



CABINET: 10 March 2020

Report of: Corporate Director of Place & Community

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor K. Wright

Contact for further information: Mrs L. Lea (Extn. 5196)

(E-mail: laura.lea@westlancs.gov.uk)

**SUBJECT: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING ALLOCATION TO
PRESTON CARE & REPAIR HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY**

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the service provided by Preston Care & Repair to the residents of West Lancashire and to recommend using an amount of disabled facilities grant funding to enable the service to continue.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Head of Housing & Regulatory Services be given the delegated authority to amend the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy 2015 to allow DFG funds to be awarded to external organisations in order to meet the aims of the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 and the aims of the Better Care Fund .
- 2.2 That 10% of the 2018/19 and 2019/20 disabled facilities grant allocation underspend be used to commission Preston Care & Repair to provide services to West Lancashire customers.
- 2.3 That the Head of Housing & Regulatory Services be given the delegated authority thereafter, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to determine the amount of DFG funding, if any, to be given to Preston Care & Repair on an annual basis.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Preston Care & Repair are an independent charitable organisation working across Preston, South Ribble, Chorley and West Lancashire, providing practical support as well as advice and information to enable older, disabled and vulnerable people to stay safe, secure, warm and independent in their own homes.

- 3.2 Preston Care & Repair are also one of 6 organisations across Lancashire who deliver an Integrated Home Improvement Service (IHIS) on behalf of Lancashire County Council (LCC). This service is specifically aimed at supporting independent living for people who have a long term condition that affects their mobility and or their ability to live safely and independently at home. The main focus is on preventing or delaying admission into residential care and reducing demand on social care services, preventing falls and accidents in the home to reduce A&E admissions and to enable safe and timely hospital discharge.
- 3.3 Services provided by Preston Care & Repair for the IHIS include:
- Healthy Home Assessments
 - Handyperson & Minor Adaptations Service
 - Aids for daily living
 - Information, advice & signposting
- 3.4 Separate to the IHIS services, Preston Care & Repair also provide the following services that are available to all:
- Major Adaptations & Repairs
 - Handyperson Service
 - Housing Options for Older People & Silverlinks
 - Home from Hospital Support
 - Dementia Support Service
 - Technical advice & information
 - Home repairs & adaptations,
 - Trusted Assessment
- 3.5 Works carried out by the Handyperson service are small jobs that are expected to take less than two hours and many are free of labour charges with the customer only paying for any materials that are required. Where there is a labour charge, this is set at £12.50 per hour plus VAT. A quote is provide for more general repair works.
- 3.6 There are no other providers of this type of service that cover West Lancashire. Age UK previously provided a handyperson service covering West Lancashire but this is no longer offered.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Preston Care & Repair receive funding from a variety of sources including Preston CC, Chorley CCG, Chorley Council and LCC (both for the IHIS service and through the minor adaptations contract). Income is also generated through work carried out on behalf of those who are able to pay.
- 4.2 LCC provide £262,000 per year in funding for the IHIS service with funding for minor adaptations being based on the number of jobs completed each year.
- 4.3 LCC have announced that they will stop providing an IHIS at the end of this financial year. As a result of this decision, Preston Care & Repair will lose £262,000 of funding. LCC are also planning to re-tender the minor adaptations

contract, however, it is anticipated that existing home improvement agencies will be in a strong position to be awarded the new contracts as they have the infrastructure in place to continue delivery.

- 4.4 Preston Care & Repair must seek new funding from 2020/21 in order to continue to provide their services to vulnerable residents.
- 4.5 The number of West Lancashire residents benefitting from the service has increased over the last three years and customer satisfaction is high with 100% of customers stating they would use the service again and 99% stating they would recommend the service to a friend. A full breakdown of the service statistics in relation to work carried out for West Lancashire residents can be found at Appendix 1.
- 4.6 The figures also show that there is a need for this type of service with over 66% of customers stating that they would not have had works carried out without their service citing issues as such as cost concerns and being worried about finding a trusted builder. Over 94% of customers stated that it makes them less worried knowing that the service is there. A full breakdown of customer satisfaction statistics from West Lancashire residents can be found at Appendix 2.

5.0 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING

- 5.1 The Government has been increasing DFG funding since 2016 and it is expected that the allocation for 2020/21 will be at a similar level to that for 2019/20. The following table shows the DFG allocation since 2016/17.

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
£989,185	£1,084,063	£1,178,940	£1,272,147

- 5.2 The Councils spend on DFGs has increased significantly since 2016/17, reaching over £1m in 2018/19 and it is expected that spend will be over £1m again this financial year. However, due to the success in securing funding and optimising the amount of grant funding recovered each year through registered provider contributions and grant repayments, there was an underspend of £867,000 that has been rolled over into 2019/20 and it is anticipated that there will be an underspend again this financial year.
- 5.3 The Government allocation must be spent on DFG related activities so there is no option to use these funds for other Council services or to use the funding for adaptations to Council owned properties.

6.0 OPTIONS

- 6.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) gave Councils the power to introduce policies for assisting individuals with repairs and adaptations to their homes. Assistance can be given directly to the individual or through a third party delivery provider.

- 6.2 The powers under the RRO can be used to justify providing funding to Preston Care & Repair to continue to make their services available to residents of West Lancashire.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Making funding available to Preston Care & Repair will have a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing by enabling services that are targeted at keeping the most vulnerable safe and secure in their own home to continue.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no adverse financial or resource implications in allocating DFG funds to Preston Care & Repair as the DFG budget is solely funded through the allocation provided by central Government.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Carrying out the recommendations in the report provides an opportunity for the Council to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable residents.
- 9.2 The risk(s) allocating an amount of DFG funding to Preston Care & Repair are that they fail to secure additional funding elsewhere and the service is unable to continue meaning a potential loss of the funds provided to them and any future reduction in Government funding for DFG would threaten the Councils ability to continue to provide funds to the organisation.
- 9.3 These risks have been mitigated by providing the Head of Housing & Regulatory Services with the authority, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to review the level of DFG funding (if any) to be provided to Preston Care & Repair on an annual basis. In addition, Preston Care & Repair have advised that they can continue to operate without any additional funding but the services offered would be significantly reduced.

10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposal will increase people's independence throughout their life course and ability to lead full active lives whilst remaining within their own home, in addition to reducing demand on social care services.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality

impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Preston Care & Repair Statistics

Appendix 2 – Preston Care & Repair Customer Satisfaction Statistics

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment