

Committee: Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 04 September 2019

Wards: All

Subject: Home Share Scheme – Task Group Update

Lead officer: John Morgan, Assistant Director Adult Social Care, C&H

Lead member: Councillor Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment.

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Recommendations:

- A. This report is to update the panel on the implementation and progress of Homeshare in Merton
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides an update, following Cabinets decision in February 2018 to support a Home Share scheme in Merton.

2 BACKGROUND DETAILS

- 2.1. In June 2017 the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed to undertake a scrutiny review of Home Share schemes.
- 2.2. Home Share is a reciprocal arrangement that householders, usually but not exclusively older people, with a spare room, who also have low level support needs, with a sharer who commits to undertake a certain level of support in return for a licence to occupy the spare room.
- 2.3. Typically, the sharer is a younger person, student or public service worker who needs accommodation and is able to provide additional support. It is important to note that the sharer is expected to provide companionship and domestic support, not personal care. As such, these schemes are not regulated by the Care Quality Commission.
- 2.4. A task group was convened to consider if a scheme of this nature would be beneficial for the residents of Merton. The recommendation to proceed with a scheme were presented to and accepted by Cabinet at its meeting on 19 February 2018.
- 2.5. Officers undertook research and market testing to establish the options for choosing a referral partner. This was confirmed to be Share and Care Home Share.

3. **TIMETABLE**

Verification was completed by 30 June 2018

Partnership was launched by September 2018

4. **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

Home Share is a voluntary scheme that is in addition to other services the council offers. The Panel undertook significant research in coming to its recommendations. Further consultation was therefore not necessary.

5. **POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF HOME SHARE FOR MERTON**

5.1 Under the Care Act 2014, the council has a duty to promote wellbeing, and this scheme is part of the council meeting its duty.

5.2 Previous reports highlighted the benefits of the scheme, in supporting older people to remain living as independently as possible within their own homes, for as long as possible. In particular, for those individuals who report experiencing loneliness, and those who have long-term health conditions and require moderate support.

5.3 The home sharer provides companionship, which compliments domiciliary care. The home sharer is able to carry out practical tasks, such as shopping, cooking, light cleaning, gardening, taking out bins, changing lightbulbs, accompanying to appointments, or to social events.

5.4 However, the sharer is not permitted to provide any personal or nursing care to the person they live with. Therefore, it is not legal or appropriate for the Home Sharer to receive payment in the form of a Direct Payment.

6. **UPDATE ON PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 **Adult Social Care to identify and work with a local home share scheme which the council could endorse and make referrals to where appropriate.**

This has been completed and the successful Home Share partner in Merton is Share and Care.

6.2 **Adult Social Care to work with local voluntary organisations to identify how they make best use of home share schemes.**

Home Share have met with various local voluntary organisations including The Wimbledon Guild, Age UK and this has resulted in referrals to the scheme.

6.3 **Adult Social Care to lead on raising awareness of an approved home share scheme amongst council frontline staff.**

Home Share met with Adult Social Care teams to explain about the scheme and presented a supplied marketing literature to all the teams this has resulted in referrals from Adult Social Care to Home Share.

Home Share have also met with GP practices to encourage referrals.

6.4 **Adult Social Care to promote the Home Share scheme on the Merton Council website and its publications.**

Staff within Adult Social Care currently promote the scheme via sharing the literature provided. Face to face and word of mouth has so far been a preferred method of communication for many older people. However, as the online directory is further developed all community services, resources and activities will be promoted online to encourage self-referrals, as well as providing leaflets, literature and face to face communication.

6.5 **Safeguarding and other policies.**

Home Share have confirmed all sharers undergo a full enhanced DBS check as well as providing three references, which are verified. They also request sharers become Dementia Friends and give preference to those who have experience of volunteering. Merton has not received any safeguarding alerts as to date. Home Share have also confirmed a compressive selection process reduces the risk of abuse. Home Share recently reported an incident where a sharer reported a safeguarding concern, which resulted in protecting the homeowner. The Safeguarding policy and procedure for Homeshare will be reviewed as part of Merton's Quality assurance process from the Quality assurance team during a quality assurance visit planned for this year.

6.6 **Interview sample householders and their sharers to establish their experience of Home Share as a provider.**

Home share continues to have positive impacts on both sharer and home owner. The below statement was taken from a sharer in July 2019

My homeshare has been brilliant. I've made a friend in B, with whom I've spent many evenings getting to know and listening to her stories. I have come to really value our relationship and think she is an amazing person. Share & Care have been extremely supportive throughout the experience - they seem to genuinely care I can't fault the service they have provided to us both.

7. **REFERRALS TO DATE**

7.1 Seven people in Merton have had Home Share, two have left the scheme to go into full-time care this year when their needs increased. The low numbers are expected as this is a new service. It is expected that once the scheme becomes better known, numbers of referrals will increase.

8. **NEXT STEPS**

8.1 Officers will take the following next steps:

A commissioning monitoring visit is planned for September 2019 to ensure continuous quality assurance and compliance with Merton's standards.

Checks will consist of:

- DBS checks of sharers:
- Confirmation of an agreement in place between the sharer and householder.
- Evidence/review of robust the interview and selection process

- Evidence of regular checks with the householder and sharer to ensure it is working satisfactorily & evidence of any support they give.
- Confirmation that for the duration of every Home Share agreement, the agency remains in regular contact with both parties to give advice and to ensure they are fully supported.

8.2 The safeguarding team in Merton will provide safeguarding training to Home Share, which will cover:

- Introduction to safeguarding
- Different types of abuse
- Reporting concerns and raising alerts

This will ensure continuous training and awareness in knowledge and practice to give confidence with LBM and its members

8.3 Continue to work with Care & Share to promote the scheme through written materials and ‘Lunch & Learn’ sessions for staff and partners. There are also plans to work with Share and Care to engage with the GP’s for information sessions in September 2019

8.4 Continue to promote and monitor the take up and success of any referrals made over the first year;

8.5 Continue to review the scheme again in six months and one year

9. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The council is not making payment to Care & Share. As sharers do not provide personal care, it is unlikely that the householder payment would be part of a service users personal budget other than in exceptional circumstances and then it is likely to be part of a direct payment.

10. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Authority will not be entering into a contract with Care & Share, the homeowners or the sharers. The Council’s role would be limited to referrals and sign posting persons who appear to be eligible to join the Home Share scheme in Merton along with monitoring the quality of the care . In making referrals and promoting the Home Share scheme, the Council must consider its various legal duties to residents of the borough and be satisfied that the scheme would promote the wellbeing of those who participate in the scheme.

11. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Both the householders and the sharers enter into the arrangement voluntarily and have the right to terminate the arrangement with notice.

The scheme can be part of promoting inter-generational cohesion and inclusion as sharing is typically between an older householder and a younger sharer.

12. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are potential risks in home sharing, but with appropriate safeguards in place these are no greater than in general day to day life. A householder with a sharer may actually reduce the risk of crime compared to an isolated householder.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There is a reputational risk to the council if a referral results in a home share that goes wrong. This is mitigated by the checks being undertaken before referrals and subsequent matching takes place.

APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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