

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 10th July 2025
REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director, Adults
PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care
SUBJECT: Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton
WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval from Executive Board for a Non-Emergency Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 is sought to allow the granting of an extension to the current contract in place for the provision of the Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton, to be delivered by Care at Home Group Limited for a further 2-year period from 19th October 2025 to 18th October 2027.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- 1) Note the contents of the report; and
- 2) Approve a Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for the contract extension for the provision of the Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton delivered by Care at Home Group Limited for the period from 19th October 2025 to 18th October 2027.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Home Based Respite care provides practical help, personal care and emotional support to people in their own homes, replacing the care normally provided by their informal carer and allowing that carer to have respite from their caring. The Service therefore supports carers and the cared for to help them remain independent for as long as possible.

The service aims to support both the carer and the cared for in enabling regular carers respite. This allows carers to have time away from their role as informal carer, whilst maintaining a safe and consistent level of support to the individual.

3.2 Respite is often used as an umbrella term, referring to a broad spectrum of activities encompassing home based services. It is generally acknowledged that respite varies according to its nature, circumstances of provision, who it is provided by, or to and when it is available. For the purposes of this contract

the service:

- is for planned respite;
- offers flexibility in service provision and service delivery;
- supports carers of people who live at home with a long-term condition that restricts their ability to get out of their home on their own;
- is delivered to Halton residents;
- is available to adults over 18; and
- is for any adult carer who is identified as having a need.

3.3 Care at Home Group Limited (CAHG) have been delivering the Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton since April 2023, when they were commissioned to deliver the service following the previous provider going into liquidation and no longer being in a position to deliver it.

3.4 As well as being registered with the Care Quality Commission for the provision of personal care, to ensure that the service delivered by CAGH is of the necessary quality, we have robust contract management arrangements in place, which consists of monthly and quarterly provision of both quantitative and qualitative information and half-yearly monitoring meetings with the provider.

3.5 A waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders is sought to award CAHG a 2-year contract extension from 19th October 2025 to 18th October 2027.

3.6 It should be noted that following discussions with the Procurement Division, a reprioritisation exercise was undertaken in respect to waivers/contracts which were due to end during 2025 which took into consideration the extended work required to support the new Domiciliary Care contract. As such a number of extensions via waivers will be sought to stagger activity linked to new tenders that will be required; the Home-Based Respite Care Service being one of these extensions.

Towards the end of the contract period, we will commence a procurement process for the supply of a Home-Based Respite Care Service in Halton.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Continuing this service supports the Council in its development of out of hospital services with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside and in respect to the One Halton placed based approach. It also supports our commitment to providing breaks for carers in line with local and national targets and to assist people to live in their own homes and remain independent for as long as possible.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Waiver in compliance with Standing Order 1.14.4 of part 3: Non-Emergency Procedures (exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) on the basis that a full tender process would result in the Council having to forego a clear financial or

commercial benefit (1.14.4 iv).

- 5.2 Awarding the contract extension to the existing provider would support continuity of care for a vulnerable client cohort and allow for sufficient time to undertake a new procurement process.
- 5.3 The waiver would be effective for the period 19th October 2025 to 18th October 2027.
- 5.4 The cost of this contract will be met within existing Better Care Fund budget allocations.

The total financial cost to the pooled budget for the 2-year contract extension would be £249,480.

- 5.5 Home Based Respite Care is usually provided on a regular weekly basis for between 1 - 4 hours. The actual number of hours that are delivered to an individual will be based on need. This figure will be determined as part of the development of the individuals care plan, this can be completed through an agreed assessment and may be required at evenings/weekends and in some circumstances may require sleeping/waking nights.

Based on the contract value, during the course of the contract there would be expectation that CAHG would provide c.10,900 hours of respite care. This is based on the current Domiciliary Care provider rate of £22.87 per hour. Please note that as the contract would run into the financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28, then we would review the hourly rate with the provider towards the end of each financial year, to explore an inflationary uplift to the hourly rate.

This would result in a reduction in the number of hours delivered over the course of the contract and not in an increase in the overall financial cost – all hours would be delivered within the financial envelope outlined in paragraph 5.4.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

This service makes an important contribution to the health and social care system in Halton.

6.2 **Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

None identified.

6.3 **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

None identified.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None identified.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None identified.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 This contract falls below the current EU Light Touch Regime threshold of £663,540 and subsequently the risk of challenge will be negligible.

7.2 The Service will continue to be monitored to ensure that the Council, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside and Halton residents receive value for money.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental or climate implications as a result of this report.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 Approval of the extension to the current contract to Care at Home Group Limited for a 2-year period would support continuity of care for a vulnerable client cohort and allow for sufficient time to undertake a new procurement process for the service.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 1. Allow the Home-Based Respite Service to cease.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 The 2-year extension to the contract would take effect from 19th October 2025.

13.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

13.1 None identified.