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Planning

Essex Carers Core Offer of Support

Essex County Council

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Scope

Reference

1104

Description

CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICE (LOT 1):

One-to-one specialist bespoke support for adult carers (18+ years).

This support will be outcomes-focused and goal-orientated and will include the following:

- Expert information, advice and guidance in areas such as getting a break from caring, mental health/emotional support, finance and benefits, carers assessments, loneliness and isolation, planning for the future, navigating social care and healthcare, employment and education and physical health.

- Small grants to support an activity for wellbeing, and to enable carers to get a personalised short break from their caring role.

Solution-focused approaches to support adult carers' (18+ years) emotional wellbeing.

Solution-focused approaches will include:

- Counselling - a confidential counselling service for a limited number of sessions to enable carers to discuss the emotional impact of caring. Counsellors will draw on a range evidence-based approaches to help carers develop strategies to process and tackle issues such as anxiety and/or depression, stress, anger, guilt, grief and compassion fatigue.
- Coaching - The service will embed coaching as an approach to help provide opportunities for individuals and families to think about their options and make informed decisions for themselves. Coaches will also support carers to address specific issues in their life that are having a detrimental effect on their wellbeing or making their caring role more challenging than it needs to be. This could, for example, include supporting carers to balance the pressure of their caring role with their career or educational goals.

Programme of peer support for adult carers (18+ years).

This will include online and face to face groups, which are equitable across the county. This is a space where carers can connect with others facing similar challenges or having similar interests. These forums allow for sharing experiences, seeking advice, and building a supportive network.

Current services being explored:

Alongside the current offer for carers shown above, officers are in the process of reviewing how the current offer can respond to the emerging key themes and issues identified by the new carers strategy which is currently being developed. The future areas which are being explored for inclusion in the contract are:

- Carers Assessments - The service will carry out statutory carers' assessments to understand the impact of caring responsibilities, identify carers' support needs, and help them access appropriate services. Where appropriate, the service may also offer a personal budget to give carers greater choice and control, promote independence and personalisation, and support their overall wellbeing.
- A Carers Development and Learning Service - which will include working in partnership with local and national partners to facilitate workshops and courses which are aimed at supporting carers to independently and confidently sustain their caring responsibilities. The types of courses this may cover are: carers wellbeing, assertiveness workshops,

legal planning, moving and handling and various other topics.

- Carers Health Breaks - Funding to provide support that enables carers to attend essential appointments (e.g., health or financial), recognizing their importance in preventing carers' health and wellbeing declining.

Lot 2: Digital Support service for adult carers (18+ years).

Online information hub

A central online platform where carers can access up to date, high quality information guidance, and resources to support in their caring role. This will include resources, signposting to local organisations, practical tools, newsletters and carers stories.

Online Peer Support Groups

Virtual spaces where carers can connect with others facing similar challenges or having similar interests. These forums allow for sharing experiences, seeking advice, and building a supportive network.

Marketing and Engagement

Virtual outreach and online marketing campaigns with the aim of identifying Essex residents who are unpaid carers. This will include mixed-method, targeted campaigns by promoting support through social media using geo-targeting and search-query based content and tools.

We will also be exploring if a joint commissioning arrangement with Health colleagues can be established to establish greater partnership working and integration of services. Due to ICB restructures currently underway, this is limited in what can be confirmed or committed at this stage in the process.

Responses to this market engagement notice should be through the ProContract portal <https://procontract.due-north.com/> the reference for this is DN798289 1104

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2028
- 2 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 85100000 - Health services

Contract locations

- UKC - North East (England)
- UKD - North West (England)
- UKE - Yorkshire and the Humber
- UKF - East Midlands (England)
- UKG - West Midlands (England)
- UKH - East of England
- UKI - London
- UKJ - South East (England)
- UKK - South West (England)

Engagement

Engagement deadline

12 December 2025

Engagement process description

In accordance with the information provided in this engagement briefing, participants to this engagement briefing are asked to provide responses to the following questions:

A. Service Model

- a) What are your thoughts on the proposed service model, and what similar models have you seen applied by other local authorities (if any)?
- b) Are there any innovations or elements which you feel are currently missing from the proposed service model which would help deliver the aims/objectives/outcomes listed in Section 2 (background)?
- c) Not being able to have a break has consistently been an issue reported by many carers. Do you have any recommendations on how this could be commissioned as part of this service based on your experience?
- d) Are there any elements that would be challenging to deliver, both operationally and financially?
- e) What challenges would you envisage in resourcing/staffing a service to address the needs detailed in Section 4 (Future Service Demands)?
- f) Further to d), what investments (e.g. I.T., etc.) might need to be made to deliver services of this nature?
- g) Would your organisation be able to deliver both lots listed in Section 4 (Future Service Demands), either directly or via subcontracting/consortium/partnership arrangements?
- h) Would you be interested in delivering the services on a countywide footprint? Or would you have concerns given the size of Essex? What challenges would a single countywide service create?

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Contracting authority

Essex County Council

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PWVM-4844-NRQH

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Region: UKH36 - Heart of Essex

Organisation type: Public authority - sub-central government