

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **4 May 2004**

By: **Director of Social Services**

Title of report: **Carers' Services Pooled Budget**

Purpose of report: **To seek agreement to the proposal to use powers under Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 for a pooled budget arrangement for Carers' services.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended:

- 1. to approve the proposed establishment of a pooled budget arrangement for carer services with the Council lead commissioning such services; and**
 - 2. to authorise the Director of Social Services, in consultation with the Director of Law and Performance Management, to agree the terms of the pooled budget agreement with the Primary Care Trusts.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The total "pooled budget" amounts to approximately £460k at 2004/2005 prices, comprising of a County Council contribution of £239k and a Health contribution of £221k. Both contributions are currently used to purchase Carer services from 'Care for the Carers'. It is intended that the Council, using the Pooled Budget, will enter into a contract with Carer for the Carers to commission carer services.

1.2 The Council contribution includes £165k from the Carers Grant. The government has announced that the Carers Grant will increase nationally to £185m for 2005/06. Any funding beyond that date will be known in July 2004 when the government's next 3 year Comprehensive Spending Review is published. Should Carers Grant funding cease or reduce, there would be a need to substantially review the impact on the pool.

1.3 There shall be no contractual responsibility for the parties to provide additional resources to the Pool above the rate of inflation unless it is jointly agreed.

1.4 The level of financial risk to the Council is manageable and the Council should seek to gain the benefits of entering into a Section 31 agreement.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The County Council greatly values the major role played by carers in supporting people in the community. By "carers" we mean people who look after a relative or friend, who need support because of age, physical or learning disability or illness, including mental illness. They might be a family member, a partner, a neighbour or a friend. Carers provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis. This includes young carers under the age of 18 caring for a family member and parent carers of children with special needs. According to Census data more than 50,000 people, provide care in East Sussex. Of these approximately 10,000 carers, almost 2% of the total population are providing care for more than 50 hours each week.

2.2 In 1994 the NHS and Social Services signed up to a joint East Sussex Carers Strategy. Over time, this has developed to incorporate more recent planning frameworks such as the Carers' Joint Investment Plan (JIP) and the Health Improvement and Modernisation Plans (HIMPs). The

joint focus of the strategy has been maintained despite major upheavals in the statutory agencies and it continues to inform the delivery of services for carers throughout East Sussex. The fundamental objective of this joint strategy is to build on good practice already achieved locally and to plan and provide information, support, services and advice that relate to carers' needs and complement the crucial contribution which carers make to community care.

2.3 Care for the Carers is a charity that works across East Sussex to support carers to develop services for them, and to raise awareness of the needs of carers and the contribution they make as service providers. At present Care for the Carers is funded for a range of services under a variety of contracts and agreements involving the Council and all four of the Primary Care Trusts within East Sussex. Funding comes from a variety of sources including the Carers Grant. This proliferation of arrangements has arisen over the last 10 years in an ad hoc manner.

2.4 The Primary Care Trusts and the Council have duties and powers to provide services to carers and are encouraged to consider using the new partnership "flexibilities" available under Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 to enable more effective joint working.

2.5 The proposal to establish a "pooled budget" for Carer Services is made within this context and as a means of improving commissioning arrangements within East Sussex. On behalf of its partners, the Council will hold the budget and commission a service from Care for the Carers. It may be possible in the future to consider extending the scope of the Pooled Budget to other carers services, but this would be subject to consultation and a further decision by Cabinet.

2.6 The Carers Pooled Budget Monitoring Group will oversee this pooled budget and any subsequent extension of partnership arrangements relating to purchase of carers' services within East Sussex. Its membership will include: representatives of the Director of Social Services and the four Primary Care Trusts. The Director of Social Services will nominate an officer with commissioning responsibility to be the Pooled Fund Manager.

2.7 The proposed "pooled budget" will have the benefits of: strengthening commissioning capacity; encouraging partners to develop agreed aims and priorities and a joint purchasing plan for this carers services; assisting the move from grant giving to commissioning services to meet shared strategic objectives; streamlining administration, monitoring and reporting arrangements for Care for the Carers.

3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 It is recommended that the Council should seek to gain the benefits of entering into a Section 31 arrangement and should agree to the implementation of the "pooled budget" for Carer Services with effect from ` April 2004.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Proposed Section 31 Inter Agency Agreement