Executive Summary

The current countywide Supported Employment Service for people with a physical disability or acquired brain injury expires in March 2016, following which, a competitive procurement is required. This service provides tailored individual support enabling customers to secure training, voluntary and paid employment.

The Care Act 2014 introduces a new responsibility for local authorities to support carers to have a life beyond their caring role. A 12 month service has successfully tested a delivery model for a supported employment service for carers to meet this legal duty.

This report concerns procurement of a countywide Supported Employment Service for people with a physical disability or acquired brain injury and for carers.

Recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet Member approves the procurement of a countywide Supported Employment Service for adults with a physical disability or acquired brain injury and carers for a contract (or contracts) for two years with two possible extension periods of 12 months each with an indicative annual cost of £157,266 and a potential total cost of £629,064 and

2. That awarding of the contract(s) be delegated to the Executive Director of Care, Wellbeing and Education.

1. Background and Context

1.1 A Supported Employment service for customers with a physical disability or acquired brain injury commenced in 2010. This contract, provided by Impact Initiatives, Workability, a local, not-for-profit organisation, will
cease on 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2016 and a competitive procurement process is required to source a service to replace it.

1.2 Supported Employment can be defined as follows:

“Supported Employment promotes the rights of all individuals to achieve their full potential through a model of flexible support that enables people to overcome barriers to their employability and access real jobs for real pay.” (Scottish Union of Supported Employment).

1.3 The Care Act 2014 introduced a general duty for Local Authorities to promote an individual’s wellbeing, which includes:

- Participation in work, education, training or recreation
- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Personal dignity
- Social and economic well-being
- An individual’s contribution to society

The proposed service would help the County Council to meet the requirements of this wellbeing principle.

1.4 Under the new Act every local authority has a duty to provide advice and information to carers, including finance and employment advice. There is also a duty to support carer wellbeing and limit financial disadvantage as a result of caring. In response, a pilot Carers to Employment service was established for carers to help them develop a life outside of their caring role. This is being provided by Impact Initiatives at a cost of £30k per annum. This funding was set with a group work delivery model in mind. Evaluation has demonstrated the need for a combined individual and group model as carers can sometimes not be ‘group ready’.

1.5 The Care Act refers to the need for Local Authorities to consider what services or facilities are already available in the area. With respect to supporting people to find work, the Department of Work & Pension’s Work Programme aims to support people to find employment via the Job Centre Plus (JCP) service. Long term caring can leave an individual feeling de-skilled and lacking in confidence. Nationally 315,000 carers have left work and remained out of employment. The DWP require carers to attend on a very limited number of occasions. A short term intervention by a service that understands carers’ issues has shown that it can empower carers to access mainstream services and work programmes.

1.6 There is a considerable gap between the level of service provided by JCP, which is focused on those more able to find work and it is unable to provide tailored support to meet the individual needs of people with disabilities. JCP staff are not trained to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities, including sensory impairments and acquired brain injury. JCP have a light touch approach to supporting customers to find employment, most communication takes place by phone which fails to identify the needs of customers with physical and sensory disabilities.
Customers who require greater support in identifying suitable work opportunities, work preparation, job searching, completing application forms, attending interviews, communication and self-presentation are not supported by JCP, who themselves make referrals to this supported employment service. Whilst both approaches aim to maximise independence, the barriers to employment experienced by people with physical disabilities can require greater support to overcome.

1.7 The Department of Work and Pension’s Disability Health & Employment Strategy (2013) states:
“There are 11.5 million working-age people in Great Britain with a long-term health condition. More than half (6.5 million) are classified as disabled under the Equality Act 2010, because they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

1.8 In West Sussex, it is estimated that in 2015, 15% of the adult population (aged 18-65) has a serious/moderate physical disability, including visual and hearing problems. This equates to 71,745 people in total (Source: Office for National Statistics).

2.0 Work and caring

2.1 Three million people combine caring for a loved one with paid work, over two million working full-time and one million part-time. Additionally, whilst part-time working is much more common amongst carers than non-carers, carers are also most likely to stop working altogether as they struggle to switch to part-time hours. In West Sussex, the share of unpaid care falls most heavily on people aged between 50-64 years. One in five people aged between 50-64 provide unpaid care, as do just under one in ten people aged between 25-49. (2011 Census data).

2.2 It is also identified that over two million people have given up work at some point to care for a loved one, three million have reduced working hours and middle-aged people with caring responsibilities were more likely than carers of other ages to have given up work, reduced working hours and seen a negative impact on their work, such as stress or tiredness. (Carers UK Policy Briefing – May 2014).

2.3 The majority of carers are of working age, with the peak age for caring of 50 – 64 years, equating to over two million people nationally, or 1 in 5 people. Whilst 58% of carers are female and 42% are men, caring tends to affect men and women at different times. Women have a 50:50 chance of providing care by the time they are 59; compared with men who have the same chance by the time they are 75 years old.

The pilot project profile was as follows:

15% Male, 85% Female
80% under 50 years of age, 20% over 50
30% caring for two people
30% caring for someone with a terminal or life-limiting illness
3.0 **Current service**

3.1 The Supported Employment Service for adults with a physical disability or acquired brain injury is made up of several elements which are broadly summarised as follows:

- Vocational profiling which includes identifying realistic aspirations, relevant skills and previous experience, learning/development needs and supporting the individual to understand the requirements and consequences of employment.
- Action Planning, which identifies aims with each customer and breaks these down into manageable steps.
- Benefits advice
- Job Search
- Provision/signposting to short courses
- Support on the job, to overcome specific issues which can be critical to maintaining employment.
- Reviewing and continued support where necessary
- Work with employers to overcome barriers
- Working with other agencies e.g. Job Centre Plus.

3.2 The current service is performing very well with targets for securing paid work, voluntary work and the number engaged in job seeking activity being met with 236 customers receiving a service in 2014/15.

3.3 Service outcomes for adults with a physical disability for 2014/15 include:
- 42 people were supported to secure and maintain paid employment,
- 42 people were supported to find voluntary employment
- 98 people were supported in job search activity and
- 41 people were supported to engage in pre-employment training or short term personal development courses to increase their employability.

3.4 Additional broader benefits for customers, which are recorded using feedback questionnaires include:
- Increased self-esteem, confidence and self-worth
- Increased skills in completing job applications
- Increased skills in interview techniques and self-presentation
- Increased awareness of job market
- Realistic aspirations
- Increased independence
- Reduced isolation
- Reduced/reduced reliance on state benefits
- Reduced/delayed reliance on social care

4.0 **Consultation**

4.1 Feedback from customers using the current service indicates a high level of satisfaction, with 73%( of customers providing feedback from January to March 2015) rating their satisfaction with the service as 5 out of 5 or ‘very satisfied’ and 27% of customers rating the service as 4 out of 5
4.2 West Sussex carers described employment as giving them a value and identity, as well as self-worth and self-respect. Employment provides an opportunity for mental stimulation and a chance to use other skills. It also provides social interaction for carers, who can feel socially isolated at home in their caring role. Carers also felt that employment gave them a break from caring, which some felt was essential to them being able to continue the caring role.

4.3 The service specification for the current service has been well tested through the life of the contract and has been compared to specifications for similar services; it has a clearer focus on paid work outcomes, and will be used as the basis for the next service.

4.4 The views of the customer group have been sought via a local User Led Organisation. Regrettably, no responses have been received to date. The views of Adults Operations Managers and the Head of Adult Integrated Care Commissioning have been sought and all support this proposal.

5. **Proposal**

5.1 It is proposed that a new Supported Employment Service is procured for adults with a physical disability or acquired brain injury and for carers.

5.2 The effect of the decision will be to continue to support a vulnerable customer group to seek and secure paid and voluntary work and to extend the provision to support carers in compliance with the requirements of the Care Act. The service will be available from April 2016 for a period of two years with the potential for two 12 month extensions. This timeline will align the service with other supported employment services and will facilitate joint commissioning across customer groups in the near future.

5.3 Supporting adults to find employment fits with the Council’s aspirations outlined in the Future West Sussex Plan 2015-2019, particularly in the following areas:
   - Helping people to help themselves
   - Ensuring people of all ages have support to access work

5.4 Performance targets for the service have been stretched to ensure more customers are supported to find employment. The service specification has an emphasis on paid employment, which will have the impact of reducing the number of people seeking Job Seekers allowance in the West Sussex, therefore benefitting the larger economy.

6.0 **Other Options considered**

6.1 An alternative to commissioning a customer group specific service would be to commission a generic service across customer groups, which could potentially secure efficiencies, however, a tender exercise is already underway for Drug And Alcohol Team customers, Learning Difficulty services have a 5 year contract in place and Mental Health services are
intending to commission preventive services collectively. A review of current contract arrangements has identified a potential opportunity for joint commissioning across customer groups, when break clauses would enable services to be collectively retendered. Further work is to be undertaken to develop a new service model incorporating all customer groups and establish the earliest date when services can be jointly commissioned.

6.2 Supported employment services are currently in place within Mental Health, Learning Disability and Drug and Alcohol services; to discontinue a service for adults with a physical disability or acquired brain injury could be considered inequitable.

7.0 Resource Implications and Value for Money

7.1 The proposed service has an annual value of £157,266, comprising £107,266 from the Physical Disabilities budget and £50,000 from Carers. Both of these funding streams are within the Better Care Fund.

7.2 The total value over the course of the contract duration of two years plus a potential two x 12 month extension is £629,064.

7.3 The performance targets detailed within the new service specification include a greater emphasis on paid work, with an increased target for this activity and an increased target for the number of people supported under the contract overall.

7.4 Additionally, new targets have been introduced to measure duration of employment, as long term employment often provides the best outcome for the customer and employer. Maintaining people in employment also means that they may not require further support from this service. This will enable the new provider to support more people.

7.5 Maintaining the independence of customers by supporting them to secure and maintain employment may delay the point when they would need to seek support from Adult Social Care services.

8.0 Impact of the proposal

8.1 The impact of this proposal is to continue to provide a specialist and customer focused employment support service for a specific customer group whose needs are not met by the universal Work Programme offer.

8.2 Extending the service to include carers enables a further use of the specialist employment skills without increasing overheads. It will also avoid the duplication of procurement projects.

8.3 Increased employment is likely to have the indirect result of reducing reliance on state benefits, which also benefits the community and wider economy. Increased financial independence may also improve the quality of life for families and promote a more comfortable retirement.
9.0 **Equality Duty.**

9.1 Under the Equality Act, the council has a ‘public sector equality duty’. The re-procurement of a service to meet the needs of disabled adults is evidence of positive action to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

9.2 An Equality Impact Report has been undertaken and is detailed below.

10.0 **Social Value**

10.1 The way in which bids are scored will reflect the value placed on working with local charitable organisations, as permitted under the Social Value Act. More broadly other benefits to social value such as economic benefit and reduced reliance on social care are outlined in the Equality Impact Report attached.

10.2 This proposal presents the opportunity for customers to experience positive social benefits via increased self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth, financial security, independence both socially and economically through gaining employment and therefore goes above and beyond the requirements of the Social Value Act.

11.0 **Risk Management Implications**

11.1 There is a risk that no bids are received in the tender process. However, current indications are that this will not be the case, therefore the risk in considered to be low.

11.2 The risk of failure to implement the proposal could represent reputational risk to the Council and also could result in a legal challenge under the Care Act of not meeting the Well-Being principle or Equality duty, particularly as supported employment services are commissioned for all other adult customer groups. This risk is potentially quite high and could be mitigated by supporting this proposal.

**Debbie Medlock**
Director of Adults’ Operations

**Martin Parker**
Head of Integrated Care
Commissioning

**Contact:** Liz Merrick, Commissioning Manager, 033022 23733
Background Papers: None
Equality Impact Report

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<th>Procurement of a Supported Employment Service for Adults with a Physical Disability or Acquired Brain Injury.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date of implementation</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; April 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIR completed by:</td>
<td>Name: Liz Merrick, Tel: 0330 222 3733</td>
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1. Decide whether this report is needed and, if so, describe how you have assessed the impact of the proposal.

The report is required as the service has a direct impact on adults with a physical disability or acquired brain injury and carers.

2. Describe any negative impact for customers or residents.

The only negative impact identified would occur if approval is not given to continue the service, in which case these customer groups would not receive specialist support to find employment, training or voluntary work.

3. Describe any positive effects which may offset any negative impact.

The service specification has been designed to ensure that the optimum number of customers receive and benefit from the service in future. Positive effects of maintaining employment include an increased sense of self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence, whilst feeling part of the community. Other benefits include increased independence both socially and financially. A new service target has also been introduced to measure duration of employment to emphasise the importance of sustaining employment once secured.

4. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

This proposal represents a very positive opportunity to provide support to carers and people with a disability to find work and helps reduce the barriers they may otherwise experience in finding employment in the open market. It is recognised that these customer groups experience more obstacles in preparing for employment and in securing and maintaining work people without protected characteristics. This service helps to address these inequalities by providing tailored support where it is needed to enable people to overcome obstacles and find work.

5. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
As outlined in 4 above, this service positively helps to reduce the potential for
discrimination and disadvantage for this customer group in seeking employment
training and voluntary work.
People with a physical disability may experience many obstacles to seeking and
maintaining employment. The service advances equality of opportunity by
overcoming individual obstacles and providing support, such as support to make a
realistic assessment of an individual’s strengths and weaknesses to help identify
suitable job opportunities. Overcoming such obstacles and identifying and
providing necessary support in the workplace advances equality of opportunity and
enables customers to compete more equitably in the job market.

6. Describe whether and how the proposal helps to foster good relations
between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who
do not.

This proposal helps to address issues of inequality in seeking and maintaining
employment; the service provides specialist support to enable carers and people
with a disability to compete in the open job market, thereby ‘levelling the playing
field’ and providing the support required to stay in employment, which has the
potential to foster good relations in the workplace as people are more able to fully
demonstrate their abilities, rather than being limited by obstacles to employment.
By removing potential barriers to employment, people with a protected
characteristic are more likely to be perceived in the same way as other employees,
rather than focusing on disabilities, which could help to foster good relations in the
workplace.

7. What changes were made to the proposal as a result? If none, explain
why.

No changes have been made as the service is designed to provide tailored,
personalised and specialist support for adults those with a disability to enable them
to find work.

8. Explain how the impact will be monitored to make sure it continues to
meet the equality duty owed to customers and say who will be
responsible for this.

The service performance will be monitored robustly against the service
specification and the Key Performance Indicators by the Commissioning Manager
responsible. Performance monitoring will evidence the impact of the service.
Should performance not meet the standard required, prompt action will be taken
to rectify this.

To be signed by a Director or Head of Service to confirm that
they have read and approved the content.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Debbie Medlock</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Your position</td>
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