

CORE OFFER BUDGET FOR COMMUNITY CARE SUPPORT

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL HAVE TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE AND WHAT DOES IT NEED TO COVER?

In 2013 the government transferred operation of the Social Fund to Local Authorities. In Darlington the total allocation for Crisis Fund and Community Care elements was £406k initially. Whilst there is no statutory obligation to deliver these services they are crucial to the individuals that they support who are amongst the most vulnerable residents of Darlington. The Community Care Element of the Social Fund aims to help applicants remain in or move back into the community after a period of usually 3 months, in supported or unsettled or inappropriate accommodation or where meeting a need for furniture such as a bed would prevent them from needing to go into residential care or hospital.

Analysis of Community Care usage has shown that the mental health, physical disability and domestic violence are the key reasons for the applications. Almost a third of clients had mental health issues and there were risks of further deterioration in health if these needs are not met. This would impact on the levels of statutory care packages that would be required and the costs to the local authority of providing a community care grant reduces the risk of far greater costs to provide more complex packages of care. If the service were not in place there is likely to be an increase in child protection cases because of neglect or increased domestic violence, crime and increased risks to health including mental health

This contract will be key to reducing demand on statutory services as it provides basic furniture and equipment for clients to enable them to move into or remaining in appropriate accommodation. This addresses a range of risks including domestic abuse, health deterioration and over or under occupancy issues. The criteria for agreeing equipment has been reviewed and the budget has been cut accordingly with the provision based on second-hand furniture where appropriate.

HOW DOES THE CORE OFFER BUDGET MEET THE COUNCIL'S OBLIGATIONS?

Whilst it is not a statutory requirement to have this service there are clear business reasons for focussing resources in this area and this provides value for money by reducing risk to both the individual and the local authority.

A set of criteria has been used to decide on Darlington's Future proposals and this proposal will support delivery of the following:

- Invest to protect the most vulnerable in society.
- Invest to reduce costs in the future.

DOES THIS DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT SERVICE?

The current service is delivered in house but the proposal is to go out to tender to ensure greater value for money but also to ensure that the service is operated by people who have key skills in dealing with these clients and also access to a supply chain that provides good value.

WHAT IS THE CORE BUDGET MADE UP OF?

2019/20 - £154,732

£150,000	Community Support
£4,732	Overheads