



Cabinet Meeting

19 July 2017

Report title	City of Wolverhampton Ethical Homecare Charter	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE Adults	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Linda Sanders, Strategic Director, People	
Originating service	Commissioning	
Accountable employee(s)	Sarah Smith Tel Email	Head of Commissioning 01902 555318 sarah.smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	PLT	19 June 2017

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree that the Council should continue to work with care providers to implement a City of Wolverhampton Ethical Homecare Charter to reflect the local market.
2. Agree that the Council should adopt the City of Wolverhampton Ethical Homecare Charter including the Wolverhampton Wage for Homecare.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Ethical Care Charter was developed by UNISON in 2012, after a nationwide survey of homecare staff. The Charter is attached at appendix 1.
- 1.2 The objective of the charter is to establish a baseline for the “safety, quality and dignity of care”.
- 1.3 It achieves this by recommending employment conditions that facilitate a high-quality service to clients, and ensure the recruitment and retention of a more stable workforce.
- 1.4 To date Wolverhampton has not officially signed up to the Unison Ethical Care Charter but it has embedded many elements of the charter in its commissioning practice. The Council is extremely vigilant in ensuring that carer’s recruitment, pay rates, quality of services and transparency of outcomes are evident in all homecare services.

2.0 Homecare market position

- 2.1 Service specifications are increasingly outcome focussed and include performance indicators which link to the service user and carer experience. The Domiciliary Care Framework commissioned in 2016 was specified with outcomes at its heart.
- 2.2 The current domiciliary care service delivers personal care to people in their own homes. There are currently approximately 1,094 individuals in receipt of this service with an average weekly delivery of 12 hours 30 minutes per person. The service is delivered predominantly to older people but is also available to all younger adults meeting the eligibility criteria.
- 2.3 The existing contracts were retendered and recommissioned in April 2016 and as an integral part of the new framework the Council raised rates to take account of the regulatory National Living Wage.
- 2.4 The tender process awarded framework status to twelve providers covering the city, the rate being applied in 2017-18 is £14.12 per hour across six geographical areas.
- 2.5 Staffing represents approximately 60% of costs for providers of care and is therefore influenced by factors such as the National Living Wage and inflation, and the ability of providers to recruit and retain staff at the hourly rates offered.
- 2.6 The framework rates which were increased effective from April 2017 have enabled: -
 - A more sustainable care and support market;
 - The ability to attract higher quality staff;
 - A reduction in staff turnover; and increased retention of care workers;
 - An increase in care worker morale and reliability;
 - Reduced absenteeism;
 - Productivity improvements;
 - Strengthened recruitment opportunities;

- Reputational benefits for the Council and its external sector;
- Care workers paid for travel time;
- More money being spent on local employees and SME's in the local economy.

3.0 Quality Assurance of Providers

- 3.1 The Council has a fully operational Quality Assurance Team which regularly monitors provider's performance. This team was increased by a further two Quality Assurance Officers as part of the new, improved and restructured People Commissioning function.
- 3.2 All strategies, policies, contracts and frameworks are visible and accessible by service users and their carers. The Council produces detailed pro-active monitoring and performance intelligence which includes direct input from service users and carers. This is used to inform and provide feedback to various user led groups.
- 3.3 Service users and carers can provide direct observation and comment on the performance of services to the Council and/or providers through the quality assurance process.

4.0 The National Living Wage in Wolverhampton

- 4.1 The new National Living Wage is intended to recognise the dignity of work and the importance for individuals, families and society of people being able to earn a living.
- 4.2 The new National Living Wage is a compulsory wage floor of £7.50 for workers aged 25 and over, which was introduced in April 2017, expected to rise to £9.00 by 2020.
- 4.3 The Council is required to provide appropriate homecare to meet the statutory requirement and the needs of individual service users.
- 4.4 Following Cabinet authorisation obtained in March 2017, the Council agreed to increase all framework providers' rates to a standardised rate; which ensured providers could meet their increased obligations under the new statutory National Living Wage,

5.0 Engagement with Unison

- 5.1 In order to progress implementation of the Ethical Care Charter, Commissioning have held a series of productive and collaborative meetings with Unison over the past two months.
- 5.2 Implementation of the Charter is recommended in 3 stages and it was acknowledged and agreed by both parties that there are elements of the steps in each phase that require further development.
- 5.3 It was acknowledged that the signing of the Charter without considering local context, local market conditions and innovations in the sector such as call monitoring may simply

be tokenistic and would not deliver the objectives of the Charter (baselining and improving the safety, quality and dignity of care)

- 5.4 It was agreed with Unison therefore that Wolverhampton would take the phased approach recommended in the Charter but amend specific elements and develop the City of Wolverhampton Ethical Care Charter including the launch of the Wolverhampton Wage for Homecare.

Stage 1, the Council is already fully compliant with the recommendations but suggests that “uniforms” are added to the list of costs in point 3, routinely incurred by care workers and for which they are reimbursed.

Stage 2, Council is already fully compliant with the recommendations excluding point 2. It has been discussed and agreed with Unison that whilst it recognised that in many cases zero hours’ contracts are not an attractive employment route there are also many cases where individuals enjoy the flexibility that zero hours’ contracts can offer. Examples given were students who may work hours during down time available away from studies.

Stage 3, Wolverhampton has always paid commissioned rates that recognise and allow providers to meet their obligations under the Living Wage. It is planned that as part of the future implementation of the Wolverhampton Ethical Care Charter the Council will also launch the “Wolverhampton Wage for Homecare”.

- 5.5 It is planned that the Wolverhampton Wage from Homecare is set using the methodology:

- Providers will always pay care workers a rate that is no less than 110% per of the legally required regulatory Living Wage per hour. In 2017 the regulatory Living Wage is £7.50 per hour. This would therefore be a minimum pay rate of £8.25 per hour.

6.0 Financial implications

- 6.1 Domiciliary care for Older People is funded from the Older People’s Care Purchasing budget which is £17.4 million for 2017/18.
- 6.2 The expected impact of the National Living Wage has been calculated on existing homecare packages. The Medium Term Financial Strategy includes growth to fund the cost of the NLW for all care packages including home care. The total annual growth for 2017-18 and 2018-19 is £1.1 million. It is anticipated that any costs associated with this ethical charter will be contained within this growth. [AS/10072017/W]

7.0 Legal implications

- 7.1 The Councils homecare service is sustainable and fully compliant with the Councils obligations under the Care Act 2014. [TS/10072017/R]

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 An equalities analysis was undertaken as part of the domiciliary care tender in April 2016.

9.0 Environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications from this proposal.

10.0 Human resources implications

- 10.1 Wolverhampton has always paid commissioned rates that recognise and allow providers to meet their obligations under the Living Wage. It is planned that as part of the future implementation of the Wolverhampton Ethical Care Charter the Council will also launch the "Wolverhampton Wage for Homecare".
- 10.2 Providers will be required to pay care workers a rate that is no less than 110% per of the legally required regulatory Living Wage per hour. In 2017 the regulatory Living Wage is £7.50 per hour. This would therefore be a minimum pay rate of £8.25 per hour.
- 10.3 There are no human resources implications for the Council.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 11.1 There are no corporate landlord implications for the Council's property portfolio.

12.0 Schedule of background papers

- 12.1 None