheme.

## **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Report to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement – Optimising the Review Process for Carers	31 May 2012	Dave Gorman, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A