

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet:**

**24 September 2013**

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Subject: **Help to Live at Home contract award**

Cabinet member: **Cllr Keith Humphries**  
**Public Protection, Adult Services and Housing**

Key Decision: **No**

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**Executive Summary**

Following the decision by Aster Living to terminate their three Help to Live at Home contracts in South and East Wiltshire (Devizes area) a tender process has been undertaken.

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of that tendering process. The decision regarding the contract award was delegated to Cllr Humphries at July's Cabinet meeting.

Mears Group Limited has been identified as the preferred provider to deliver all three contract areas. The process and background to this decision are set out below.

**Proposal**

That Cabinet notes the award of the Help to Live at Home contract to Mears Group Ltd.

**Reason for Proposal**

In July 2013 a report was presented to Cabinet to inform Members of the decision by Aster Living to terminate their contracts and setting out the steps that would be taken to re-let those contracts.

This report informs Members of the new provider that has been selected.

**Maggie Rae, Corporate Director**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the process and award of three Help to Live at Home contracts previously delivered by Aster Living.

### **Background**

2. In March 2013, Aster Living gave notice on three of the eight Help to Live at Home contracts covering South and East Wiltshire.

This report sets out the process that has been undertaken to identify a new provider and informs Members about the company that has been selected.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

3. **The Contract Award Process:**

Interest from the market was stimulated through national advertising, writing to local providers and a series of information days at which potential bidders were invited to hear more about the Help to Live at Home service.

Bidders were required to submit detailed financial information, answers to specific questions about quality and to provide details about their organisation. In addition, bidders were asked to complete some illustrative support plans for anonymised customers so it was possible to ascertain their ability to deliver the innovative, outcome based service.

Twelve bids were received as a result of this, with sufficient bids for each of the areas identified.

Bidders comprised local and national companies.

The first stage evaluation of financial and quality issues was undertaken by customers, operational staff and commissioners from the NHS and the Council.

Seven providers were selected to go forward to the final stage of the selection process and were invited to give a thirty minute presentation to Cllrs Humphries and Milton, customers, the Corporate Director, Chief Operating Officer for the CCG and others.

This presentation focused on the development of the workforce. Members will recall development of the care workforce is a key priority for the Help to Live at Home service, so bidders were asked to evidence their plans for achieving this.

Following this, Mears Care Ltd have been selected. They are a private limited company based in Gloucestershire, (with plans to open an office in Wiltshire). They currently employ 16,000 staff and their areas of business, as well as care this includes housing support, maintenance and repairs. Mears scored highly on quality (40 out of a possible 50) and are competitive in terms of price.

Mears impressed evaluators with their plans for improving the terms and conditions of staff, with a clearly thought through implementation plan, and with their understanding of the market and the importance of being able to deliver services, particularly in South Wiltshire where there have been difficulties.

### **Safeguarding Considerations**

4. The transitions from Aster Living to Mears will take place on September 29<sup>th</sup>. A project group is meeting weekly to plan this transfer that involves staff from Aster Living, Mears, operational (NHS and WC), finance and performance staff.

This project group reports weekly to the Service Director for Adult Services commissioning.

Communicating with customers during this period of transfer will be key and there will be lead from our communications team to work on this.

### **Public Health Implications**

5. Mears Group demonstrated an excellent understanding of the benefits of delivering a service that prevents people's needs escalating and had some interesting ideas for utilising sheltered housing schemes as bases for the wider elderly population.

## **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

6. The carbon emissions of outsourced services are included in the council's overall carbon footprint. Therefore Mears will be required to report on its annual emissions from transport and static sources and make efforts to reduce these emissions as part of this contract.

One of the goals of Help to Live at Home is the development of local staff teams able to deliver services to people in their community. This will reduce travel time and costs.

## **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

7. Help to Live at Home offers services to the whole population whether they are supported by the Council and are funding their own care. In this way we can offer customers an equitable service.

## **Risk Assessment**

8. As with any contract transfer there are potential risks in the delivery of service. This is being managed by the transitions project group. The principle risk is a gap in service to customers. The plan to address this is on a customer by customer basis.

## **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

9. Failure to award the contract to Mears would have resulted in a significant number of older and vulnerable people not receiving a service for which the Council has a statutory Duty of Care.

## **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

10. In awarding these contracts to Mears Group the key risks are:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Action to mitigate the risk</b>
1. Customers do not receive service	Management of customers on individual basis
2. Gap in service to customers because new contract not signed	Transitions project group in place, meetings with Mears arranged, draft contract already shared with Mears.

## **Financial Implications**

11. Aster Living gave notice because they were unable to make the contracts financially sustainable at the price they had quoted. It was acknowledged that the new contracts will incur transitional costs such as TUPE transfer and pension costs for which no additional budget provision has been made. This will have to be managed within existing budget provision made for the transitional costs of the Help to Live at Home Service. .

12. It is difficult to accurately quantify what additional revenue costs will be incurred as a result of this process, as these will depend upon volumes of activity as these are framework rather than block contracts, and volumes can vary significantly. Based on existing volumes, it is estimated that the additional cost in 2012/13 could be £150,000 and any increased volumes in these localities will increase this.. There is no additional budget provision to manage this additional cost and therefore this will be managed within existing budgets.

### **Legal Implications**

13. We requested Legal Services to advise on the contract and Legal Services have also advised on other matters in relation to this re-tender.

### **Options Considered**

14. In view of the fact that Aster Living gave six months notice, there was no opportunity to explore any other options apart from re-tendering the existing contracts.

### **Conclusions**

15. The Council and NHS are delighted to announce that Mears Group have been appointed to deliver the Help to Live at Home service in South and East Wiltshire following a rigorous and inclusive tendering process.

### **\*Proposal**

- 16 That Members note the steps taken to appoint a new Help to Live at Home provider and the appointment of Mears Group.

### **Reason for Proposal**

17. Mears Group has been selected in accordance with the Council procurement and legal requirements.

**Maggie Rae, Corporate Director**

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**Background Papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Cabinet Report July 2013

## **Appendices**

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