

Committee(s)	Dated:
Community and Children's Services – For DLT – For recommendation	12/09/2017
Subject: Supporting Adult Carers	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Anna Grainger, Department of Community and Children's Services	

Summary

It is proposed that the current Carer grant payments are amended as a recent audit determined they could be improved in line with the requirements of the Care Act. The payments are also inconsistent with many other Local Authority payment amounts. The suggested solution is to amend the system from the current "grant" allocations of £150, £700 and £3,000. Carers will be offered both universal and targeted support by way of information and advice as well as services such as carer groups. Carer assessments will be conducted with a view to allocating a personal budget where a carer has eligible needs. This is likely to mean that some carers may see their historic allocation reduce whilst others at the lower end of the previous grant scale are likely to see an increase. The money is determined via a carer assessment and (where eligible) a Resource Allocation System (RAS). This is calculated via the assessment through the "FACE tool". This will be incorporated into the new Mosaic case management system. It will calculate entitlement via a formula but will have a maximum payment amount of £1,560. However this can be overridden where there is a clear need. Essentially this is a move to more personalised support. Carers grants are not means tested. The previous carer grants included money for respite for the cared - which was not previously means tested. The new approach will see the cared for person charged for respite where they are able to afford this. This is a statutory requirement of the Care Act. This is not applicable to paid carers, such as home carers.

Recommendation

Members are asked to recognise the important role that carers play in supporting friends and family members within the City of London.

Members are asked to approve:

1. The new system of payments for carers
2. That respite care is now subject to means testing of the "cared for" person which is likely to bring in some income and is in line with the Care Act.
3. That the new system will commence with the start of the new IT system, Mosaic during November 2017.
4. That carers who received grants in 2017/18 are offered a re-assessment of needs if they have received the lower amounts previously.

Main Report

Background

- 1.1 Nationally and locally, carers provide vital support to the people they support. A City of London carer strategy and action plan for adult carers is in place. The carer strategy focuses on 6 key areas: early identification, personalised support, involvement, improving health and wellbeing, improving economic and social wellbeing and a life after caring. It was based on a piece of research conducted within the City by Carers UK in 2015. In addition support for carers is a thread running through all strategies within SEND, for young carers and across social care. However the payments in question relate to people over 18.
- 1.2 The Care Act demands that Local Authorities are mindful of the need to “Prevent, Reduce and Delay” the need for funded support whilst also supporting carers to access assessment and support when eligible.
- 1.3 The Carer strategy addresses wider support for carers, such as respite, which will still be available. Other means of support are being explored in the City and across London for carers, such as discounts at London shops and businesses. In addition, support will still be available as part of the Reach Out Network carer groups.

Current Position

- 2.1 City of London adult social care carries out an assessment of adult carer needs based on eligibility criteria. Where appropriate a carer’s payment has been available historically, providing £150, £750 or £3,000 annually per carer as a grant to the person. This approach has started from an assumption that carers are entitled in the main to fixed amounts. In 2016/17 42 carers received such a payment.
- 2.2 The Care Act emphasises the need to focus on strengths (what people CAN do) and to develop more accessible universal offers to people generally – e.g. websites to give information and advice. The carer assessment focuses on this.
- 2.3 There is no national fixed rate that Authorities must give, but it is a statutory requirement to offer an assessment and meet eligible need. The assessment considers if a need is already met – e.g. money or support to reduce social isolation is not provided if the person has a large network of friends. Some Local Authorities in London do not give any fixed amounts of funding. Benchmarking figures are available at Appendix One. In total last year the benchmarking shows that low numbers have been allocated the £3,000 top amount previously, but that these carers may receive less under the new system. If this is found to be the case, following the new needs assessment, the funding level will be incrementally reduced to support the transition to the new rate– conversely those at the lower end are likely to receive more.

- 2.4 Benchmarking was carried out by FACE on carer payments across London and the projected impact on current carers in the City. The maximum amount in the proposed calculated system will be £1,560 which is in line with benchmarked authorities. However consideration will be given to those whose caring role would break down without more support or more money than this top amount.
- 2.5 An Equality Impact test of relevance has been carried out which concluded that a full Equalities assessment was not needed as the proposal is in line with statutory duties. The new system allows the indicative amount to be overridden if this will help a carer maintain their caring role – i.e. if someone needs more they can have this.

Implications

- 3.1 The current system is inequitable with other benchmarked authorities and could be open to challenge. It does not appropriately meet personalised need.
- 3.2 The Comptroller and City Solicitor have been consulted and have no additional comment on the contents of this report.
- 3.3 There are no financial implications – the costs of meeting these requirements will be met by the Departmental Local Risk budget.

Options

- 4.1 Do nothing. If this option is chosen it is likely that the Authority could be open to legal challenge because the way to calculate resources available to carers would not be transparent nor potentially Care Act compliant. The current grant system is not based on need versus actual spend so may not be best value for money. With increasing numbers of elderly people predicted the Council needs to ensure best use of decreasing resources so it can support people into the future.

Approve the following:

1. The new system of payments for carers
2. That respite care is now subject to means testing of the “cared for” person which is likely to bring in some small income and is in line with the Care Act.
3. That the new system will commence with the start of the new IT system, Mosaic during November 2017.
4. That carers who received grants in 2017/18 are offered a re-assessment of needs if they have received the two lower amounts previously.

Conclusion

- 5.1 Members are asked to approve the options 1-4 in section 4 above.

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Appendix One: Carers Payments Impact Summary

The FACE organisation provided benchmarking data from 6 London LAs and a further 6 regional LAs used to formulate the Mosaic City RAS calculation as follows:

- No change to those reporting no significant impact on their wellbeing - supported by information and advice, local offer including Carers Support Group, along with universal services including health where appropriate.
- The maximum payment available will be reduced to 1560 - in line with the highest level currently allocated across all those benchmarked.
- The lowest level payment will be increased to 200 - in line the highest level currently allocated across all those benchmarked
- All other payment values based on the average payment made by the 6 London LA's or the average payment made by all 12 nationally benchmarked LA's whichever is the highest.

Projected Impact based upon 2016/17 payments (note difficulty in estimates due to different assessment model)

8 carers received maximum payment of 3K

26 carers received £750 - the amount could go up or down but would depend on individual needs.

8 carers received £150 - all 8 likely to have at least another £50 per year