

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 4</b>
<b>17 SEPTEMBER 2012</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## Report of the Executive Director of Adult Social Care

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### PROVISION OF CARERS IN RURAL AREAS

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities has requested a report on the provision of adult homecare support in rural areas.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities is asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.

#### 3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The provision of social care support to rural communities supports the delivery of the key outcome *Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities*, specifically in relation to improving health and supporting vulnerable people.
- 3.2 Community social care also supports the key outcome to *Create strong and supportive communities* in terms of empowering local communities and supporting people to engage in and be part of their local community.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Nationally people living in rural areas make up around one-fifth of the total population; recent DEFRA health statistics (June 2012) indicate that life expectancy in rural areas is higher than urban areas and that years of life lost to cancer, stroke and heart disease are lower. However, people in rural areas can be more at risk of isolation, support services are often based in urban centres and transport costs to access services can be higher.
- 4.2 Peterborough's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) shows that around 20,123 (12%) of Peterborough residents live in a rural area and that there are rural areas within the Unitary Authority boundary classified with high and low levels of deprivation.
- 4.3 The total cost of homecare purchased by Peterborough City Council from independent providers for 2011/2012 was £16.1 million.
- 4.4 A snapshot of Adult Social Care data covering April to July 2012 shows that there were 127 people (10%) living in a rural area receiving home care support from a total of 1271. The costs of purchasing homecare support in rural areas made up 10% (£14,900 per week) of total homecare spend (£147,000 per week). When this is compared to JSNA population data it appears that proportionally less homecare is purchased for rural areas. However, this could be due to differences in the definition of 'rural' between the two data sources; socio-economic factors could also play a part. Further analysis would help to develop a clearer view of the provision of homecare support across urban and rural areas.

## **5. KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 The process to access adult social care support is the same for people who live in rural areas as for people living in urban areas. In terms of community based support, there are two main ways for the Council to meet someone's assessed eligible needs: through managed services or through a Direct Payment.
- 5.2 Managed services involve the Council purchasing services to meet a person's needs, currently this is through a range of independent sector providers that the Council has formal arrangements with, mainly through the Independent Living Support Services (ILSS) framework.
- 5.3 The ILSS framework allows services to charge different hourly costs for delivering support in urban and rural locations, the intention being that the additional cost of providing rural support can be factored into charges so the Council pays a fair price for the support it purchases and people who need homecare are not disadvantaged by where they live.
- 5.4 In practice there are still challenges in arranging homecare in rural areas; providers will sometimes refuse to take on packages due to the additional cost associated with delivering the support. Feedback from providers indicates that, even with higher rates for homecare support in rural areas, it is not always financially viable to deliver individual support packages in some areas. The Council is reviewing the ILSS framework currently; more effective purchasing arrangements for rural homecare support will form part of this review. A key issue will be how the additional costs associated with travelling to rural areas are managed fairly and transparently.
- 5.5 Direct Payments involve the person, or a suitable person acting in their best interests and on their behalf, choosing to receive a cash payment in lieu of services. In this case the person might employ someone directly to provide the support needed. This is often an effective solution for people living in rural areas as they are able to directly employ someone who lives in the local area to provide homecare support and to support them accessing and being part of their local community.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Adult Social Care Strategic Commissioning Team has been consulting with providers on possible ways to improve how support is provided for people living in rural areas. People who use services and carers will be consulted on proposed changes.

## **7. NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 The issues associated with providing homecare support in rural areas, following further consultation, will be included in the planned review and restructure of the ILSS framework. Consulting on and co-producing a solution with people who use services and who live in a rural area will be an essential part of this development work.
- 7.2 In order to monitor homecare delivery for all service users, the Council will be requiring all homecare providers to use Electronic Homecare Monitoring systems from 1 October 2012. This will provide accurate information on whether homecare is delivered as commissioned by the Council and will immediately highlight and evidence if calls are not delivered or are being cut short.

## **8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 8.1 DEFRA Health Report, June 2012: available on the DEFRA website at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/files/HealthJune12.pdf>
- 8.2 Peterborough Joint Strategic Needs Assessment available on the Peterborough City Council's website at <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/>

## **9. APPENDICES**

9.1 There are no appendices to this report.

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