

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION – 8 JULY 2024

NEW FOREST DISABILITY INFORMATION SERVICES – JUST GOT HOME/ INDEPENDENCE MATTERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Demand for hospital discharge services and disabled adaptations is demonstrably increasing in the district.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Housing and Homelessness Portfolio Holder to provide additional funding to New Forest Disability Information Services (NFDIS) to cover the shortfall in costs for them to provide the Just Got Home and Independence Matters schemes.
- 1.3 Approval is also sought for an additional £17,660 for the financial year 2024/25.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Each year the NFDC Private Sector Housing (PSH) Team receive Better Care Funding (BCF) from Central Government, via Hampshire County Council (HCC) to support the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) across the district. This fund is provided to HCC and is distributed to district councils as part of a joint county wide plan.
- 2.2 This funding is provided to enable vulnerable individuals to stay living independently within their own home, preventing them from becoming homeless or having to move unnecessarily into a less independent institutional setting, with the objective of:
 - Facilitating timely hospital discharge
 - Reducing admissions to residential care homes
 - Reduce the cost of providing domiciliary care
 - Contributing to the wider prevention agenda of housing, social care, and health authorities by facilitating improvements in individual's wellbeing, and reducing hospital admissions.
- 2.3 In order to meet these duties the Portfolio Holder has previously agreed a partnership with NFDIS under a Service Level Agreement (SLA), NFDC has grant funded 2 schemes. These are:
- 2.4 **Just Got Home Scheme** – Two days a week NFDIS visit Lymington and Romsey Hospital to meet with patients, soon to be discharged, who would require advice, aids, adaptations and help co-ordinating services in order to facilitate a timely discharge from hospital, and to remain safe within their property. Contact and home visits are then carried out once the patient has been discharged from hospital.
- 2.5 **Independence Matters Scheme** – To raise the profile of the services offered under the PSH team's Financial Assistance Policy and increase awareness of how the Council can assist disabled persons within the community, primarily through the funding of disabled adaptations. Awareness events include drop-in sessions around the district, adverts in local newspapers and a series of presentations to GP Surgery Staff.
- 2.6 These schemes help the Council meet the duties of the BCF, our strategic homelessness priorities and allow the PSH Team to concentrate on the technical aspects of delivering aids and adaptations to vulnerable people within the district.

Without these schemes it is unlikely that we would meet the requirements of the BCF and meet the needs of vulnerable people in the district.

- 2.7 The PSH Team currently provide NFDIS with:
- £49,125 for the Just Got Home Scheme (Lymington and Romsey Hospital) and;
 - £20,000 (maximum) for the Independence Matters Scheme.
- 2.8 NFDIS also received a Community Grant of £17,000 for 2024/25.
- 2.8 NFDIS have requested an additional £17,660 to be able to continue with the increased demand of the Just Got Home Scheme. In 2023/24 NFDIS saw 1400 patients in hospital and at home.
- 2.9 The additional funds would enable NFDIS to continue to provide the Just Got Home Service at its current level for this financial year.
- 2.10 Discussion have already started with regards to how NFDIS will cover this shortfall from 2025/26.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The additional funds will assist NFDIS to continue to provide the Just Got Home services at both Lymington and Romsey Hospital, benefiting many of our residents. The benefits will be monitored via an updated SLA and quarterly meetings between both parties.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost for funding this request is an additional £17,660.00 which will be funded from the BCF budget from HCC.

5. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are none arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none arising from this report.

7. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The enhanced scheme is likely to enhance the access to services for residents with protected characteristics.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That an additional £17,660 is provided to NFDIS in the form of a grant to continue with the Just Got Home Scheme at Lymington and Romsey Hospital for the financial year 2024/25.

9. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I agree to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr Steve Davies

Date: 8 July 2024

For further information contact:

Richard Knott
Strategic Director Housing and Communities
Tel: (023) 8028 5242
E-mail: Richard.Knott@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Public Documents

Kirsty Farmer
Service Manager – Housing Resident
Services
Tel: (023) 8028 5276
E-mail: Kirstym.farmer@nfdc.gov.uk

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 8 July 2024

Last date for call in – 15 July 2024