

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Housing and Environmental Services Director

PREVENTATIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT

Purpose

1. To consider an offer of a grant to the Council for 2006/7 and 2007/8 of finance from the Preventative Technology Grant held by the partnership Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	Preventative Technology is a major new development in service provision that will benefit residents of South Cambridgeshire.
Sustainability	Preventative Technology can significantly contribute to assisting adults to remain living independently in their own homes, enhancing a mixed and sustainable community.
Partnership	This is a proposal from the PCT for extending partnership working with the Council to provide a coordinated service that will meet the needs of residents of South Cambridgeshire.

Background

3. The Department of Health has made funding available for 2006/7 and 2007/8 for the development of Preventative Technology (also known as Telecare or Assistive Technology) solutions to assist in preventing admissions to hospital and residential care. The Preventative Technology Grant (PTG) will be paid to the County Council as the Social Services authority. The Department of Health has set a national target for telecare to be available in every home where it is needed by 2010. The two years PTG should benefit around 160,000 people across England.
4. Telecare will primarily benefit older people, but the PTG is not ring-fenced specifically for this and is available to assist other adults with disabilities or ill-health.
5. Use of the PTG in Cambridgeshire was considered by Adult Task Group (a standing group of officers from the County Council and the county PCTs that oversees adult social services) and it was agreed that it will be paid to the PCTs to facilitate the development of telecare services. The grant payable to the partnership Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire PCTs for 2006/7 will be £127,530.
6. Telecare devices can significantly contribute to maintaining an older or disabled person to live independently in their homes and reduce the need for intensive homecare and prevent admission to residential care. Examples of telecare equipment include:
 - (a) Falls monitors
 - (b) Flooding/fire/CO2 monitors

- (c) Vital signs monitoring
 - (d) Automatic medicine dispensers (with failure and reminder alerts)
 - (e) Cut-offs for cookers left on, baths left running, etc.
7. More recent innovations include telemedicine with on-line or videophone access for healthchecks.
 8. The PCT already employs an Assistive Technology Manager who was historically based in Cambridge City, but who has more recently been expanding her activity in South Cambs. The PCT strategy for use of PTG includes additional staffing resources within the PCT. These posts will focus upon assessing needs and specifying equipment, as well as expanding awareness of telecare and its opportunities across the health and social care professions.
 9. The majority of Telecare devices function through a lifeline system to ensure a response to the “triggering” of any of the monitors. The ability and capacity of SCDC to install lifelines is therefore a vital part of expanding this service.
 10. The review of sheltered housing has highlighted the need for the new Sheltered Housing Officers role to play a key part in expanding take-up of lifelines in the community. Within the structure there is also a 18.5 hours per week post to co-ordinate this activity.
 11. Experience has shown that having a dedicated officer within the housing service who has knowledge and skills of the additional Telecare devices and the ability to install them is a considerable advantage, freeing up the Telecare specialist(s) within the PCT to concentrate on the assessment and training roles.

Proposal

12. The PCTs are therefore making the offer to the Council of funding from the Preventative Technology Grant to enhance the planned part-time post to be a full-time post, 50% dedicated to working with the PCT's Telecare specialists on:
 - (a) installing lifelines and telecare equipment in Council and private sector homes
 - (b) providing training and assistance to other supported housing officers (and other organisations) on Telecare
 - (c) providing awareness sessions for other organisations and to residents of South Cambs
 - (d) acting as a link between the PCTs health and social care staff and the sheltered housing service, further enhancing the already high level of partnership working across the services

Considerations

13. The grant for 2006/7 would be in the region of £13,770 plus around £2,400 as a share of travel costs (based upon mid-point salary range). The exact amount of grant would depend upon the salary scale of the appointee and final travelling costs – the offer is for 50% funding of the costs of the post, rather than a fixed amount.

14. The grant could only be guaranteed for 2 years, so consideration needs to be given to making best use of the funds.
15. Line management of any post would be with the Supported Housing Manager, but advice and guidance from the PCT's Assistive Technology Manager will be available as required.

Options

16. One option would be to create an additional half-time post to focus upon the telecare role. The PCT has indicated that this would not be a preferred option as the roles of lifeline installation and telecare are so closely linked and this option would lose the advantages accruing from having a dedicated full-time position covering these roles. The second disadvantage is that a fixed-term half time post would not prove attractive to existing staff in permanent posts, full-time or part-time, as it would be a reduction in income and would have the disadvantage of splitting the linked lifeline/telecare role.
17. An alternative would be to accept the offer of finance to create a full-time post, initially fixed-term until March 31 2008, but with the potential of continuing if further funding is available. This would make the post significantly more attractive.

Financial Implications

18. None to the Council.

Legal Implications

19. None.

Staffing Implications

20. As set out in the report.

Risk Management Implications

21. The main risk is in potential future withdrawal of funding from the PCT. In this instance either additional funding/savings would need to be identified or the post would need to revert to a part-time post.

Consultations

22. Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts

Conclusions/Summary

23. The provision of PTG to the PCT presents a major opportunity to expand this service to the benefit of the residents of South Cambs. Telecare devices and other assistive technology equipment can help maintain independence and even simple devices and significantly improve the users' quality of life – a reminder to take medicines or a warning device if appliances are left on can make all the difference to a person's self-confidence.
24. A vital part of telecare is the link with the lifeline service - most telecare devices rely upon this link to function. The installation of some telecare devices is relatively simple, but a level of skill and understanding is needed which increases with the

complexity of the device. The creation of a joint lifelines/telecare post would allow this skill to be developed and, equally importantly, to be passed on across the sheltered housing service through training and awareness-raising.

25. One option would be simply to create an additional half-time post to concentrate on telecare, but this would lose the advantages of a post linking lifeline take-up and telecare installation. There would need to be further discussions with the PCT if this option were to be taken, as a half-time post within the PCT to provide this resource may be a preferred use of the funds available.

Recommendations

26. It is recommended that Cabinet accept the offer of grant from Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts for the purposes of creating a full-time post of Lifelines/Telecare Officer, initially on a fixed-term basis until March 31 2008.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Department of Health: "Building Telecare in England"

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