



# **A Proposal for the Future of the Carers' Grant Consultation**

**12<sup>th</sup> June – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Consultation Document**



## What are we consulting on?

The City Council has provided grants of £250 to carers in the City. The intention has been that carers use the grant to purchase goods or services to help them in their caring role.

A carer is defined as someone who is looking after someone who is aged 18 or over who is a friend, relative or neighbour who has a long-term disability, mental health difficulty, or is frail due to old age, and who are not paid for the care they provide. A carer does not have to live in the same house as the person being cared for. The typical caring role includes assistance with:

- Personal care, such as washing, dressing or taking medication
- Practical care, such as support with shopping, cooking and cleaning; or
- Emotional support if they are lonely, worried or get upset.

As part of the City Council's 2017/18+ budget, a proposal was included which would significantly reduce the funding available for carers' grants. The consultation on the City Council's budget proposals ran from 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 to 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

The Council has subsequently reduced the amount of funding available for the grant to £341,600 in 2017/18 – a reduction of 888 grants and to £119,600 in 2018/19 – leaving 478 grants available at £250 each.

The City Council's application process for carers' grants is currently suspended so that this consultation can take place. This consultation will seek views on ways in which we can use our diminishing resources to better target and focus the remaining funds.

## Background

Since 1999, the City Council has provided grants to carers who support a person aged 18 years or older. Each grant is worth £250 and is paid directly to the carer to be used towards the cost of a holiday, or something else that will help sustain them in their caring role. Carers have been able to re-apply for a grant every 2 years, with allocation usually on a first come, first served basis.

The City Council recognises the current scheme has limitations including a lack of evidence that carers who are most in need access a grant and whether the grant is being spent in a way that is having a positive tangible impact on carer wellbeing.



## Previous consultation

A previous consultation to look at how to best use the grant was held between 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – 14<sup>th</sup> August 2015. There were four public meetings, which were attended by over 100 people and over a hundred people also completed a questionnaire. One of the proposals in this consultation was to introduce some more detailed eligibility criteria. Almost 60% of the 130 respondents to the BeHeard questionnaire were in favour of the proposed eligibility criteria which were:

- Caring for a relative, partner or friend, who is ill, frail, disabled, or has mental health or substance misuse problems;
- Providing more than 10 hours support per week;
- Willing to provide feedback on what impact the grant has had on their quality of life;
- Willing to rate the quality of the service/ product they have purchased; and
- Registered with the Birmingham Carers' Hub.

We therefore intend to incorporate these eligibility criteria into this -new proposal.

As part of the 2015 consultation we piloted an e-marketplace on which carers could spend their voucher. 55% of respondents to the questionnaire thought that the proposal to offer a menu of products and services from vetted local providers was a good idea.

53% of respondents to the questionnaire thought that the proposed menu of services and products which was aimed at giving carers time out from the stresses and strains of caring, agreed that the listed services and products would have a positive impact on carer wellbeing.

Although this consultation took place in 2015, none of its findings have yet been taken forward.

## How will we consult?

1. We will be asking for views on these proposals from carers, those who are being cared for, the Council's Adult Social Care and Health Service, health partners, organisations that provide carer support and the general public.
2. We will be asking for views through events and meetings, BeHeard website, e-mail, letter and a public phone line.
3. We will listen to, and take note of all your comments.
4. We will publish and make widely available what we find out from the consultation and the next steps we will take. We will show where our proposals have been changed as a result of listening to people's views. Where we do not make changes to our proposals we will explain why this is the case.



5. We will write a report to our Cabinet including material about what we have found out through this consultation. The Cabinet is the governing body of the City Council, made up of elected councillors; it is responsible for decisions on all Council services.

### **How long will this consultation run for?**

This consultation begins on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and finishes on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

### **Who will be affected by the results of this consultation?**

This consultation affects:

- Carers for adults who live in Birmingham.



## **A Proposal for the Future of the Carers' Grant**

We propose that in place of the current £250 Carers' Grant scheme, we introduce a process which would allocate an amount of money to a carer following the outcome of an assessment, with the Birmingham Carers' Hub. This would be a one-off payment. The money will allow a carer to arrange how to manage their own wellbeing and contribute towards their being involved as an active citizen in family and community life, and to engage in work, education and leisure.

Please note that the 'assessment' referred to in this document is not the statutory needs assessment for carers referred to in the Care Act 2014. The 'assessment' referred to here is undertaken by the Birmingham Carers' Hub in order to signpost registered carers to information and services which may support them in their caring role.

Following an assessment, the carer will receive an allocated payment via a pre-loaded debit card which can either be collected in person from Birmingham Carers' Hub, or posted out to them.

Carers will be free to use the debit card to purchase supplies and goods in line with the agreed outcomes identified in the assessment. There will be a time limit of 2 months for carers to spend their allocated money. A follow up review will determine the impact that the payment has had on the carer's wellbeing.

### **Question 1: Do you think that using pre-loaded debit cards is a good idea?**

The exact nature of what could be purchased with any money allocated to the carer following an assessment will depend upon the issues identified during the assessment. The types of services and products we anticipate carers will purchase could include:

- Access to leisure activities, including purchase of a bicycle;
- Wellbeing activities e.g. complementary therapies, pampering, massage sessions;
- Access to the gym, yoga, tai chi, relaxation classes;
- Recreation, vocation and educational opportunities including access to driving lessons;
- Support to assist a carer to gain employment;
- Household and garden maintenance to keep/make the caring environment safer.



The pre-loaded debit cards that we would use will allow us to see what the money has been spent on. The cards will be issued in the expectation that the money allocated is spent on the activity identified, discussed and agreed with the carer during the assessment process. Any misuse of funds on items not agreed could lead to the carer being barred from the scheme.

**Question 2: Do you think that removing the current scheme and replacing it with one that allocates money following an assessment on activity identified, discussed and agreed with the carer during the assessment process is a good idea?**

It is important that we are able to tell that the use of any allocated money has had a positive effect on carers in Birmingham – the Council’s expectation in spending this money from its budget is that the lives of carers are improved in some way and that they feel supported to continue caring. If we cannot find a way of showing this – as with the current grant scheme, then the Council will have no alternative but to remove this budget.

**Question 3: Do you have any other ideas about how the Council might be able to see that the money that it spends is helping carers to continue caring?**

### Bandings

The allocated money could have a number of bandings. The example below is based upon 2 bandings to determine level of payment depending on the carer’s situation.

Banding Level	Allocation	Banding Factors
Band 1	Up to £100 per payment	All carers who meet the eligibility criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Caring for a relative, partner or friend, who is ill, frail, disabled, or has mental health or substance misuse problems; and</li><li>• Providing more than 10 hours support per week; and</li><li>• Willing to provide feedback on what impact the grant has had on their quality of life; and</li><li>• Willing to rate the quality of the service/ product they have purchased; and</li><li>• Registered with the Birmingham Carers Hub.</li></ul>



Band 2	Up to £250 per payment	Carers registered, who are providing over 50hrs of unpaid care per week and <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• who are living alone with the cared for; and/or</li><li>• who themselves have significant health problems/disabilities; and/or</li><li>• the cared-for is not able or willing to co-operate with the care provided (through disability, mental health problems, dementia, etc)</li></ul>
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The proposal for bandings is to ensure that the Council's remaining funding is directed towards those with the greatest caring responsibilities.

**Question 4: Do you think that introducing bandings is a good idea?**

**Question 5: Have you any comments about the number of bands or what the criteria should be?**

### Overview of the proposed process

- 1) Contact - A carer makes contact with Birmingham Carers' Hub direct or is referred to the Carers' Hub by the City Council.
- 2) Assessment - The Birmingham Carers' Hub contacts the carer to undertake an assessment in order to understand the carer's situation, to identify needs to be addressed and outcomes to be achieved. **Where the carer may need additional support from the City Council, a referral is made for a statutory carer's assessment.**
- 3) Eligibility . The eligibility criteria would be:
  - Caring for a relative, partner or friend, who is ill, frail, disabled, or has mental health or substance misuse problems; and
  - Providing more than 10 hours support per week; and
  - Willing to provide feedback on what impact the grant has had on their quality of life; and
  - Willing to rate the quality of the service/ product they have purchased; and
  - Registered with the Birmingham Carers Hub.



- 4) As part of the assessment, an action plan to meet the carer's outcomes is agreed. This could include an allocation of money to assist in achieving one or more of the carer's outcomes.
- 5) If the carer is eligible, the appropriate banding is agreed. The request is made to an administrator to allocate funds to a pre-loaded debit card. The debit card would be issued to the carer by the agreed method such as collection in person or by post.
- 6) The carer activates the card, and spends their allocated money on goods and supplies as per the agreed plan within a 2 month period.
- 7) Review - Within 3 months following issue of the allocated money, a review is undertaken by the Birmingham Carers' Hub Team to assess any impact upon the carer's wellbeing.

#### **Question 6: Is the proposed process clear?**

We must remember that this type of carer support is a non-statutory service and there is only a certain amount of money available, so issuing an allocated amount of money for carers is always reliant on having the resources available.

#### **Benefits of the proposed changes**

The City Council, in partnership with Birmingham Carers' Hub, believe that the change proposed is needed to ensure the best use of money available to support carers in Birmingham.

- Financial support is linked to an identified outcome for that individual carer, following an assessment by the Birmingham Carers' Hub;
- Carers who have a greater caring responsibility will have access to a larger amount of money.
- This would be a more efficient system to administer that promotes personalised care and support;

Every pound spent on carers following assessment by the Birmingham Carers' Hub can be accounted for in a way that measures improvement to a carer's wellbeing.

#### **Question 7: Do you have any other comments on proposals for the Future of the Carers Grant?**





### **How is this proposal different from last time?**

In 2015, the proposal looked at using an e-marketplace. Although half of the respondents last time were in favour of the e-marketplace, we received a large number of comments regarding the fact that it did not offer a consistent selection of services across all of Birmingham.

The use of pre-loaded cards allows carers the opportunity to purchase a wider range of services or items with the intention of allowing them to better meet their identified outcomes.



## Having your say.

During the consultation period there are various ways in which you can get involved and give us your views. You can do this by:

### 1. Completing a consultation questionnaire

Please use the consultation questionnaire to tell us what you think about the proposal for the Future of the Carers' Grant. You can complete an online version of the questionnaire and download copies of this document at:

<https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/people-1/cg>

If you cannot access the questionnaire or consultation document online, please use the contact details at the bottom of the page to request a paper copy.

### 2. Contacting us about the consultation

If you have any thoughts, questions or comments, please use the contact details below. Again, should you need a paper copy of the consultation document and questionnaire, please contact us to request this.

## How to contact the Consultation Team

Use the title of - **A proposal for the Future of the Carers' Grant Consultation** and contact us by any of the following ways:

By email: [peoplebudget@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:peoplebudget@birmingham.gov.uk)

By Phone: 0121 303 5154

Or write to us at: **A Proposal for the future of the Carers' Grant Consultation**

PO Box 16465

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**Thank you for taking part in this consultation.**