

Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Approval to recruit a Social Worker (1 FTE for a 12-month period) to review cases to identify residents who should be eligible for Continuing Health Care (CHC) or joint funding and build up the evidence required to support the application.
Decision Maker:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care Services
ELT Lead:	Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People
Report Author and contact details:	Andrew Sykes, Assistant Director, Living & Ageing Well (Adult Social Care) Andrew.Sykes@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	<p>This decision supports lawful and appropriate funding of care by ensuring that individuals with a primary or partial health need are assessed for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) in line with the National Framework.</p> <p>It strengthens compliance with Section 22 of the Care Act 2014 (local authorities must not provide services that are the responsibility of the NHS).</p> <p>It aligns to People Directorate objectives (supporting residents to stay safe and well) and the Resources directorate (enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council) and is consistent with corporate commitments on equality and assurance.</p>

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Financial summary:	<p>One-off investment of £80,000 (secured growth) to fund a Social Worker (G8) for 12 months via agency or via backfilled secondment.</p> <p>The initiative will provide a dedicated social worker to review cases to identify residents who should be eligible for CHC or joint funding and build up the evidence required to support the application. A desktop review has identified at least 3 cases that could deliver gross savings of £672,000, giving an indicative net impact of £592,000 after the investment.</p> <p>Savings are contingent on suitable cases being identified which will be tracked through monthly performance reporting.</p>
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	People Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	The decision will be exempt from call-in as it is a Non-key Decision.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well ☒ [X]

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This decision paper is seeking the approval of the Strategic Director of People to approve a one-off investment of £80,000, funded via secured growth, to recruit a Social Worker (G8) for 12 months to review cases to identify residents who should be eligible for CHC or joint funding and build up the evidence required to support the application.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

The Havering Constitution:

Scheme 3.3.3 Powers common to all Strategic Directors

1. General:

1.1 To take any steps, and take any decisions, necessary for the proper management and administration of their allocated directorate, in accordance with applicable Council policies and procedures.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Approval is sought for a one-off investment of £80,000, funded via secured growth, to recruit a Grade 8 Social Worker for a 12-month period. This role will be dedicated to strengthening Adult Social Care's (ASC) capacity to identify individuals who may be eligible for NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding, whose care needs are primarily or partially health related.

Rationale for the Investment:

ASC currently funds many high-cost care packages, some of which may lawfully fall under NHS responsibility as outlined in the CHC Framework. The existing team's limited capacity and specialist knowledge restrict opportunities to secure CHC funding. By appointing a Social Worker focused exclusively on CHC, ASC will be able to proactively identify eligible cases, gather robust evidence, and challenge funding decisions where appropriate. This ensures statutory compliance with the CHC National Framework on the part of the ICB and ASC and may reduce financial pressure on ASC budgets.

This approach directly supports compliance with the National Framework for NHS Continuing Health Care and Section 22 of the Care Act 2014, which prohibits local authorities from providing services that are the NHS's responsibility. It also helps to ensure that funding responsibilities are correctly allocated and that ASC does not unlawfully meet health needs.

Expected Outcomes and Performance Monitoring:

- Initial focus on three priority high-need cases, with potential to expand the approach based on outcomes.
- Monthly CHC tracker reporting to ASC leadership and quarterly benefits realisation updates to Finance.
- The Social Worker will provide cross-ASC support, enhancing practitioner confidence, knowledge, and skills in relation to the CHC Framework, and promoting statutory compliance with the Care Act 2014, the National Health Service Act 2006, and the CHC National Framework.

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Key Risks and Proposed Mitigations:

- Recruitment Challenges: Mitigated through secondments and flexible recruitment approaches.
- Insufficient evidence from providers: Addressed via an engagement plan and development of an evidence standards checklist.
- Changing CHC Eligibility: Managed through timely review, reassessment, and robust audit trails to support partial CHC or Section 117/health contributions where applicable.
- Savings Realisation: Recognises that high-cost packages reflect clinical complexity and eligibility is determined by health need rather than expenditure.

Summary of Benefits:

- Improved outcomes for residents via appropriate funding and multidisciplinary decision-making.
- Strengthened partnership working with health colleagues.
- Enhanced statutory compliance with relevant legislation and frameworks.
- Ensuring specialist care is delivered by the most suitable providers for those with complex needs.
- Cost avoidance and savings for ASC budgets through successful CHC applications.

Financial Summary:

A one-off investment of £80,000 (secured growth) is proposed to support a Social Worker (G8) for a 12-month period, either through agency engagement or by backfilling via secondment. Three high-cost cases have been identified already and could generate gross savings of £672,000, resulting in an estimated net benefit of £592,000 after accounting for the initial investment. Realisation of these savings depends on the identification of suitable cases, which will be monitored through monthly performance reports.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the proposed investment to recruit a Grade 8 Social Worker for a 12-month period is approved. This will enable Adult Social Care to strengthen its capacity to identify and secure NHS CHC funding for eligible individuals, ensuring statutory compliance, improving financial outcomes for the Council and supporting better care and outcomes for residents with complex needs.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Option 1: Do Nothing

This option would maintain the current approach within Adult Social Care (ASC), without making any changes or investments to improve the identification and securing of NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding for eligible individuals. By choosing this route, ASC would continue operating as it currently does, without additional resources or adjustments to its processes. This option was rejected because it would simply preserve the status quo. Not actively seeking to secure NHS funding where appropriate means missed opportunities to obtain funding for those residents who are eligible. Consequently, ASC would remain exposed to avoidable costs and potential non-compliance with statutory requirements, ultimately failing to improve outcomes for residents or strengthen the Council's financial position.

Option 2: £200,000 Investment

The larger investment would be for a team of three (1 x Grade 9, 2 x Grade 8) to review seven cases. This option was rejected due to the higher upfront cost. The preferred approach is to

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start with a smaller-scale investment, establish proof of concept, and scale up the resource and approach are shown to be effective.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Prior to reaching any final decisions, there was a comprehensive consultation process involving Members during the STAR Chamber sessions held in the summer of 2025. These sessions provided an opportunity for Members to engage in meaningful dialogue, raise concerns, and contribute their perspectives, ensuring that all viewpoints were carefully considered before any decisions were made. This collaborative approach fostered transparency and inclusivity throughout the decision-making process.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Andrew Sykes

Designation: Interim Assistant Director, Living & Ageing Well, Adult Social Care

Signature:



Date: 16th February 2026

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Legal have stated that this is an employment matter which the legal team would not normally provide comments on.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The proposal seeks approval for a one-off investment of £80,000 to fund a Grade 8 Social Worker for a 12-month period. This investment is expected to be covered through growth funding, which has been agreed in principle but is yet to receive final sign-off by Cabinet.

If growth funding is not approved, the post could alternatively be funded from the estimated savings of £672,000, which are projected to result from successful NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding applications for eligible individuals. After accounting for the initial investment, this would deliver an estimated net benefit of £592,000, this is the saving that has been put into the proposed medium-term plan.

However, these savings are based on modelling high-cost cases that are likely to qualify for 100% CHC funding. This assumption is subject to evidence gathering and eligibility determinations under the CHC National Framework and actual savings may vary.

In the event that growth funding is not secured and savings do not materialise as anticipated, the contract may need to be terminated early to avoid further financial risk to the Adult Social Care budget.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

HR have confirmed that the recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable Human Resources implications or risks arising from this decision.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Havering has a diverse community made up of many different groups and individuals.

The council values diversity and believes it essential to understand and include the different contributions, perspectives and experience that people from different backgrounds bring. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- I. the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- II. the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- III. foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

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Note: 'protected characteristics' are: age, gender, race and disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council demonstrates its commitment to the Equality Act in its decision-making processes, the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and employment practices concerning its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

The Equalities team have confirmed that there are no EDI impacts arising from this decision as the role is time limited.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any Environmental or Climate Change implications or risks.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to direct Health & Wellbeing implications or risks. Nonetheless, there is a potential for better health outcomes through receiving the right care.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDICES

None.

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed:



Name: Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date: 16 February 2026

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____