

Appendix 3

Small Items of Equipment under £50

Savings proposal 2015/16 £30K

Adult Social Care currently provides Occupational Therapy, Sensory and Telecare equipment to vulnerable people who meet the Care Act 2014 well-being principles. This equipment includes aids and minor adaptations to support independence and resilience.

Occupational Therapy, sensory and Telecare equipment can be used to support service users to remain within the community prevent hospital and residential admission and delayed discharge.

Small items of equipment under £50 assist service user with activities of daily living including but not exclusively toileting, bathing, moving and handling, accessing the community and alerting emergency support. Items of equipment can include – white canes, toilet frames, grab rails, shower boards, slide sheets and personal triggers.

The proposal to no longer provide equipment under £50 is clearly supported by a number of points:

- Most of the equipment under the value of £50 is usually generic items which are widely available from a number of retailers at a cost to the individual of far less than the cost to the Council from the approved equipment services.
- People who require small items of equipment will have a much wider choice if they are not limited to approved providers
- A number of Local Authorities have already stopped providing small items of equipment, Barking and Dagenham being one example. Also other Local Authorities have revised their equipment catalogues and identified small items of equipment that are available in the open market and so removed from the catalogues.
- This will enable Adult Social Care to focus on those with high level needs

The proposal is to realise a saving of £30K within this financial year on the issuing of small items of equipment. Detailed work analysis is still to be completed however based on last financial year the budget for small equipment under £50 is approximately £66K per annum.

Small items of equipment are used by service users to support their identified needs. Consideration should be given to the possible risks of removing this provision.

There are a number of clear risks including;

- Likelihood of increase of care and support packages
- Reduction in service users independence
- Likelihood of an increase in hospital admissions
- Likelihood of an increase in admission to residential placements
- Service users may be unable to self-fund the equipment
- Increase risk of falls
- Delay hospital discharges
- Increase demands on carers and break down of care
- If self-funding is agreed there is limited market provision for people to purchase equipment locally in Thurrock.

There is a risk that if Thurrock Council does not supply the item of equipment the service user will not self-purchase a more detailed risk analysis considering each item of equipment and its potential benefit to a service user will be carried out within the consultation process.

Legal Position

The Care Act 2014 and the statutory guidance for the Care Act do not prescribe how specific needs are to be met. Equipment, including smaller pieces of equipment, can be provided under section 2 of the Act which relates to the prevention of care needs developing or sections 18 to 20 which relate to meeting care and support needs. Regulations require that Local Authorities must not charge for aids or minor adaptations up to the value of £1,000.

Where a Local Authority is under a duty or decides to meet an individual's care and support needs Under the Care Act 2014 Sections 18 to 20, the Local Authority will develop a care and support plan with the involvement of the person and take reasonable steps to agree with them as to how to meet their needs. The question of whether to provide small equipment would need to be decided on a case-by-case basis, and as part of overall care and support planning.

Prevention is a key responsibility under the Care Act 2014 under Section 2, Local Authorities must provide or arrange for the provision of services, facilities or resources that contribute towards preventing or delaying the development of care and support needs. The guidance clarifies that this can be achieved through a range of measures such as providing information and advice (which may for example include advice to the person about equipment that would support them) or providing interventions such as community equipment. In the case of prevention, a general policy of not providing small equipment may be justifiable in some circumstances, but would need to be kept under review with a view to changing the policy if the situation changes. Local Authorities do have a degree of discretion in how they

discharge their prevention duties but their policies must meet the requirements of section 2 and be lawful.

It is also important to note that small items of equipment under £50 are currently installed to support Children and Adults.

A decision will be required concerning people who already have equipment and who need to replace that equipment.

It will be important to identify clearly the mitigation of risk associated with this proposal. One key development that may support the proposal is that Adult Social Care has introduced a new Information and Advice service and Resource Allocation System. People can access this to establish information and choose the right piece of equipment. If the proposal is agreed then a clear process will be developed to address exceptional circumstances where equipment may need to be purchased by the Council for an individual.

The Care Act 2014 states that Local Authorities must promote well-being when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. Well-being is described as relating to the following areas:

- Personal dignity
- Physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Control by the individual over day to day life
- Participation in work, education, training or recreation
- Social and economic wellbeing
- Domestic, family and personal
- Suitability of living accommodation
- The individual contribution to society

As part of Thurrock's Better Care Fund future planning has included increasing the number of service users using Telecare to support

- Reduction in acute admission avoidance
- Living well with Long Term Conditions
- Living well with complex co-morbidities, dementia and frailty

The proposal is to explore all options to support the required saving. Adult social care wants to fully involve people who access services those who might access them in the future and representative organisations for service users in Thurrock. This will be a consultation that will recommend options and explain the impact of those options.

As part of this process Thurrock Coalition have agreed to produce a detailed Equality Impact Assessment of the proposals which will highlight the implications, risks and

impact of the subsequent decisions that Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will be required to make.