

REPORT TO: Health Policy & Performance Board
DATE: 3 November 2015
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People & Economy
PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing
SUBJECT: Care Act Implementation – Current Position
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the Board with an update on progress and impact of implementation on phase 1 of the Care Act, and to inform the Board of the postponement and consequences of phase 2 of the Care Act to 2020.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board note the contents of the report, impact and risks associated with the implementation of the Care Act 2015.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On April 1st 2015 phase 1 of the Care Act came into force. Accordingly:

- Halton now has a duty to provide prevention, information and advice services, including independent advocacy;
- Carers are entitled to an assessment and support, with the same rights as any adult service user;
- There is a new national threshold for eligibility for social care for both adults and Carers, which replaces the previous Fair Access to Care Services (FACS);
- Those who pay for their own care (self-funders) also have the right to an assessment, advice and support planning;
- There is a universal system of Deferred Payments for residential care; and
- Local Authorities (LAs) have a duty to set-up a Safeguarding Adults Board.

3.2 Progress has been made on the implementation of all aspects of the Care Act; Halton can now demonstrate full compliance within all areas; including:

- **Prevention:** Information model has been improved in relation to signposting and closer working across voluntary sector organisations. A new approach to advocacy is in place; a hub model has been developed.
- **Assessment and Eligibility:** New adults assessment process and policy in place; additional posts have been recruited to in order to manage the increased demand for assessment and services.
- **Training:** All of the training for the Act has been delivered in house by Halton Borough Council staff. The training has been well attended

(over 300 staff) and responses have been very positive. In addition, we have secured access to some e-learning modules due to a partnership arrangement with Wirral LA; these e-learning modules are available for all staff.

- Adult Safeguarding: a number of areas have been strengthened to incorporate the requirements of the Care Act.
- Carers: A new Carer's assessment process and policy is in place.
- Policies: A number of policies have been reviewed to ensure they are compliant with the Care Act

3.3 The implementation of the Act has resulted in an increase in demand for services and assessments, some of this increase in demand has been managed with improvements in sign posting and prevention services. Significantly more individuals are now provided with information and signposted with positive results.

3.4 Postponement of Phase 2

The cap on care costs (£72,000) was due to be introduced in April 2016 and Halton's preparation for this was well advanced. However, the Department of Health (DH) has decided to postpone this until April 2020. The Government has said that they are still firmly committed to implementing the cap on care costs. This puts a hold on all of Halton's current Phase 2 planning and development. Related to the cap are a number of other processes which have also been delayed until 2020:

- The means test which looks at a person's financial assets to decide how much they will contribute towards their own care will remain at £23,250. This was to increase to £118,000. It is not yet clear whether it will go up at all until 2020;and
- The introduction of a right of appeal against specific local authority decisions about a person's care and support.

The additional time saved due to the delay will be used to conduct various analyses of the impact of Phase 1 in Halton and how effectively the new universal assessment process is working.

3.5 The Expected Impact of Phase 1 on Halton

Information about how the Care Act was likely to affect individuals living in Halton was extensively publicised both by the DH, through its media campaign in the run up to April 1st 2015 and by Halton's own Information strategy.

As a result we expected to see:

- an increased demand for information and advice, assessments and carers' support services; and
- a significant financial impact.

3.5.1 Some Early Results

- There has been a 44% increase in the number of Carers assessments requested, compared with the same period last year (1st April - 14th June).
- The expected financial impact was reduced by the fact that very few self-funders applied for an assessment. In addition, the introduction of a triage system at the Call Centre meant that a significant number of new approaches from Carers resulted in more being signposted or receiving the information they required from their dialogue with the Call Centre.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 A number of policies have been reviewed to ensure they are compliant with the Care Act

5.0 SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A review of safeguarding processes etc. has demonstrated full compliance with the Act

6.0 FINANCIAL/ RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The total allocation under the Care Act is £1,122,000. We have so far committed spending of £447,000. A contingency pot has been established to support any increased demand from the Care Act and this is currently £600k; this will ensure that we are in a position to react to any changes in provision or public expectations related to the Act.

6.2 We remain unclear if any funding will be recalled as a result of the postponement.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

There are no implications for this priority.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

There are no implications for this priority.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no implications for this priority.

7.4 A Safer Halton

There are no implications for this priority.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no implications for this priority.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 After the next Spending Review (to be published on November 25th), the DH will advise LAs on the level of funding available for social care. Until then it is still unclear as to what future funding will be available.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 None identified at this stage.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUNND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.