

Divisions Affected - All

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

18 JUNE 2024

**Budget Approval For Provision of a Dementia Support Service Funded
Between Adult Social Care and Integrated Care Board**

Report by Corporate Director for Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) **Approve the proposal for Adult Social Care to extend the current Dementia Support Service contract with Age UK Oxfordshire for the fifth and final year from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 (contract value £585,804).**
 - b) **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Adult Services to award and enter into contract with Age UK Oxfordshire to continue the additional service provision from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2025 funded from Better Care Fund (contract value £410,060).**

Executive Summary

2. The Dementia Support Service (branded Dementia Oxfordshire) is provided by Age UK Oxfordshire. The service is funded by Oxfordshire County Council (the council) and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (ICB). The contract is for three years plus a possible further two years extension. The contract is currently in its fourth year which expires on 31 December 2024. A decision is required about whether the contract is extended for the fifth and final year.
3. A decision is also required to directly award a contract to Age UK Oxfordshire to continue with the work provided by additional funding through Better Care Fund. This would run concurrently with the extended Dementia Support Service and expire on 31 December 2025. It is recommended that we continue with this additional funding, but it is not possible through the current Dementia Support Service contract due to previous funding taking it to the maximum increase allowance through contract procedure rules. An exemption to tendering has been granted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to allow the direct award of the additional contract.

4. This paper provides a review of the service covering cost, demand, quality, strategic priorities, followed by options for service provision from 1 January 2025. The review concludes that the service is performing well, and the provider is engaged in work with commissioners and health colleagues to help improve the support for people with dementia and their unpaid carers across Oxfordshire.
5. People living with dementia and their unpaid carers give feedback that the service is extremely helpful. For example:

“Thank you so much for all your support. I’m hoping I get to see you again at some point. I still think that my Angels choose you especially as you made both mum and I feel so supported in such a short space of time. I will always be grateful for that you walked into our lives.”¹
6. Our conclusion is that the service should continue and should be given the opportunity to continue with the work that the additional funding has been allowing, supporting people living with dementia, people with memory problems before diagnosis and their unpaid carers to continue living in the community.

Decision Table

Board	Date	Decision
Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team	20 May 2024	Agreed
Commercial Board	23 May 2024	Agreed
Joint Commissioning Executive	June 2024	
Key decision at Cabinet	18 June 2024	

Contract Details

Introduction

7. Our population is ageing and the prevalence of dementia roughly doubles with every five-year increase in older age. The need to improve and develop services for people with dementia has received an increasing level of national and government attention in the last ten years. We estimate the demand in Oxfordshire will increase in line with this trend.
8. The contract service specification cites the Government’s “Challenge on Dementia 2020²” which focuses on boosting research, improving care and raising public awareness about the condition. Through this challenge, there has been a national drive for early diagnosis as this helps to support people living with dementia and their families to access treatment and to promote future care planning.

¹ Extract from an email from an unpaid carer to Dementia Oxfordshire

² [Prime Ministers Challenge on Dementia 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

9. In line with the 2020 Challenge commitments, the council wants Oxfordshire residents to benefit from a specialist service that:
 - Keeps people with dementia living well at home.
 - Increases support for people with dementia and their carers to reduce admissions to hospital and residential care.
 - Provides a proactive and responsive service to people in crisis and at risk of deterioration.
 - Creates a bridge between health and social care and community services to help people with dementia live well.
 - Proactively manages the challenge of increasing numbers of people living with dementia at a time of considerable pressures on public funds.

Background

10. Under the Care Act 2014, the Council and NHS are responsible for ensuring that every person diagnosed with dementia receives meaningful care, and requires us to develop sustainable, high-quality care and support services.
11. In November 2015, a new dementia support contract was awarded to Age UK Oxfordshire which brought together three smaller contracts previously delivered by Age UK Oxfordshire, Young Dementia UK and the council. This contract expired in November 2020.
12. Following a review, the Dementia Support Service was recommissioned and following a competitive tender process, the contract was again awarded to Age UK Oxfordshire commencing 1 January 2021. The service is branded Dementia Oxfordshire.
13. The contract is for three years with the option to extend for a further two years. In March 2023, approval was received to extend the contract for one year from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 with additional funds of £234,320 from Better Care Fund. The additional funds were awarded to enable the Dementia Support Service to meet the increasing demand, enhance the education offer for carers and people living with dementia and allow the service to support people with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) but have not had a dementia diagnosis, which the service did not previously do.

Contract Value

14. The Dementia Support Service is funded jointly from the Age Well pooled budget by the council and the ICB. The contract value is £585,804 per year. The council funds £420,000pa and the remainder is funded by ICB.
15. In 2023, the council awarded Age UK Oxfordshire with additional funds from the Better Care Fund to extend their offer and meet the increasing demand for the service. This increase was under the maximum 10% allowance through Contract Procedure Rules and was completed via a contract variation.

Year	Dates	Value
Year 1	1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021	£585,803
Year 2	1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022	£585,804*
Year 3	1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023	£585,803 + £58,580 BCF
Year 4	1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024	£585,804 + £234,230 BCF

The Service Offer

16. The core offer of support is for every person in Oxfordshire with a diagnosis of dementia to have access to a dedicated Dementia Adviser (DA), from the point of diagnosis to either end of life or at the end of independent living. The Dementia Support Service is estimated to be working with approximately 71% of people with a diagnosis of dementia living in the community.
17. The personal outcomes sought through the delivery of the service are:
 - People with dementia and their carers feel aware of choices for future care and are therefore in control of their own journey
 - People with dementia and their families receive tailored support and are better connected to live well with dementia, maintain their independence and create their own wellbeing
 - People with dementia and their carers receive a responsive, proactive and timely service
 - Carers of people with dementia have received training and feel more knowledgeable about dementia and different types of management.

Service Growth through Additional Funding

Meeting Increased Demand:

18. In Oxfordshire the number of people with a diagnosis in June 2023³ was 5733. The Dementia Diagnosis Rate is an important metric reported to central government. This was 61.9 which remains below the national average of 63.5. Oxfordshire is required to increase its dementia diagnosis rates in line with the national ambition to hit 66.7%. There is a dementia plan to support the delivery of this ambition and the current service is helping to achieve this.
19. Data from LG Inform tells us how many people with a dementia diagnosis are living in residential care (which the service does not currently support) which allows us to work out how many people with a dementia diagnosis are living in the community. The data indicates that the service is engaging with approximately 71% of people with dementia living in the community. This means there is still further potential demand with people with a diagnosis that the service is not engaged with in the community.
20. With the additional funding provided by BCF, the Dementia Support Service has been able to support more people with dementia and their unpaid carers and families. The service is aligned with the Oxfordshire Way, focusing on

³ [Primary Care Dementia Data, June 2023 - NHS England Digital](#)

supporting people in the community and preventing or delaying demand on formal support services.

21. The table below provides information on the activity of the service under the current contract to 31 December 2023 and demonstrates the very high and increasing level of demand.

	Year 1 (2021)	Year 2 (2022)	Year 3 (2023)	Change (from 2021 to 2023)
Number of telephone support contacts	797	845	870	+9%
Number of new referrals accepted	965	1,111	1,179	+22%
Service case-load	2,109	2,337	2,609	+23%
Number of 6-month reviews completed	3,610	4,364	4,643	+28%

Support For People Without a Dementia Diagnosis:

22. The Dementia Support Service has worked with system partners and developed a two-pronged approach for this work.
- a) Memory Support Case model to support people with memory concerns or a Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) diagnosis
 - b) GP Memory Clinics to support people pre-diagnosis.
23. The services have made an impact on people with MCI with 25% of closed memory support cases converting into Dementia Adviser cases which tells us that the model is allowing the service to reach people earlier than it would have done if they were waiting for a diagnosis, and it is potentially helping improve the dementia diagnostic rate by supporting people through the diagnostic process.

Carer Education on Dementia:

24. The service has focused on co-production when developing its educational offer, which has been enhanced based on the feedback it received. Some people living with dementia advise the service around the educational offer, acting as Dementia Ambassadors and where appropriate assist with the delivery of the education sessions.
25. The education includes awareness sessions and sessions for people living with dementia and unpaid carers. There are also education sessions for professionals (not funded through the contract) and social groups which often include a knowledge sharing and/or educational element.
26. The service has received consistent feedback that participants value the opportunity to share their experiences of dementia and of being an unpaid carer. This helps to reduce their sense of isolation and helps them understand that there is a community of people dealing with a dementia diagnosis and that this

community is one from which they can draw both emotional and practical support.

Quality and Impact

27. Routine contract monitoring, through quarterly contract review meetings, demonstrates that the service is well-run, meeting or exceeding its performance expectations and achieving positive outcomes for people living with dementia and their families/carers. We fully expect that this would continue for the additional year if the option to extend is approved.
28. The service has published an impact report⁴ based on the work delivered in 2022 and updated in 2023. The report contains data on the support the service has offered to people with dementia and their carers over 2023 and an analysis of how this support has impacted them using surveys, interviews and case studies. The qualitative research has uncovered three main ways that the service makes an impact:
- a) Reducing carer stress through tailored practical and emotional support
 - b) Preventing people living with dementia and their carers experiencing isolation and loneliness
 - c) Increasing the confidence of carers in their caring role and improving the carer-cared-for relationship through education.
29. In the impact report, carers said:
- “Simply knowing support is there I don’t feel I’m on my own, and feel able to make contact when necessary.”*
- “Explaining the way mums dementia affects her, and how to help, makes me more patient with mum.”*
- “I am grateful for the work that you all do to support and encourage everyone in the community through this phase of our lives.”*

Options Analysis

30. **Option 1:** Retender. Prepare and undertake a procurement exercise to transition to a new contract from 1 January 2025 including the increase in funding of £234,320pa.
31. **Option 2A:** Extend the contract for one year from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 and directly award a contract for the value of £410,060 to the current provider to run concurrently with the extended contract from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2025 (preferred option).

⁴ [Our impact - Dementia Oxfordshire](#)

32. **Option 2B:** Extend the contract for one year from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 without the additional funding within a new contract running concurrently.

Preferred Option

33. The preferred option is Option 2A: **Extend the contract for one year from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 and directly award a contract for the value of £410,060 to the current provider to run concurrently with the extended contract from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2025.** This option will maintain a successful specialist service which has demonstrated high quality delivery and will take advantage of the current provider's innovations as well as external funds leveraged by the current provider.
34. This approach could be easily actioned. A further year will allow us to refine in more detail how to evaluate impact. The provider will look for greater efficiencies to improve outputs.

Cost Estimate of Preferred Option

35. The cost for a further year of funding this contract plus the additional directly awarded contract running concurrently is shown in the table below. This has been provided for in the current budgets.

Year	Cost (Cost centre SBE532)
Year 5: 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025	£585,803
Plus concurrent contract from 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2025 from BCF	£410,060
Total	£995,863

Corporate Policies and Priorities

36. The continuation of the Dementia Support Service for a further year aligns with the council's **Strategic Plan 2023-2025:**
- a) Commitment to tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
 - b) Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents
 - c) Support carers and the social care system.
37. The delivery of stronger, more resilient communities will address a portion of the demand on health and social care services as identified in the council's strategic Plan 2023-2025 priority of supporting carers and the social care system. The proposed interventions make a significant contribution to prevention work which seeks to strengthen health outcomes and build on individuals' strengths.

38. The Dementia Support Service also aligns with the new **Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2030**, through supporting people to stay well and independent, enjoying better health and wellbeing for longer – and interventions delivered as early as possible when needed.

Financial Implications

39. The funding required for the fifth and final year in the contract from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 has been identified by both Oxfordshire County Council and Integrated Care Board and will be funded jointly through the Age Well pooled budget. The funding for the directly awarded contract to continue with the additional work from 1 April 2024 to 31 December 2025 has been identified through the Better Care Fund.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

40. Under the Care Act 2014, the Council and NHS are responsible for ensuring that every person diagnosed with dementia receives meaningful care, and requires us to develop sustainable, high-quality care and support services.
41. The current contract for the Dementia Support Service was procured as an above threshold Light Touch Regime contract in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The contract is currently due to expire on 31 December 2024 and contains the option to extend for a further year until 31 December 2025.
42. An exemption from the requirement to tender the contract for the additional services has been granted pursuant to Contract Procedure Rules in order to facilitate a direct award. The value of the additional services is £410,060 (VAT exempt) and falls below the pecuniary service threshold for the Light Touch Regime of £663,540 (inclusive of VAT) at which the council is required to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Comments checked by:

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Staff Implications

43. There are no new or additional staffing implications. The contract with Age UK Oxfordshire is adequately funded for the staffing resource required.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

44. With equality and diversity issues at the forefront, the service model was designed and co-produced with people living with dementia and their carers. The service continues to develop with the help of people living with dementia. Feedback is sought about how satisfied people are and how using the service has made an impact on their lives. This is monitored and evaluated to ensure that the commissioned service is making a positive difference to people living with dementia and their carers and helping them to continue living in the community.

Risk Management

45. **Critical success factors summary table**

Critical success criteria	Option 1	Option 2A	Option 2B
Savings achieved	1	1	3
Least reputational risk	1	3	2
Least user risk	2	3	1
Strategic aims achieved	1	3	1
Total	5	10	7

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Background papers: None

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