

Policy Committee Decision Report

Title of Report:	Early Help and Prevention – Our Occupational Therapy, Equipment, Adapted Housing and City-Wide Care Alarms and Technology Enabled Care Offer Update
Date of Decision:	18 th September 2024
Report To:	Adult Health and Social Care Committee
Report Of:	Strategic Director Adult Wellbeing and Care
Report Author:	Kelly Siddons, Assistant Director Living and Ageing Well Short-Term Services; Martin Smith Assistant Director of Transformation & Delivery (Sheffield) Sheffield ICB/Sheffield CC

Executive Summary:

This report provides

- Further update regarding Living and Ageing Well Short-Term service provision including Occupational Therapy, Equipment, Adapted Housing, City-Wide Care Alarms and Technology Enabled Care services setting out the current position and achievements since the previous report to committee in March 2024.
- Activity underway to achieve an accessible, responsive suite of services to improve long term outcomes for local people in the city.
- Current commissioning arrangements for the Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service and the options for recommissioning, along with key updates with regards to implementation of national guidance.
- An update on the City-Wide Care Alarms service including proposals in relation to charges to customers.



Council Plan outcomes:

[A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future](#)

[Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home](#)

[People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing](#)

[A creative and prosperous city full of culture, learning, and innovation](#)

Policy Committee remit:

This report is to be considered by the Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee as its remit includes Adult Living and Ageing Well: [Part 3C - 3.3 Matters Delegated to Committees May 2024.pdf \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](#)”

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? No

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee:

1. Approve an extension of the Integrated Equipment Loan Services (ICELS) of 18 months consultation and engagement will take place regards future of the ICELS contract commencing in November 2024 to enable a recommendation to be proposed at Committee in March 2025.
2. Notes consultation and engagement will take place between September and January 25 regards the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and discretionary funding policy to enable a recommendation to be proposed at Committee in March 2025.
3. Notes the update on the delivery of the Council’s Occupational Therapy and City-Wide Care Alarms Services.
4. Notes progress in delivering Technology Enabled Care ambitions including the financial impact of digital switchover.
5. Approve charging the amount reflective of the additional digital cost, where the digital switchover is applied to customers, so that Sheffield City Council is not at a financial loss.
6. Notes engagement will take place between October 2024 and February 2025 to propose increase in City Wide Care Alarm charges to achieve an affordable service. The outcome of the engagement will be provided to Committee in March 2025.
7. Approves an annual review of the Citywide Care Alarms charging policy to ensure sustainability of the service.

8. Requests that the Strategic Director Adult Care and Wellbeing provides the Committee with updates on progress and outcomes in relation to the performance and financial spend on a six-monthly basis.

Financial Implications: [Yes] [Approved by: Laura Foster & Judith Town 04.09.24]

Legal Implications: [Yes] [Approved by: Sherrie Grant]

Equality and Inclusion Implications: Yes Approved by: Ed Sexton
Full Equalities Impact Assessment completed with EIA number: 2804

Climate Change Implications: [Yes/No] [Approved by: Sustainability Officer name]

Background Papers: Not Applicable

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Equipment and Adaptations Delivery Plan

Appendix 2 – Waiting well document

Appendix 3 – Case study of waiting well in practice

- 1.1 This report provides further update regarding Living and Aging Well Short-Term service provision including Occupational Therapy, Equipment, Adapted Housing, City-Wide Care Alarms and Technology Enabled Care services setting out the current position and achievements since the update to committee in March 2024.
- 1.2 Commissioning arrangements for the community equipment loans service and the options for recommissioning, along with key updates with regards to City Wide Care Alarms, the MHRA regarding safety of people and the measures taken to ensure that people remain safe are provided.
- 1.3 This work contributes to the Safe and Well and Active and Independent Outcomes that are set out in the Adult Care Strategy in several ways.
 - Interventions delivered increases quality of life by enabling people to remain or increase independence, live safely and well in their own homes for as long as possible, plus helping to prevent hospital admissions and long-term care.
 - Thriving neighbourhoods and communities as more people will be able to maintain living in their own home and participate more fully in their communities.
 - Better health and wellbeing as more people will have the adaptations equipment and/or assistive technology to maintain their independence and prevent ill health.
 - Tackling inequalities as more people can utilise adaptations equipment and/or assistive technology to overcome obstacles and achieve their potential.

2 Proposal

2.1 Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service (ICELS)

- 2.1.1 The Integrated Community Equipment Loan Service (ICELS) is the mechanism by which community equipment and non-catalogue equipment (Special Equipment) is ordered, loaned, procured, stored, supplied, distributed, collected, decontaminated, recycled and serviced across Sheffield. This delivers on our statutory requirement for Sheffield Council and NHS South Yorkshire ICB to provide a community equipment loan service.
- 2.1.2

- 2.1.3 The Service consists of the procurement, storage, loan, distribution, collection, decontamination, repair, recycling and servicing of community equipment, including single use consumables, simple aids and adaptations.

- 2.1.4 This offer ensures that residents of all ages living in Sheffield, are promptly provided with equipment and aids that enable them to stay independent for longer.

- 2.1.5 Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 allows partners (NHS bodies and councils) to contribute to a common fund to commission health and social care services by forming a commissioning partnership, as seen in Sheffield.

The existing Provider's contract is due to expire on 30/9/2025 with the options of a 2-year extension to 2027. The Procurement Team has indicated that the process for re-procurement will take 12- 18 months and includes a period of consultation and engagement with local people, procurement and mobilisation once a decision has been made.

2.1.6

To undertake a review of equipment provision learning has been undertaken from a Yorkshire and Humber wide review of equipment provision, discussions with the current provider, review of performance, a local review of prescribing practice aligned to Care Act duties and consideration of equipment needed to support people with sensory impairment.

2.1.7

To inform a future commissioning strategy, a review of options is underway to enable delivery of positive outcomes but also enable and establish efficiencies in ways of working. In meantime to ensure sufficiency of time to complete the review of options, it is proposed to extend the current contract by 18 months to enable the review to be undertaken and options agreed by Members.

2.2 Disabled Facilities Grant Update

2.2.1 Equipment and adaptations enabled people to live independently and well in their own homes. Due to this, it's been important that we can deliver accessible, quality provision.

2.2.2 Over the past 12 months, the service has: -

- ✓ Approved 365 adaptations grants
- ✓ Delivered 735 Adaptations.

2.2.3 The administration of the grant and adaptations helps transform the lives of disabled individuals, their carer's and their families by funding essential home adaptations. These changes go beyond mere physical alterations; they open opportunities of independence, comfort, and possibility.

2.2.4 As a follow up to the Equipment and Adaptations report in March 2024 the financial position has also improved due to the impact of means testing, and robust application of the guidance with regards to the reasonable and practicable elements of the legislation.

2.2.5 The latest full year forecast shows that, whilst the main DFG mandatory budget continues to show an overspend, this is offset against an underspend across the full budget due to the robust application of the grant resulting in an overall outturn variance of -£83.4k for all DFG funded schemes showing a positive improvement. We will continue to review the position to ensure that we maximise the use of the grant in line with the criteria.

2.2.6 It is anticipated that the grant will be fully committed in 24/25, although some schemes may not be completed until 25/26 due to issues in the delivery mechanisms of the work.

2.3 Private Sector Housing Policy Update

2.3.1 The Council's Adult Care and Wellbeing service administers and delivers the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in line with the [Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy](#), agreed in January 2020. Working in partnership with Housing and Children's.

2.3.2 The DFG is provided from Central Government and is ringfenced to fund equipment and adaptations identified by Occupational Therapists for people and children living in their own occupied, private rented or registered provider homes.

2.3.3 Following March Committee further work has been undertaken to implement the standard operating procedure with regards to the DFG grant for major adaptations. Progress has been made with regards to the use of discretionary payments, ensuring it is utilised in line with National and Local policy according to the funds available on a case-by-case basis.

2.3.4 The Principal Occupational Therapist is leading a working group with people with a disability and carers to ensure that the Criteria and our approaches and practice regards the provision of equipment are personalised and promote independence. The group commences in October 2024.

2.3.5 This will inform a review of the Private Sector Housing Policy to reflect the views of individuals, latest guidance and to support the appropriate use of discretionary funding to ensure that it is applied accordingly and supports best use of the available and is accessible for those with extenuating need for further financial support. It's planned to bring an update of the Private Sector Housing Policy to March 2025 Committee for approval.

2.4 Occupational Therapy Update

2.4.1 The Adults Occupational Therapy team complete work under the remit of The *Care Act 2014* to promote the independence and *wellbeing* of an individual and help to *prevent, delay, or reduce* the need for a person to access formal care and support.

2.4.2 The team have worked to develop several documents that set out how we support people to wait well where we currently have waits for accessing our services, alongside practice guidance with regards to our duty function to ensure that we work in a proactive and preventative approach meeting people's needs in a timely way whilst supporting us to reduce the number of people waiting.

2.4.3 The ongoing development of Occupational Therapy and a proactive response to the provision of aids and adaptations is key to enabling us to

support more people to remain living well at home and less reliant on formal services.

2.4.4 Over the past 2 years we have reduced waits from a baseline of 2900 people waiting for 18 months to a current position of 959 people waiting for an assessment with the longest wait being 4 months, this is despite a **120%** increase in demand in same period.

2.4.5 To reach our goal of delivering assessments within 28 days by February 2025 in the context of the increased demand, the following is underway:

- ✓ Implementing a dedicated occupational therapy dashboard that provides us with access to the data required to understand and develop the service
- ✓ Establishment of an independent living centre and training facilities for our workforce development. This operates 5 days per week and opens to members of the public in September 2024.
- ✓ Launch of an assessment clinic in May 2024, which supports a responsive approach.
- ✓ Implementation of a waiting well principles across all services, including the allocation of existing resources and robust monitoring to reduce risks to people.

2.4.6 In addition, training is planned to create Trusted Assessor trainers which will be a sustainable approach to delivery of training, provide value for money and give our internal workforce development opportunities to increase their skills and knowledge around the provision of low-level equipment. Through this approach its planned to: -

- ✓ Develop and implement 10 Trusted assessor trainers
- ✓ The Trusted Assessor trainers, will then train 150 of our internal and partner organisations by May 2025 enabling us to increase prescriber capacity and the timelier prescription of Equipment and Aids

2.4.7 The trajectory to deliver timely assessments is expected to increase during the next 6 months as work continues to implement practice guidance with staff regarding the provision of duty and ongoing work to innovate our initial contact functions.

2.4.8 Since March 2024, the service has also:

- ✓ Facilitated several Away days with the workforce including guest speakers from Foundations and raising the profile of best practice.
- ✓ Implemented systems and processes regarding Blue Badge scheme to ensure that we are working in line with the latest guidance published in 2022.
- ✓ Undertaken workforce planning and development based on data and redesigned practice guidance related to the function of duty to improve the experience of people's initial contact with the service.

- ✓ Planned an event for Prescribers across Sheffield to be held October 24 to share best practice and promote collaboration across health and care.

2.5 Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) National Patient Safety Alert

2.5.1 The MHRA issued an alert in August 2023 following continued reports of deaths and serious injuries from entrapment or falls relating to medical beds, bed rails, trolleys, bariatric beds, lateral turning devices and bed grab handles.

2.5.2 This alert set out several actions to those responsible for the use, purchase, prescription and maintenance of medical beds, trolleys, bed rails, bed grab handles and lateral turning devices across Health and Social care.

2.5.3 Sheffield City Council have updated organisational policies and procedures on procurement, provision, prescribing, servicing and maintenance of these devices in line with the MHRA's updated guidance, developed training and implemented maintenance and servicing schedules.

2.5.4 During March – July 2024, the service completed 756 risk assessments with children and adults with atypical as a priority. There are 72 reviews remaining which are planned to be completed by end of August 2024. This report provides an assurance to Committee that the service has responded to the alert and requirement to review equipment affected.

2.6 Technology Enabled Care Update

2.6.1 Our priority is to focus our offer to the people of Sheffield to live independently with the assistance of Technology Enabled Care (TEC). TEC can deliver increased quality of life by enabling people to remain or increase independence, live safely and well in their own homes for as long as possible.

2.6.2 TEC can also prevent hospital admissions and the requirement for long term care. Tests of Change on Connected Care have been extended, working with Howz (Short Term Care) and Anthropos (Long Term Care) to evaluate the benefits that these digital products bring. Around 160 people have been involved in the testing to monitor activities of daily living, and send data to indicate changes in behaviors, supporting the delivery of proactive and preventative care.

2.6.3 Sheffield City Council have been selected to collaborate with Oxford University to develop case studies as part of an economic evaluation focusing on the experience of people in receipt of care. The evaluation is

funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and supported by the Digital Team from the Department of Health & Social Care. This brings positive recognition to Sheffield regards our approach to TEC.

Furthermore, there are developments planned as follows: -

- ✓ The TSA Virtual House which is demonstrated on this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8p8uYubBUo>. The training will run from September to August 2025 targeted at Sheffield Hallam University – and our future workforce supporting the learning for qualifications in social work, district nursing, and paramedics. Health and Social Care – including a range of practitioners, commissioners, and leadership.
- ✓ [YOURMeds](#) Test of Change – A digital monitored dosage system enabling people to continue to self-medicate at home, supporting independence and building capacity. The test of change will run from the 9 September for 40 weeks involving 27 people in receipt of care. We will evaluate the outcomes for people, the benefits of medication compliance, and the impact on home care service provision.
- ✓ **TEC First Approach to Care** – As part of our Home First approach, a new Service Delivery Model is being developed as a partnership with NRS Healthcare. With plans to bring the commissioning strategy to Committee in November 2024 for approval.

2.7 City Wide Care Alarms Service

- 2.7.1 Citywide Care Alarms (CWCA) is a universal service which provides a care alarm and response service to approximately 8258 people over the age of 18 in Sheffield.
- 2.7.2 People who use CWCA are provided with a main unit and a portable alarm. Through this a 24-hour response centre can be contacted by the customer. If necessary, locally based staff in Sheffield can be dispatched to a customer's home address to provide assistance. This element makes our offer unique from private sector care alarm services. Customers can also purchase optional extras such as sensors that can detect falls, flooding, extreme temperatures etc.
- 2.7.3 On average the service responds to 866 call outs a month and of this on average 350 falls a month. Having a care alarm provides reassurance to people and their families that they can stay safe at home. It can allow someone to live independently whilst providing reassurance should an adverse event occur. This means that care packages can be prevented or minimised. This is linked to our commitment to preventing, reducing and delaying needs in line with the Care Act (2014).
- 2.7.4 Because of this CWCA also provides wider benefits to the health and social care system in Sheffield by reducing preventable hospital admissions. In addition to the core care alarm offer the service has also received discharge

grant in 24/25 to the amount of £320,000 to continue to provide low-level falls pick up service on behalf of Yorkshire Ambulance Service. We are exploring extending this work to care homes which could attract an additional £75,000 if agreed. Presently this work is only funded in 24/25.

- 2.7.5 Discharge Grant is currently funding a falls pick up service operated by CWCA. When someone has fallen if there are no injuries CWCA staff can be deployed to, this is not limited to CWCA customers. This is planned to make a **cost saving to the NHS of £895,594** in avoided ambulance costs alone. In 23/24 this prevented **276 people** who had fallen from needing ambulance call outs. In Quarter 1 of 24/25 a further 84 ambulance call outs were prevented.
- 2.7.6 Through the business as usual operation of the service CWCA also prevents demand in the NHS. In Quarter 1 of 24/25 the service attended **2363** call outs to people in their own homes. In previous years the service has attended an average of **313** falls a month where the person who was uninjured and avoided conveyance to hospital.
- 2.7.7 CWCA is a discretionary service which is charged to customers. In line with SCC's financial governance, it should recover the cost of its operation through charges. The Council has not increased charges for CWCA since 2015. This has prevented cost increases for customers for 9 years and has meant that the service has remained accessible to as many people as possible.
- 2.7.8 However, this means that in real terms CWCA's income has significantly fallen as inflation has driven up the costs of operating the service. Additional costs have also arisen as the service has invested in digital equipment which is required for the switch off of the analogue phone network by January 2027. Telecare equipment uses phone lines to communicate between the device and the response centre. Therefore, new equipment is needed which can work on digital phone networks.
- 2.7.9 The service has been replacing analogue equipment, but this has contributed to an overspend. In 23/24 £504,000 in overspend was incurred from the service purchasing digital equipment to meet the requirements of the switchover.
- 2.7.10 As of June 2024, CWCA is forecast to overspend by £574,000 in 24/25. SCC cannot operate traded non statutory services at a loss and needs to maximise income generated by the service. An increase in service charges and changes in the application of the charging policy would significantly help to address 24/25 forecast overspend and put the service in a stronger sustainable financial position in the longer term.
- 2.7.11 It has been established that, going forward, the purchase of the equipment required to replace analogue systems, and (contingent on the method used), the installation of this equipment can be capitalised. A one off historic Social Care Capital Grant is available to fund this investment, which will reduce an

in-year revenue budget pressure. Longer term, the service's charges are proposed to recover the cost of digital equipment as part of business-as-usual work.

Application of the Charging Policy

2.7.12

The service recommends making the following changes with immediate effect regarding charges to customers to ensure the long-term financial sustainability by appropriate application of the existing charging policy as follows: -

- ✓ As part of the digital switchover of equipment a SIM card is required to operate digital telecare equipment. This is provided by CWCA but the cost of a telecare package with a SIM card is higher in CWCA's current charging schedule (£21.42 a month analogue, £30.39 a month digital) reflecting additional costs to SCC.
- ✓ It is proposed to charge the amount reflective of the digital charge, where the move is made to customers so that Sheffield City Council is not at a loss and to ensure that the service remains viable.
- ✓ In some cases, customers have been moved from analogue to digital telecare packages, but service charges have not increased accordingly in error. It's not proposed to backdate any charges applied but correct charges will be applied going forward.
- ✓ If the proposal is accepted, the service intends to write to all affected customers to inform them of the new charges for digital equipment. This will provide existing customers the opportunity to cease care alarm packages if they wish. All new customers provided with digital equipment are now being charged the correct rate from the start of their packages.

2.7.13 Correctly applying the existing charging schedule which reflects the cost of digital, will generate additional income of £ 463,126.48 annually, assuming 95% invoice recovery rate. A one-off cost will be incurred from writing to existing customers of £ 6,204.73.

2.7.14 The service needs to more broadly examine its charging policy and consider options for uplifting charges and the longer-term charging model for the service which strikes a balance between the financial sustainability of the service and the affordability of the service to customers.

2.7.15 Due to this, engagement will take place between October 2024 and February 2025 to propose increase in charges to achieve cost recovery. The outcome of the engagement will be provided to Committee in Spring 2025. Going forward it is proposed that service charges are reviewed annually to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the service.

3 How does this decision contribute to the Council Plan?

The report and approach contributes to [A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future; Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home; People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing; A creative and prosperous city full of culture, learning, and innovation](#)

3.1 People – Prosperity - Planet

The wellbeing of Sheffielders drives the work of the Council. We want more people to live long, independent and fulfilling lives free from harm and poverty. This plan supports the ambition to enable people to live independently and well and have a sustainable provision of equipment.

3.2 City Goals

The report and approach contribute to A caring and safe Sheffield, A Sheffield for all generations and A connected Sheffield and in particular: -

- We have access to the digital and physical infrastructure we need to work together to solve shared problems and make positive and healthy lifestyle choices.
- We support everyone to live with dignity and to age well, with access to leisure activities and control over where and how they receive high-quality health & care services.
- We have diverse and accountable leadership that listens, is trustworthy, effective and inspiring, putting inclusion, expertise and diversity at the heart of decision-making

4 What community or partner engagement has been undertaken and how has it informed the proposal?

- 4.1 A crucial element in the successful promotion of independent living and reablement is the increased involvement in people receiving, and staff directly delivering care, in the development of all key parts of the plan. Throughout the sector, we know that involving and coproducing these makes them more likely to be successful.
- 4.2 Consultations with people with lived experience and partner organisations are planned to take place specifically with regards to the recommissioning of the ICELS contract, and the proposed changes to the Private sector discretionary housing policy prior to the next committee update in March 2025. Their views and experience will be instrumental in shaping decisions.
- 4.3 This paper sets out the planned reviews to take place of ICELSS, Equipment, Adaptations Services and a Criteria. As part of the reviews, views of individuals with a disability will be sought and any future proposed models codesigned so that our approaches are inclusive and are representative of individuals views and choices, including our development of a disability friendly city.

5 What alternative options did we consider?

The alternative options considered:

5.1 Alternative Option 1:

- Don't complete the identified recommendation and actions risking the implementation of service improvements. performance and financial recovery.
- This option does not provide the assurances required

5.2 Alternative Option 2: - Recommended

- To note the identified recommendations and actions including the implementation of delivery plan for equipment and adaptations performance and financial recovery.
- This would provide the assurances required to ensure that we are striving towards a high performing and financially sustainable service

6 How has equality, diversity and inclusion been actively considered?

The Equality Impact Assessment will be published alongside the report.

6.1 As a Public Authority, we have legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010, collectively referred to as the 'general duties to promote equality'. Section 149(1) contains the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is connected to protected characteristics and prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The proposal described in this report is consistent with those requirements. It aims to develop a more efficient and person-centred approach and, as referenced in the Consultation section above, to ensure citizens' voices and experiences help to inform and develop the future models. A full EIA will be undertaken in response to each development so that the EIA informs the future models

6.2 Engagement will ensure that any impacts to any protected characteristic groups are fully understood and carefully considered before any decisions are made.

- 6.3 When charges are reviewed in Citywide Care Alarms the service will engage with customers and will seek to strike a balance between low charges for customers which includes older people and people with disabilities and the financial viability of the service in the long term.

7 Financial and Commercial Implications

Integrated Equipment Loan Service

- 7.1. For 24/25, the budget for the Equipment Contract with Medequip is made up of £3.1m NHS SY ICB funding, £1.95m SCC funding and up to £2m of refund income for items of equipment which have been returned. The budget is a risk share budget with the NHS SY ICB picking up 67% of costs and SCC picking up the remaining 33%.
- 7.2 At month 3, there is a forecast underspend of £131k against the SCC element of the contract.

Disabled Facilities Grant

- 7.3 For 24/25, the total amount of Disabled Facilities Grant available is £6m. This is made up of £0.42m committed carry forward from 23/24, and the 24/25 annual allocation from Central Government of £5.6m. This has been supplemented by £0.2m from a historic Social Care Capital Grant to manage the demand levels anticipated at the point the budget was set. The current forecast outturn against the £6m budget is £6.1m, however it appears likely that a significant proportion of this delivery may slip into 25/26.
- 7.4. There is already £1.1m of work identified to be funded by DFG in 2025/26. The current trend is for new requests for work to be received at a rate of approx. £420k per month. If this level of demand continues, and stairlifts continue to be delivered in advance of the statutory 12-month timescale, then the forecast total costs to DFG (including staffing recharges) will be £5.8m. In 24/25 the annual Disabled Facilities Grant award from Central Government has increased from £5.1m to £5.6m. Therefore, the indications are that between the steps taken to rationalise expenditure and increased funding from government, Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure is moving towards a sustainable position.

City Wide Care Alarms

- 7.5 At month 3, the City-Wide Care Alarms budget was overspent by c. £574,000. This is because of unfunded equipment digital upgrades, and costs not being fully recovered through the service charge. For 24/25, one off capital grant has been identified to offset the cost of equipment purchase and installation relating to the

digital switchover. Work is underway to quantify these costs and match them to grant income.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Under the Care Act 2014, the Council has a duty to meet the eligible needs of those in its area. As part of this duty, the Council must set out and provide information about eligibility so that individuals and carers know what support is available to them.
- 8.2 Adult health and social care eligibility criteria is set out in the Care and Support (Eligibility Criteria) Regulations 2015 (the 'Eligibility Regulations'). Page 130 Page 11 of 12 4.3.3 4.3.4 4.3.5 4.3.6 4.3.7 4.3.8
- 8.3 To be eligible to receive social care support, individuals need will be assessed against the criteria set out in the 2015 Regulations. The Council must also act in accordance with the Care Act statutory guidance issued by the government.
- 8.4 By virtue of section 78 of the Care Act 2014, Local Authorities must act within that guidance. Provided the suggested amendments to the eligibility criteria are in accordance with the 2015 Regulations and government guidance, these shall go some way to discharging the Council's statutory duties.
- 8.5 The proposals set out in this report will also assist the Council in meeting its statutory duty under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee approved the establishment of a fund and its criteria under which individual grants are given on 16 November 2022 as part of the DFG scheme.
- 8.6 Other than the extension of the ICELS scheme, there are no direct legal implications arising from the remainder of this report.

9 Climate and Environmental Implications

The review the equipment contract and adaptations reviews will include a review of how we increase recycling of equipment and adaptations which will in turn reduce landfill and waste and ensure effective business continuity plans are in place to ensure a response to impacts of climate change. This will in turn support implementation of the Climate Statement agreed at Committee in January 2024.

10 Other implications

- 10.1 From 2008-09 the scope for use of DFG funding was widened to support any Council expenditure incurred under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO). Article 3 of the RRO enables housing authorities to give discretionary assistance, in any form, (e.g.,

grant, loan or equity release) for the purpose of improving living conditions, allowing the Council to use DFG funding for wider purposes which may be more appropriate for individuals than mandatory DFG allows.

- 10.2 This provides an opportunity for a more flexible use of the DFG fund to address issues on a wider preventative basis which cannot be covered using the mandatory scheme. However, under the RRO, any new forms of assistance must be set out in an approved policy. The Council Assistance Policy sets out all the forms of assistance it provides under the RRO. Therefore, any assistance using DFG funding will need to be set out in the Assistance Policy.

11 Reasons for decision

- 11.1 The decision to approve an extension of the Integrated Equipment Loan Services (ICELES) of 18 months provides the time required to undertake the work regarding development of a new specification including consultation and engagement regards the future of the ICELES contract.
- 11.2 This decision will support consultation, and engagement regards the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and discretionary funding policy, enabling us to have clear practice guidance for both people requiring access to the funding and our workforce which is reflective of learning from previous ombudsmen decisions
- 11.3 The performance updates and focused delivery plan gives a structured approach to the promotion of independent living as well as how the service is addressing waiting lists and ensuring that progress is being made and people are supported to wait well. It will also provide greater accountability and transparency of how we will do this.
- 11.4 Providing regular updates and latest position of the service and the key priority workstreams including commissioning arrangements, future opportunities and performance ensures the Committee, wider stakeholders, and the public the ability to hold the Council to account for progress and provide an additional mechanism to input to future development and oversight.
- 11.5 The approval to undertake a review of charging for City Wide Care alarms will enable us to have a more viable business model and better reflect the increased cost for the upgrade to digital equipment and ensure that we are delivering value for money whilst not operating at a loss.