

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 22 November 2012

Electoral Division affected: All

Progress on the Proposal for a Carers Break Fund

Contact for further information:

Barbara Lewis, (01772) 534394, Adult and Community Services Directorate,
barbara.lewis@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

At the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on 12 October 2012, a report was presented on the progress of the proposal for a Carer's Break Fund.

A Carers Break Fund will 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. The fund would also enable more accurate monitoring of how carers needs are met and could be reviewed annually at any point during the year.

It was recommended that a pilot be undertaken to test out any proposed changes including IT requirements to ensure an efficient and effective service to carers

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- (i) Support a pilot which would include addressing IT issues and identifying future IT requirements;
- (ii) Subject to (i) above, recommend the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services to approve the detailed proposals for a pilot.

Background and Advice

A proposal to replace the current short break voucher scheme with a Carers Break Fund was presented to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement on 12 October 2012. A further update on the timescales for the implementation of the IT system and more information on the proposed pilot was requested for the next meeting.

The proposal was further discussed at the Adult and Community Services (ACS) Directorate's Senior Management Team on 13 November 2012 with senior managers supporting the proposal and a pilot to assess the implications of proposed changes to ensure that carers' needs are more appropriately met in a timely and effective way.

IT systems development was presented as one of the main issues to be addressed to facilitate effective delivery of the scheme, particularly as Adult Social Care is planning a whole scale replacement of the current IT system (ISSIS) in the future. The timescales for the replacement are not yet confirmed as the approval to proceed with the project has not yet been given, however it is estimated that it will take 12 to 18 months to completion.

ACS Senior Management Team considered the IT implications as, currently, the ISSIS suite of systems is unable to deal with the implementation of the Carer Break Fund so the amount of Carer Break Fund allocated and payments made would have to be manually recorded. While manual systems are not the most effective way to support operational and finance processes, it was considered that the development of a pilot would help to inform the future requirements for IT support to be planned into the replacement system. If interim changes within the current system are possible, they would also be explored.

It is recognised that there are several aspects to delivering such a significant change and that a robust, comprehensive pilot will be required over 12 months to ensure the successful implementation of an improved offer for carers.

Initially a small scale pilot in one geographical area was planned however, the pilot will now include as many people as possible receiving the variety of respite options in each area of the County. A minimum of 50 in each area should be included but if operated over a 12 month period there potentially could be no upper limit to the number included. Initially, those carers requesting renewal of their short break vouchers would be offered a "fund", extending to new customers where carer needs have been identified and other carer groups throughout the course of the pilot.

The pilot would test out benefits for carers both in terms of being able to access a wider range of carer support options and the process to access the "fund" to ensure a streamlined service. It would also achieve an improvement in performance for carer's reviews by managing review activity across the year. An evaluation of the pilot will be reported back to the ACS Senior Management Team prior to recommendations for the future being presented to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services.

Consultations

N/A

Risk management

The proposed pilot will assess any risks in terms of the proposal to implement a Carers Break Fund with any actions to mitigate risk presented to the senior management team. Respite for carers will continue to be provided by the Short Break Voucher scheme until such time as a sustainable alternative is developed.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Report to the Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement – Progress on the Proposal for a Carers Break Fund	12 October 2012	Dave Gorman, Office of the Chief Executive, (01772) 534261

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A