

## **Commissioning Intentions Prospectus for Preventative Services Contract for Adults (2026-2031)**

### **Introduction**

The overarching vision for Shropshire Council is described within [The Shropshire Plan \(2022-2025\)](#) as: “Shropshire living the best life”. This vision is supported by four strategic aims which place a focus on: Healthy People; Healthy Environment; Healthy Economy and having a Healthy Organisation. For the purposes of this contract, the activity delivered will emphasise the importance of promoting healthy people. The objectives aligned to this element of The Shropshire Plan concern the importance of: Tackling inequalities; Early intervention; Partnerships and Self-responsibility. This includes:

- Tackling inequalities, including rural inequalities, and poverty in all its forms, providing early support and interventions that reduce risk and enable individuals to achieve their full potential and enjoy life.
- Supporting Shropshire residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, choosing healthy lifestyles and preventing ill-health, reducing the need for long-term or hospital care.
- Working with partners to develop, commission and deliver the right services and support that meet the needs of individuals in the right place, at the right time.

Source: The Shropshire Plan, 2022

Strategically this contract aligns to the [‘Shropshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2022 – 2027\)’](#); [‘Prevention Framework \(2023 – 2027\)’](#) and the ICB’s [Joint Forward Plan \(2025-2030\)](#) for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

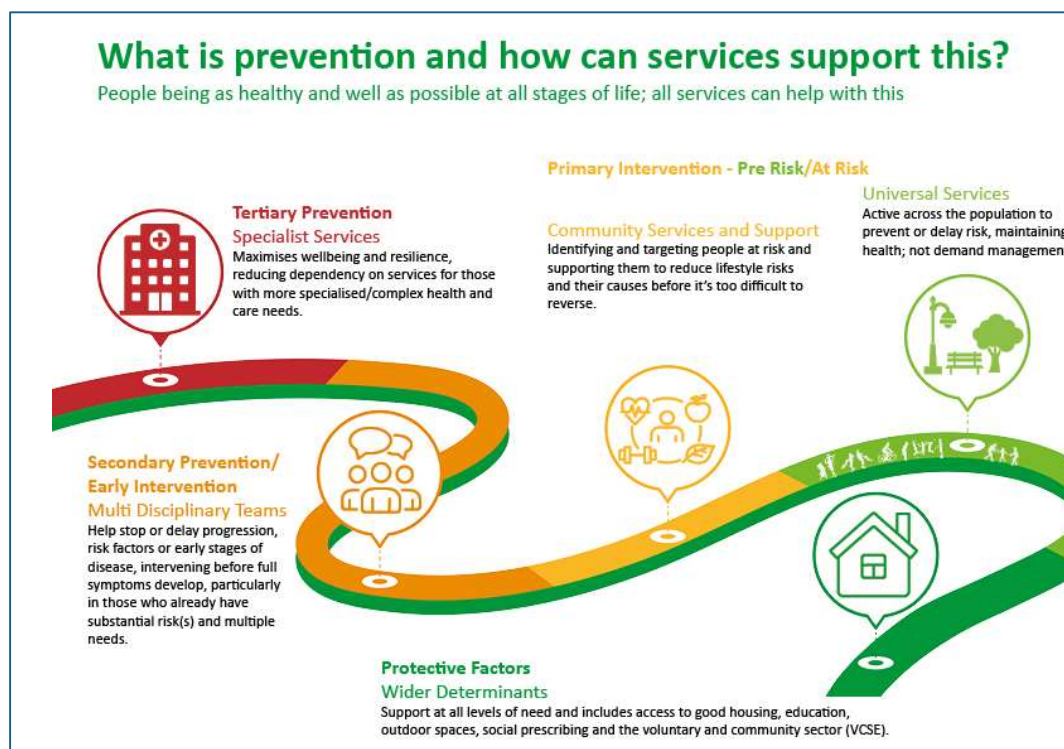
By focussing on a preventative approach, the Prevention Services Contract for adults will help the Local Authority and ICB to deliver these strategic objectives, providing a range of place-based, community led initiatives that support people, including those with informal caring responsibilities to attain/retain good mental and physical health. Doing so will promote a good quality of life and the ability to live independently for as long as possible and in-turn reduce demand on statutory services.

### **The role of prevention**

The Council have a responsibility under The Care Act 2014 to provide or arrange for services, facilities or resources which prevent, delay or reduce individuals’ needs for care and support. In any event, local and national research has shown that investment in preventative services clearly helps to avoid much higher costs further ‘downstream’ in areas such as social care, admissions to hospital and homelessness. Many statutory services and many programmes depend on a sustainable and effective suite of preventative services. For example, the Social

Prescribing programme in Shropshire relies on the availability of preventative solutions to be able to 'prescribe' for their clients.

Preventative services are valued by customers, partners, stakeholders and the Council itself. Services achieve this by focussing on those things which have an impact on an individual's ability to live independently in a home of their own and then helping those individuals to cultivate the necessary resources to live a good life. Preventative services can be described as those which help to delay or reduce the need for unplanned or crisis health and care interventions later on which are commonly more costly. Additionally, the types of interventions delivered as preventative services can also have a positive impact on quality of life and the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Prevention can happen at any stage in a person's involvement with services (illustrated via the diagram below) and can be tailored to current and expected future circumstances.



Source: Prevention Framework (2023 – 2027)

Preventative services should aim to achieve the following:

- Preventing and delaying ill-health
- Keeping people fit and active
- Developing personal resilience
- Allowing people to maintain independence
- Reducing inequalities
- Improving wellbeing and quality of life

- Reducing the need for acute services including A&E, hospital admissions, residential care, etc
- Reducing isolation
- Allowing for more informed lifestyle choices and decision making
- Preventing homelessness

### **Purpose of the Contract**

The contract will play a pivotal role in redefining the adult social care ‘front-door’ by strengthening the layer of community led support and breadth of local assets that sits ahead of First Point of Contact and the operational health and social care workforce for adults. Through effective partnership working and by addressing social and structural determinants of health this will help to manage demand more effectively, prevent people reaching crisis and improve health inequalities.

In terms of the target audience, this contract aims to support adults aged 18+ who are vulnerable to, or experiencing:

- Difficulty managing their home and remaining independent
- Inability to cope / poor mental health
- Informal caring responsibilities
- Poor or reduced mobility/risk of falls
- Financial hardship and/or rural deprivation
- Social exclusion, loneliness and isolation

The remit of the contract will place a focus on both:

- Universal / primary prevention – facilitating information and activities that focus on maintaining health and wellbeing and thus preventing or delaying ill health.
- Secondary prevention – targeted at those people who are more at risk of becoming vulnerable.

Additionally, this approach will be reinforced by internal transformation that the Local Authority are progressing in order to develop the ways in which people access information (online or otherwise) in order to build knowledge, provide guidance and create greater self-reliance.

Shropshire is a large and rural county with a dispersed population. Providers must understand the importance of ‘Place’ and the Shropshire ‘landscape’ when considering the approaches needed to ensure an equitable county wide offer.

In order to ensure successful navigation into the preventative activity provided through the contract it will be vital for the contract holders to align to relevant system wide workstreams associated with local prevention agenda which emphasises the adoption of a neighbourhood level approach to prevention and wellbeing. The Provider will be expected to stay abreast of

these developments and opportunities and be proactive and receptive to embracing effective partnerships and alignment of the contracted activity with the broader preventative offer. Of specific note, is the connection that this contract has with ensuring improved integration across the system; the role of coproduction in order to actively work with residents to help us shape how services and support are offered; and improving access to information, guidance and support at a local level which will be championed through the development of community hubs.

## Our Vision

*“Focus on developing strong communities where we can reduce inequalities, build the resilience of vulnerable people and families, and concentrate on driving system change so that every area has joined up, efficient local services which are able to identify people and families in need and provide the right support at the right time”*

*(Prevention Framework, 2023)*

## Existing Provision

Currently the local authority commissions a contract called **The Wellbeing and Independence Service (WIPS)** which is a consortium of agencies with a lead provider. Together they provide a range of preventative services, signposting and targeted information and advice to those over the age of 18, although a large portion of the contracted activity is delivered to an older demographic. Specifically, the activity delivered through the contract includes: practical help in the home; friendship support; day opportunities; groups that promote keeping well/active and additionally facilitates a wealth of volunteering opportunities.

Furthermore, the local authority grant-funds the following preventative activity that is relevant to our future commissioning intentions.

**Community-led Mental Health Outreach** - facilitating local person-centred outreach within both group settings and on a one-to-one basis which provides tools, techniques and networks that encourage improved mental health and wellbeing, preventing people reaching crisis and requiring formal mental health and social care support.

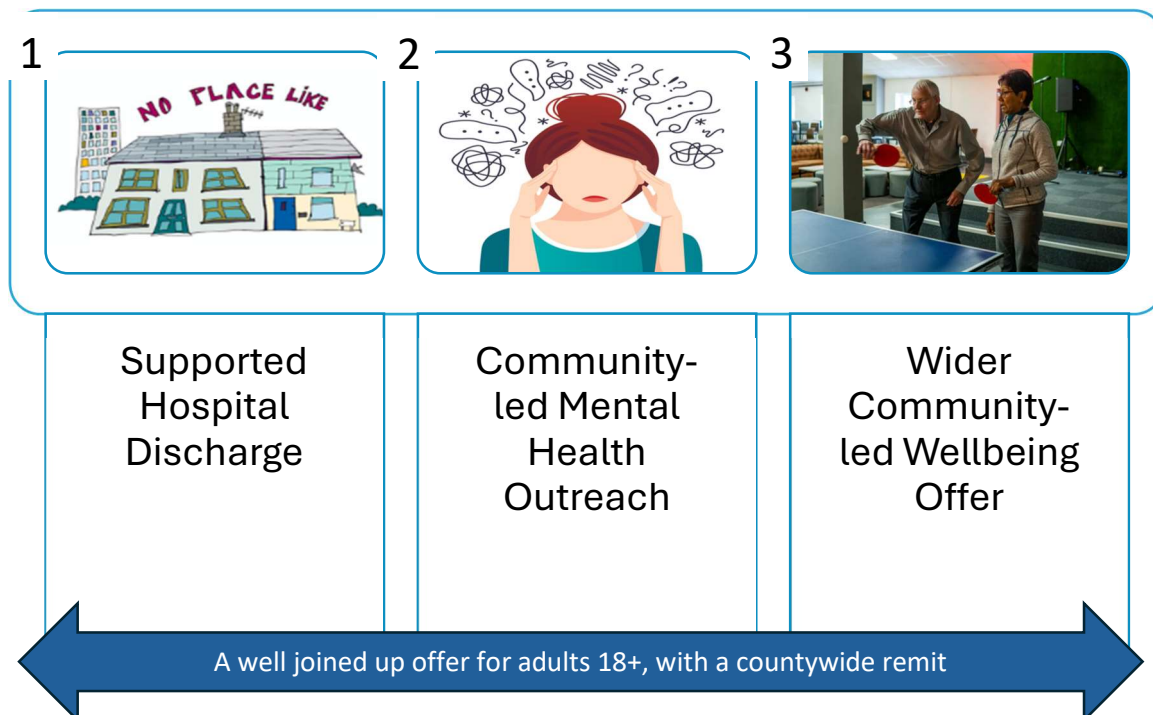
**Supported Hospital Discharge Provision** - supporting residents with time limited practical and emotional support upon being discharged home from hospital. The provision enables increased independence, reduced isolation, rebuilds confidence and assists with practical tasks such as collecting prescriptions, form-filling, and shopping. This avoids readmissions and supports people who would otherwise need to draw on adult social care.

## Looking Ahead

The new model seeks to rationalise and enhance current commissioning arrangements in order to procure activity in a coherent and streamlined way. This will enable a broader range of preventative provision to be brought into the scope of the commission that residents and frontline officers can navigate with ease. Furthermore, the contract will place greater

emphasis on addressing health inequalities by ensuring that there is a greater concentration of support within the communities most at risk, whether that be based upon indices of deprivation; rurality or the circumstance that people find themselves in i.e. in the role of a family carer or living with risk factors surrounding their health. A more targeted approach will enable the provision to withstand the changing needs of our local population and ensure affordability and sustainability.

It is proposed that the procurement is approached as three lots with an expectation of close partnership working. We welcome submissions from individual organisations as well as from partnerships, consortia, or lead provider/subcontractor arrangements. The three lots would include:



#### 1. Supported Hospital Discharge

The contract holder will deliver countywide provision for people when they are discharged from hospital or at risk of an unplanned admission. The provision will involve a variety of support including transportation where needed, alongside practical and emotional support that will aid an individual's recovery and reablement, ensuring that health, wellbeing and independence is maximised, and the risk of readmission and/or carer breakdown is minimised. This will include but not be limited to: food shopping/prescriptions collection; access to low level aids, equipment & assistive technology and connectivity to sustained support that will encourage healthy lifestyles and strong social networks. This provision will maintain a focus on both the needs of individuals being discharged and their family carers.

## **2. Community-Led Mental Health Outreach**

The contract holder will deliver community-led mental health outreach to support individuals facing mental health difficulties and their family carers. This provision aims to enhance health and wellbeing, preventing the escalation of symptoms that might require primary or secondary care interventions or lead to carer breakdown. The services will be available countywide, prioritising accessibility and visibility in areas with the greatest need. The focus will be on equipping individuals with skills, strategies, and tools to empower them to take control of their decisions, actions, behaviours, and thought patterns, thereby improving their ability to cope with the stresses of daily life and lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

## **3. Wider Community-led Wellbeing Offer**

The contract holder will provide a range of community led activities that have the ability to encourage and facilitate healthy and resilient communities, recognising the breadth of provision that influence and determine good health. The activity will facilitate both practical and emotional support for individuals, including family carers, that will enable people to live as independently as possible within their own home and to engage with their local community. The provision will include practical support and activities aimed at helping individuals to develop/maintain daily living skills, reduce vulnerability, and reduce isolation. The provision will also enable individuals to build confidence to foster meaningful social connections, networks of support, increased activity levels, and access to creative and expressive activities.

### **Single Point of Referral and Robust Approaches to Navigation**

The Providers will work closely with the Local Authority who will operate a single point of referral which will ensure that residents can access support in a way that is clear, holistic and streamlined. The health and social care workforce will action referrals directly on behalf of consenting individuals to be quickly assessed and routed through to the most appropriate community led solution. Whilst we'd foresee the majority of referrals being routed via this single point of referral, we recognise that there will be instances where this isn't the case. During the implementation period, the Providers will work with the Local Authority to establish operational systems that are logical and seamless, yet with the ability to ensure that data can be recorded in a comprehensive way.

### **General Principles Applying to all Services in Scope:**

In commissioning services, we want to ensure:

- Meaningful and collaborative partnerships will be developed and sustained between commissioned services and non-commissioned activity as well as the public and private sectors.



- That services should feel joined-up and all providing good quality information about how the 'system' works and how to navigate towards the most appropriate solution.
- Providers take a flexible approach and are able to adapt to changing priorities.
- Staff or volunteers involved in delivering services will have appropriate training and access to supervision to ensure that they maintain a good working knowledge of the area(s) in which they are providing advice.
- Whilst the target audience for this provision isn't residents with complex needs, it is anticipated that the breadth of provision is designed to be as inclusive as possible for residents living with a range of health conditions or chronic diseases that impact on a person's mental and physical health and/or cognition.
- Providers will need to demonstrate that they are committed to maximising the social, economic and environmental benefits gained through the way that they organise themselves. Providers will work with the Council to develop and deliver Social Value outcomes as described in the Council's Social Value Framework.
- People will be given the tools and the confidence to make their own choices through targeted advice about a wide range of issues which impact on people's sense of wellbeing and ability to cope.
- The support available will be delivered in a way that is flexible, proportionate, person-centred, strengths-based and maximises opportunities to connect residents to additional sources of information and support that may enhance their quality of life.
- That the support is targeted at those areas which make the biggest difference and address health inequalities. The Provider and other organisations involved in the delivery of the Services will therefore work very closely with the LA to ensure that resources and support are allocated according to priority with a focus on targeting support in areas of greatest need based on rurality, demographics and indices of deprivation.
- The providers will work collaboratively to pool knowledge and resources that will enhance the workforce and offer efficiencies.
- Foster 'ask, advise, assist' approaches to working that ensures that residents are supported by the most appropriate team, service or organisation.
- Support complementary programmes such as Social Prescribing; the development of community and family hubs; Shropshire Carers Team and partnerships opportunities that incorporate the expertise of a multidisciplinary team.
- Ensure integration and collaboration with system wide partners who are working in a preventative place-based way to ensure that approaches are well understood and well aligned. A specific example of this can be seen in how improving access to information, guidance and support is achieved at a local level which will be championed through various evolving workstreams including the development of community and family hubs.

## **The Financial Challenge**

The Council has been dealing with a sustained period of financial challenge due to a combination of inflationary pressures and ongoing cuts in government grants. In these challenging financial times, it is vital that prevention is targeted at those areas which make the biggest difference. Providers will therefore work very closely with the Council to ensure that resources and support are allocated according to priority.

The impact of austerity on preventative services in Shropshire can be seen in a number of different ways. Funding reductions or ending of funding for programmes or services does not mean that the need for that support goes away. The need may be displaced and create additional demand on remaining services; or people cope without support for a while before seeking support again or reach a point of crisis resulting in a more intensive period of assistance to resolve issues that have built up. By pooling funding from both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care System (ICB) through The Better Care Fund and consolidating activity into one long term contract this will help to ensure a stable platform for this vital activity to be cultivated and sustained.

## **Procurement Timescale**

In terms of process, procurement of the services contained within the current and proposed Statutory Advocacy and Non-Statutory contracts fall under the 'Light Touch Regime' (LTR) of the Procurement Act 2023. This means that the contracting authority (Shropshire Council) has greater flexibility in its approach as "there are exceptions and special provisions in the Act that result in more flexibility and fewer rules regulating how procurement is carried out for light touch contracts" provided that:

- We comply with the principles of transparency and equal treatment of participants
- We publish a contract notice
- We publish a contract award notice
- We conduct the procurement in conformance with the information provided in the contract notice
- Any time limits imposed by us on suppliers, such as for responding to adverts and tenders, must be reasonable and proportionate

In any event there is an expectation that in order to ensure that a transparent and competitive procurement has been undertaken, at the very least it would be necessary to acquire tenders before awarding the contract. It is proposed to use a process based on the 'Open' procedure in the main regulations.



## Contact Details

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either:

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