



# EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

**REPORT OF:** Executive Member for Public Health and Wellbeing  
**LEAD OFFICERS:** Director of Public Health and Wellbeing  
**DATE:**

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Public Health and Wellbeing

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** All

**SUBJECT: Procurement for Safe and Warm Homes Service 2023-26**

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safe and Warm Homes service for Blackburn with Darwen is commissioned jointly by Public Health and the Better Care Fund. The service was originally delivered internally as the Decent and Safe Homes (DASH) service. Since 2016 the service has been delivered by Care Network, with DASH staff being transferred into the new provider. An open tender process has not been carried out to date and permission is now being sought to undertake this with a view to a new contract starting in April 2023.

The Safe and Warm Homes programme supports residents of all ages to live in a home which supports and promotes health and wellbeing. Due to a number of emerging challenges post COVID, including the cost-of-living crisis, physical deconditioning brought about by extended a period of shielding, along with historical issues around poverty and housing stock which is difficult to make more energy efficient, a review and recommission of this service is timely to ensure a robust and effective service for residents.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Member:

1. Notes the commencement of a tendering and procurement activity to offer this service to the wider market, with revised contractual and commissioning arrangements to be in place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. This contract will cover the life course and will be awarded for three years with an option to extend for up to two years subject to satisfactory delivery which will be monitored via robust contract review processes.
2. Delegates responsibility to the Director of Public Health for the award of the final contract.

## 3. BACKGROUND

The purpose of the Safe and Warm Home service is to increase the awareness of the link between health and housing, develop a network of healthy homes champions to promote safe and warm home messages and provide targeted and coordinated support for residents who may need help in keeping their home warm and safe to live in. The current service provider is Care Network who carry out home risk assessments and provide advice and signposting for suitable interventions to keep the home environment safe and warm. Advice and

signposting are a universal provision but the targeted provisions and interventions are for the most vulnerable households within the borough. The tendering of this service provides the opportunity to identify areas for growth and development of the service to help meet the demands of the population.

A study conducted by Building Research Establishment (2021)<sup>1</sup> found that the cost to the NHS from poor housing was £1.4 billion in 2018. This was primarily due to the category one hazards (Housing Health and Safety Rating System rating) of excess cold, falls and dampness. However, it was noted that the wider societal costs could equate to £18.5 billion from the need for long-term care, educational achievement and mental health impacts.

A new model by Public Health England<sup>2</sup> has shown that the return on investment for home assessments and improvement is significant, for both the local authority and the NHS. For every £1 spent, there are £2.17 financial savings to health and social care. The wider societal benefits which are measured by quality adjusted life years, or number of years spent good health and not requiring substantial health and social care input, are £7.34 for every £1 spent.

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide affordable housing of a good quality to its residents and provide accommodation for the homeless. By ensuring houses are safe and warm, health can significantly be improved as basic needs are met and independence is maintained. The service will align with the following NICE guidance ensuring it is evidence based:

- NG6 Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes<sup>3</sup>
- CG161 Falls in older people: assessing risk<sup>4</sup>
- PH30 Unintentional injuries in the home: interventions for under 15's<sup>5</sup>

The proposed timeline for the tender process is available in Appendix A.

## 4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

A study has found that families who are already the most deprived will be hit the hardest by the increase in the cost of living as they have nothing left to cut. This is subsequently a driver of poor mental health and will cause an increase in the demand for both safe and warm home services and mental health services. (BMJ, 2022)<sup>5</sup>. This will be particularly true for Blackburn with Darwen.

### Key statistics for Blackburn with Darwen<sup>6</sup>

- 46.9% of children are living in relative poverty in BwD
- 16.4% of houses are in fuel poverty (10,000 and expected to double due to cost of living crisis)
- 32.7% of older people live alone in the borough
- 1143 formal diagnoses of dementia within the borough for those aged 65 and over (35% increase expected by 2030)
- 30.3% of residents have a limiting long-term illness/disability

From the evidence presented, this service is necessary to improve the health of the borough. Through this tender process and specification, the service can be expanded to include a dementia provision, increase volunteer training and target additional resources at the BAME community. As housing has moved into the public health portfolio, this will only increase the demand of the service.

<sup>1</sup> BRE\_Report\_the\_cost\_of\_poor\_housing\_2021.pdf (bregroup.com)

<sup>2</sup> A Return on Investment Tool (publishing.service.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Overview | Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes | Guidance | NICE

<sup>4</sup> Overview | Falls in older people: assessing risk and prevention | Guidance | NICE

<sup>5</sup> Overview | Unintentional injuries in the home: interventions for under 15s | Guidance | NICE

<sup>6</sup> Cost of living crisis: we cannot ignore the human cost of living in poverty | The BMJ

<sup>6</sup> fingertips.phe.org.uk

A 3 year contract will enable the successful provider to develop the service to meet the changing needs of the residents in the borough. A three year contract may also attract a variety of providers to bid for the service.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This process will be aligned with local and national guidelines, including the NICE guidelines stated above. The service will also link with the borough's Fuel Poverty Toolkit. The service also supports the Climate Emergency action plan.<sup>7</sup>

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The service is jointly funded through the Public Health ring fenced grant and Better Care Fund (BCF). Current annual funding from BCF is £20,000 plus £58,785 funded from the public health ring fenced grant totaling £78,785 per annum.

An uplift to the BCF funding element to £27,000 for the lifetime of the contract has been agreed by the BwD Joint Commissioning Recommendations Group on 6<sup>th</sup> June. The total value of the contract will be £257,355 over the initial three years of delivery starting 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

An open tender process will be followed to ensure this tender attracts providers with sufficient knowledge and expertise to enable quality delivery. The tendering process will need to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations and the Council's Contract and Procurement Procedure Rules.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The management of the tender process and subsequent implementation, roll out and monitoring of the service will be managed by the public health team and supported by the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board commissioning team. Clarity is required as to where Better Care funding will sit within the new commissioning landscape. Contract management will be supported through contracting and procurement.

## **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

A programme of consultation and engagement is planned during the summer of 2022. This will include consulting with a range of partners, stakeholders and the public.

See Appendix B for full consultation plan

## **11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## **12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Hannah Dean, Public Health Development Manager</b> <b>Beth Wolfenden, Public Health Specialist</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	Appendix A Procurement Timeline Appendix B Consultation Plan EIA Checklist Fuel Poverty Toolkit - <a href="#">Fuel Poverty Toolkit - Be Well BWD</a>