

# **North Somerset Council**

## **REPORT TO THE ADULT SERVICES AND HOUSING POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**DATE OF MEETING: 12 APRIL 2018**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: GRANT FOR HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT  
UPDATE**

**TOWN OR PARISH: ALL**

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: GERALD HUNT HEAD OF  
COMMISSIONING**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. That the Panel notes progress with the award of a £1m grant for NHSA (Alliance Homes) Ltd.

### **1. SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This grant award to Alliance was approved as part of the council's MTFP and delivers £1.2m savings as the above grant replaces the previous contracted arrangements for housing floating support, following an aborted procurement process for the contracted service. The grant will commence 1 April 2018.

### **2. POLICY**

- 2.1 The People and Communities Directorate Statement for 2018-19 lists the following as two of its aims:
  - Manage the impact of ongoing financial reductions for voluntary sector and supporting people services;
  - Support and enable vulnerable adults to live independently.
- 2.2 The North Somerset Corporate Plan 2015-19 considers various areas of key focus. The following listed under "Wellbeing" relate to the re-commissioning of domiciliary care:
  - Enable residents to make healthy choices and promote active lifestyles which reduce ill health and increase independence;
  - Commission or provide quality health and care services, which deliver dignity, safety and choice.

### **3. DETAILS**

#### **The Project**

The council is finalising the project agreement for the grant for housing related support. Given the substantial financial reduction from the original contract for floating support previously delivered by Alliance and its support partners, its full impact will emerge once the services and staffing impact of the changes are finalised at the end of the month.

Given diminishing budgets and a financial climate likely to lead to greater ongoing demand for services, it is necessary that all parties maximise the impact of available funding. This grant proposal is for a project aimed at delivering housing related support as part of the prevention and reduction of homelessness in North Somerset. The project scope is to cover the North Somerset area. Any services delivered as part of the project are to help meet the housing needs of those most vulnerable and at risk of homelessness in North Somerset.

This project supports the following council strategies:

- Preventing Homelessness Strategy
- Housing with Support Strategy
- Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy

As one of the largest providers of housing support services in North Somerset providing housing and housing-related support to around 12,000 people, the council is working solely with Alliance Homes Group to achieve both organisations objectives.

This grant proposal sets out the project objectives and the way in which Alliance Homes proposes to achieve these objectives. Both parties must agree with the final accepted grant proposal, which will form part of the grant agreement.

The key elements of the new grant are outlined below.

## Project Objectives

Project Objective
<b>1. People experiencing crisis in housing related issues or negative life events are able to access appropriate support, in a timely way, to help to meet immediate needs.</b>
Alliance Response
<p>We expect demand for the service to outstrip supply. Our assessment and triage processes will identify those clients who can benefit most from our direct service intervention. We will refer or signpost clients who will benefit more from other service interventions (see project objective 2 below) and we also expect to maintain a waiting list for clients with non-urgent support needs where demand exceeds the available resources.</p> <p>We will re-design our support processes to deliver an equal emphasis on 'Brief Intervention' support and traditional support. (Brief intervention support is a stripped down, highly flexible approach that delivers quick support interventions as close to the point of referral as possible).</p> <p>This approach will deliver maximum support outcomes for the available investment.</p> <p>We will continue our 'one point of service entry' which will be relocated into the Alliance Contact Team. This change delivers resilience and improved service accessibility.</p> <p>Staff handling first point of contact will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Respond to all support calls and referrals</li><li>• Triage cases</li><li>• Complete telephone assessments</li><li>• Complete brief interventions where appropriate</li><li>• Coordinate casework distribution to the support team</li></ul> <p>We will set up 'drop in' surgeries where there is sufficient demand / available staffing resource so that clients who can leave their homes can access/be directed to them as and when needed.</p> <p>Our support team will offer support across North Somerset from office locations in the north and south of the district (currently located at Weston and Portishead). The service will be available during office hours on Monday to Friday (not including bank holidays).</p> <p>In order to deliver these service changes we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Re-design/streamline our assessment processes to be deployed more efficiently/flexibly according to presenting need</li><li>• Flatten our delivery structure to maximise staffing efficiencies</li><li>• Concentrate staff resources on clients at greatest risk of homelessness</li><li>• Deliver traditional casework support only when there is clear evidence that it is needed</li></ul>

- Provide support in the client's home only when this is clearly necessary to ensure fair service access and/or to deliver the best client outcomes

All support that we deliver will be needs based, focused on delivering clear outcomes, and maximising staff productivity

## **2. People have the opportunity, where needed, for longer term, specific and/or higher levels of need to be met through signposting and access to other appropriate services**

### **Alliance Response**

Our staff are well trained and well informed about statutory, non-statutory and charitable agencies and services that create client resilience and reduce vulnerability.

We maintain and update resource folders so that this information is readily available to all support staff. Developing a good knowledge and understanding of community resources forms part of the induction programme for new support staff.

Where possible, we identify other agencies/services that may be of benefit to the client at assessment.

Where it becomes clear that the client does not fit our service criteria - or s/he requires another more appropriate service intervention - the case is closed after appropriate signposting advice has been given / referrals have been actioned.

Where it becomes clear that the client will benefit from referral/signposting, this is actioned as soon as possible. Generally speaking, the support worker will make a direct referral when the client lacks the capability (or motivation) to progress this task him/herself. Where the client has capability and motivation, we ask the client to assume responsibility for this action.

Sometimes it is not apparent at assessment that the client could benefit from other appropriate service inputs. This situation normally arises through disclosure / discovery of a circumstance/ situation that was previously not known to us, or simply through a change in client circumstances. The support worker will then action the referral/signposting task as described above.

We record all referrals and 'signposts' at individual and service level. This provides useful intelligence in terms of identifying the key agencies and services that we link into, and helps us to strengthen and develop partnership working that directly benefits clients.

### **Example - Citizens Advice (CA)**

We identified a significant flow of referrals between our services. We started to work in partnership with CA to deliver service efficiencies and better client outcomes:

- We have agreed a priority referral route
- We part-populate the forms that CAB use, from information we have already gathered. This eliminates overlaps between the services and delivers a much better client experience
- We are sharing knowledge and learning
- We are working together to agree effective responses to welfare reform
- Staff are developing highly effective working relationships

Fiona Cope, Chief Executive Citizens Advice:

*“Alliance Homes is a valued partner....by working together, we have reached some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people within our community ensuring they receive the support and advice they need to take control of their lives.*

*This approach prevents issues turning into crisis and improves the health and wellbeing of local residents”*

### **3. People receive person-centred and outcome driven services, founded on the needs and circumstances of the individual.**

#### **Alliance Response**

Many of our clients face multiple challenges, often with a complex history of cause and effect. To accommodate this reality, we embed a strong culture of person-centred, holistic support, with all interventions tailored to the specific support needs of individual clients.

The skills and qualities of our staff, and the quality of the relationship between support worker and client, are integral to motivating clients to achieve identified outcomes.

We ensure staff are skilled through:

- A well-resourced training programme
- Effective management
- Appraisals and regular supervisions
- Learning from client feedback

All staff are committed to enabling independence and reducing dependency. Often, clients have lost confidence in their own abilities, so our support is delivered in ways which maximise client skills, coping abilities and independence. This approach is critical to the success of our service.

Our service will provide two models of intervention:

- Brief intervention support (which is a stripped, down highly flexible approach that delivers quick support interventions as close to the point of referral as possible)

- Traditional support (which uses support planning and targeted support interventions to deliver the required outcomes). Traditional support will only be offered to customers who have enduring needs who require support over a longer time duration to achieve their support outcomes.

Clients receiving traditional support will have a named support worker. During every support session the support worker completes a Client Support Journal which records progress achieved, and outlines actions to be completed before the next session. Future support sessions are diarised accordingly.

Support sessions are structured and delivered according to client needs and/desired outcomes. Not all support will be delivered face to face - we will use the telephone, and platforms such as skype to deliver 'remote' support to clients who will not be disadvantaged by these approaches.

We will use case management data to learn 'what works best'. Case management data helps us to monitor:

- Service quality
- Individual and team performance
- Risk
- Safeguarding compliance
- Policy and procedure compliance
- Staff training and development needs
- Policy/procedure development
- Resource allocation

We are currently redesigning our case management system. We expect it to become operational in Q2 of 2018/19.

#### **4. Key existing partnership arrangements are maintained and new ones developed.**

##### **Alliance Response**

We have been working in effective partnership with the Council to develop this grant funded service.

Alliance Homes is the best connected housing organisation in North Somerset. One of our fundamental strengths is the breadth and extent of our partnership links and networks that clients directly benefit from.

We will attend and continue to contribute to the key groups which shape local strategies and services – for example The Preventing Homelessness Strategy.

Wherever possible we will co-locate support workers to strengthen service links to benefit clients. One example is locating a drop-in surgery within the Job Centre Plus / NSC Gateway at Castlewood, Clevedon.

We will continue to adapt our service to meet the needs of key stakeholders. For example, The Home from Hospital (HfH) team is now part of the multi-disciplinary discharge team. As a result, staff interact daily with discharge coordinators and clinical staff to immediately address individual patient issues.

We will continue to work in close partnership with the Resource Team to deliver The Step Up service for Care Leavers

We will regularly liaise with other community services - for example with Citizens Advice - where there are clear synergies/benefits for clients.

Our approach for encouraging and facilitating flexible, effective partnership working is summarised below:

- Strategic engagement
- Professional networking
- Co-locating staff
- Joint working
- Flexible service delivery
- Service feedback

We remain committed to working in effective partnership with clients. We will provide a flexible range of options for clients to have their say in service design and delivery.

Key client feedback mechanisms are:

- End of service questionnaires
- Customer surveys
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints
- Client Involvement Groups/workshops

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No