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**SPECIALIST DOMICILIARY SERVICES – PROPOSED CONTRACTING  
ARRANGEMENTS**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Eleanor Lister, Social Services Portfolio  
Responsible Director(s) – Margaret Asquith, Director of Social Services**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide background information about the proposed changes in relation to service provision for people with a learning disability.
2. To seek agreement to the proposal for tendering for Specialist Domiciliary Services and the process to be followed.

**Information and Analysis**

3. The current Supported Living Agreement which commenced on 1st November 2002 ends on 31st October 2004. The providers who currently provide care under the terms of this Agreement are Mencap, New Era, United Response, and Northern Lifecare. The Agreement underpinned the Government's aims detailed in the White Paper 'Valuing People' by affording service users with a learning disability increased independence and choice and supporting social inclusion. The service delivery was closely linked to, and supported by, changes to Transitional Housing Benefit and Supporting People funding. The service provides support to service users within their own home.
4. To facilitate the ongoing development of support for people with a learning disability and to develop services to support adults in the community with physical disability and/or sensory impairment, it is proposed that a Specialist Domiciliary Service be developed which will replace the current Supported Living Agreement. Those people currently receiving a service via the Supported Living Agreement will have their care provision reviewed by a Care Manager and until the specialist domiciliary services are set in place, interim Service Level Agreements will be implemented with current providers. The Service Level Agreements will define reviewed care packages and ensure that service users continue to have their assessed needs provided for until the new contractual arrangements are implemented.
5. A specialist domiciliary service will enable all adult service users to access a service, which will maintain their independence and choice, and will support social inclusion and not just be relevant to people with a learning disability. Service users will continue to benefit from Transitional Housing Benefit and Supporting People funding where assessed as appropriate.
6. It is proposed that the tender is for cost and volume contracts for these services to ensure that the Department is able to satisfy itself that providers are able to meet its requirements and support service users appropriately, and to offer a guarantee of hours to the provider

thereby promoting stability within the domiciliary care market.

7. The proposed tender process will propose a price per hour and will consist mainly of financial and quality checks as follows:
  - a) An advertisement would be placed in regional newspapers (i.e. Northern Echo and Newcastle Evening Chronicle) and in the national Community Care journal asking for 'expressions of interest';
  - b) Potential providers who responded would be sent an 'expressions of interest' package which would comprise:
    - (i) details of the process to be followed;
    - (ii) a copy of the draft Contract and Service Specification; and
    - (iii) a business & service level questionnaire which is designed to collect information regarding:
      - a) Financial details
      - b) Health and Safety Audit
      - c) Equal Opportunity issues
      - d) Staff recruitment and CRB checks of day to day manager of the service
      - e) Details of referees
      - f) Adult Protection Issues
      - g) Information regarding complaints.
  - c) A Tender Panel will be called to open received 'expressions of interest' and formally record receipt of them;
  - d) A period of 6 weeks will be allowed for analysis of the information received (1st stage evaluation). Analysis of Financial and Health and Safety information will be undertaken by Corporate Services Department as for other tenders;
  - e) Following analysis of the information a Tender Panel will be called and asked to consider the outcome of the analysis and the recommendation as to which providers will progress to the 2nd stage evaluation;
  - f) The 2nd stage evaluation will comprise interviews with managers; and
  - g) A Tender Panel will be called to consider recommendations made following the 2nd stage evaluation and to finalise awarding of contracts.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

8. No consultation was required in producing this report.

### **Legal Implications**

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough

Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Council Policy Framework**

11. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

### **Decision Deadline**

12. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

### **Recommendations**

13. It is recommended that Members:-
  - a) Approve the proposed changes in contracting for a Supported Living Agreement for People with Learning Disabilities to a Specialist Domiciliary Service for Adults; and
  - b) Approve the tender process for a Specialist Domiciliary Service as outlined above.

### **Reason**

14. The change in contracting will provide a support service in the form of a Specialist Domiciliary Service to all adults with a disability and not limited to adults with a learning disability. A specialist service will cover physical impairment, sensory impairment, and mental health issues offering better choice to service users.

**Margaret Asquith**  
**Director of Social Services**

### **Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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