

UNISON's Ethical Care Charter

Report by Allister Short, Joint Director Health and Social Care

1 Purpose of Report

To propose Midlothian sign-up to UNISON's Ethical Care Charter and work with UNISON to modernise the charter to reflect developments in the integration and coordination of services since 2012 and support strategic workforce planning.

2 Background

- 2.1 Following from a 2012 UNISON survey of care workers UNISON called for all councils to commit to becoming an Ethical Care Council by commissioning homecare services by adhering to a three stage approach described in UNISON's Ethical Care Charter (Appendix One). *(The writer understands Midlothian is the final local authority in Scotland to sign up to the charter.)*
- 2.2 The commissioning of homecare services in Midlothian has fully met the ethical care standards UNISON called for from councils and so there is no consequence from signing the existing charter.
- 2.3 The meeting and exceeding of the ethical care charter standards in Midlothian has not resulted in sufficient recruitment and retention of carers to meet the current or predicted demand for homecare services.
- 2.4 The movement towards outcomes focused commissioning of homecare services is captured within Midlothian's contracts with homecare providers. However, service providers in Midlothian are primarily focused on a time and task model of service delivery due to demand exceeding capacity whilst having a fairly static workforce pool.
- 2.5 The strategic model for homecare is integrated across Health, Social Care, third sector and communities. This means that a range of sectors and roles are part of providing homecare services beyond that captured in the existing charter.
- 2.6 The guidance for councils on adopting the charter suggests the convening of a review group with representation from providers, NHS and UNISON union representatives and commissioners as a mechanism to implement the charter.

3.0 Conclusion

The recommendation is for Midlothian to sign up to UNISON's existing ethical charter and propose a review group is established by UNISON to consider the update of the charter to reflect the current context and strategic plan for commissioning integrated homecare nationally and in Midlothian.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

- 4.1.1 No additional resource is required as a result of signing the charter. If a review group is established by UNISON then resource from procurement and planning officer would be required within the remit of their function.

4.2 Risk

The risk of not signing the charter could portray Midlothian as not participating in ethical commissioning and this is absolutely not the case.

There has been significant disruption within commissioned care at home services this last year and the council could be challenged on the impact of being the only local authority in Scotland not to have signed the charter.

The recent Care Inspectorate inspection of the in-house service graded leadership and management of the service as 'weak'. Again, this could be viewed as the council not valuing the homecare workforce at a time when the council is planning and making considerable change to improve equality and quality in delivering homecare services.

4.3 Policy

Strategy

The commissioning of homecare services is changing and a strategic remodelling of homecare services to include third sector, health and social care in partnership with unpaid carers and cared for, is underway.

Consultation

No consultation is required in order to sign the charter. However, a homecare workforce consultation is being scheduled to follow the Consultation would commence should UNISON establish a national or local charter review group.

Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been circulated to Members.

Sustainability

The proposal supports the strategic planning and commissioning of sustainable services.

5 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

Council is asked to support the recommendation that Midlothian signs up to UNISON's Ethical care charter for the commissioning of homecare services.

Council is further asked to recommend to UNISON that UNISON consider establishing a group to review the existing charter.

The review group consisting of national representatives from NHS, UNISON, third sector representation, home care providers, carers, cared for and councils as commissioners of homecare services.

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Appendix One

UNISON's Ethical care charter for commissioning of homecare services

Accessible via hyperlink:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/11/On-line-Catalogue220142.pdf>