

**CABINET – 16 DECEMBER 2025****PROCUREMENT OF COMMUNITY LIFE CHOICES
(DAY SERVICES AND PERSONAL ASSISTANTS)****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of the report is to seek the Cabinet's approval to progress with the procurement of a new Community Life Choices (CLC) framework. This includes both day centres/services and individual personal assistants (PAs) provided by organisations.
- 2 CLC is a commissioning framework operated by the Council for the provision of day services and PAs. People have a choice from a selection of pre-approved providers. The main purpose of CLC is to enable people to remain in their own homes, living as independently as possible. 1,274 people currently receive CLC services via the framework and/or a Direct Payment (where the person receives a personal budget and engages support directly from the person/organisation they want to use).

Recommendations

- 3 It is recommended that:
 - a) The procurement of a new Community Life Choices (CLC) framework for the provision of day centres/services and individual personal assistants (PAs) provided by organisations be approved;
 - b) The Director of Adults and Communities, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to enter into any contractual arrangements necessary to bring into effect the new CLC framework with effect from 31 August 2026.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 4 The current CLC framework ends on 30 August 2026. It is proposed that the new CLC framework will be for the period 2026-2029, with the option to extend for a further two years if required.

- 5 The proposals for the future recommissioning of the CLC framework aim to promote sustainability, deliver care and support outcomes in line with the Care Act 2014 and the Council's Fair Outcomes Policy, strengthen carer support, enable progression, and ensure cost-effective care.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

- 6 Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the tender will be published in February 2026 for commencement on 31 August 2026. The key stages for the procurement are set out as follows:
 - Advert Published: February 2026;
 - Advert closed: March 2026;
 - Contract award letters issued: May 2026;
 - Provider Mobilisation: June to August 2026;
 - Contract Commencement Date: 31 August 2026.
- 7 On 3 November 2025, the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered details on the proposals for the recommissioning of the CLC contract and its comments are set out in paragraph 84 of this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 8 Services highlighted in this report contribute to the County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026, in particular the strategic outcome Safe and Well. The proposals are also integral to the delivery of the ambitions for Adult Social Care which are detailed in the Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-2029, 'Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire'.
- 9 On 22 June 2021, the Cabinet received a report inter alia outlining the procurement and recommissioning for CLC services. The arrangements were agreed by the Cabinet on 14 December 2021.

Resource Implications

- 10 Expenditure on CLC services purchased directly by the Council in the financial year 2024/25 was £8.6 million with forecast expenditure for 2025/26 expected to be circa £9.8 million (due to increased costs from annual inflation uplifts and forecast demand).
- 11 The estimated contract spend for this procurement is circa £60 million over five years (2025/26 price points) with annual inflation potentially taking this spend above this figure.
- 12 The introduction of pricing differentials within the procurement for CLC may result in a saving to the Council in the region of £750,000 over five years depending on the bids received and the ability to place people in services at the most cost-effective rates.

- 13 There are also potential savings linked to the introduction of the new service level (1:5 ratio) but this is difficult to quantify.
- 14 Due to the introduction of price competition, additional resources will be required to manage the brokerage of CLC services. The costs for this will be considered once the call-off process has been determined.

Procurement implications

- 15 The previous CLC tender attracted 37 bids. It is anticipated that there will be a higher number of bids for the upcoming tender due to market engagement work that has been undertaken to resolve areas with unmet needs.
- 16 Bidder sessions will be held with interested parties. The bidder sessions will enable prospective providers to ask questions about the opportunity, and these questions and the Council's answers will be added to a clarification log which will be accessible to those who have expressed an interest in the opportunity.
- 17 Work is underway to co-produce questions by people who receive CLC services and carers to ask in the method statements (documents explaining how specific tasks will be carried out).
- 18 Where current providers do not bid or their bids are unsuccessful, they will be able to retain their current packages until the person's care package is reviewed. At this point, the person can consider moving to a Direct Payment arrangement to continue with the incumbent provider or have their care moved to a contracted provider.

Legal Implications

- 19 The agreement will be drafted by the Council's Legal Services under the new provision of the Procurement Act 2023 and advice is being provided on an ongoing basis by the Legal Services team.
- 20 The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

- 21 This report will be circulated to all Members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

- 22 The current CLC framework began on 29 November 2021 and has been extended three times. It will expire on 30 August 2026.
- 23 The primary purpose of the CLC service is to enable people to develop and maintain physical, intellectual, emotional and social skills through provision of meaningful activity, maintaining their independence, and to support and maintain the health and wellbeing of carers and thus reduce the likelihood of further intervention such as admission to residential services.
- 24 The CLC service includes two types of support: Day Services and provider employed Personal Assistants (PAs).
- 25 Day Services are community-based and provide meaningful activities, social engagement, and opportunities to develop independent living skills. This includes cooking and household skills, support to access employment and banking and budgeting skills.
- 26 Provider-employed PAs are employed by an agency (rather than being self-employed or directly employed by the individual) and support people to build independence, gain independent skills, and access their community. This includes shopping, using public transport and accessing community assets such as leisure centres, swimming pools and gyms.
- 27 Approximately 670 people receive CLC support via the Council's procured framework, i.e. where the Council directly commissions support from a provider. The table below includes a breakdown of the number of people receiving support at each banding, as of October 2025. The bandings reflect different levels of need (more details are given at paragraph 41 below). Some people receive support across multiple bandings.

Band	October 2025
Band A (Remote support, including activity packs)	1
Band B (Moderate level of support)	43
Band C (Medium level of support)	326
Band D (Continuous 1:1 support)	168
Band E Additional Hourly 1:1 support (to be used in addition to B and C or Band D only)	138
Band F Community 1:1 support (Including Personal Assistant)	192

- 28 There are a total of 26 people receiving support as an exception, when a package is commissioned outside of the Council's framework. Some of the exceptions are at the Council's banded rates and some are at alternative rates.

- 29 Exceptions are only commissioned rarely, such as when a person needs a specialist service that cannot be met on the framework. For example, when someone has a sensory impairment and requires a service with British Sign Language trained staff, or when someone has a particular need and requires a service with staff trained to support with more specialised services.
- 30 The CLC framework currently has 25 providers who offer a total of 58 different day services and nine PA services.

The Future Arrangements of CLC

- 31 A key consideration for future commissioning will be how the Council can ensure a cost effective and financially sustainable service whilst continuing to offer choice to people in the support that they receive.
- 32 The Council engaged independent advice to review the CLC offer with a key focus on the operation of the current framework, the cost model in place for providers and where opportunities and changes could improve the effectiveness of the service.
- 33 The main structure of the existing arrangements is proposed to continue; however, some key changes will be introduced for the new arrangements and are highlighted below.

Length and Type of Contract

- 34 It is intended that the CLC contract will be commissioned as an open framework under the light touch regime of the Procurement Act 2023. The framework will be commissioned for three years, with the option to extend for a further two years if required.
- 35 The Council will reopen the opportunity to join the framework as required and at intervals which will be publicised.
- 36 Services will be commissioned in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. It is intended to award multiple providers who are capable of performing the services; individual contracts will then be entered into for packages as need arises.
- 37 There will be no legal obligation upon the Council to award packages under this framework. Providers will be assessed on financial stability, insurance, policies, safeguarding practices, approach to quality and price. Bidders must pass all these elements.

Annual Uplifts

- 38 Providers' rates are usually reviewed annually, before the start of the new financial year, to ensure the rates provided are sustainable. Currently, uplifts are calculated using the Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) index and the Consumer Prices Index (CPI).

- 39 The calculation for review of annual uplifts will change from AWE to National Living Wage (NLW) and the CPI. This will bring CLC in line with the Council's other commissioning areas, including home care, residential care and supported living.
- 40 However, the Council reserves the right to review uplifts within the financial context of its funding and any future market conditions/wider pressures.

Rates and Bandings

- 41 Currently, there are six different payment band rates, which reflect different levels of need. The table below includes a summary of each band and the building/community-based rates for the 2025/26 financial year:

	Half Day 3 hours a day	Full Day 6 hours a day
Band A (Remote support, including activity packs)	£16.18	£32.36
Band B (Moderate level of support)	£26.22	£52.44
Band C (Medium level of support)	£39.21	£78.42
Band D (Continuous 1:1 support)	£78.70	£157.40
Band E Additional Hourly 1:1 support (to be used in addition to B and C or Band D only)	£17.14 per hour	
Band F Community 1:1 support (Including Personal Assistant)	£21.47 per hour	

- 42 Under the new CLC contract, there will no longer be fixed rates. Instead, providers will be given floor and ceiling rates for each individual band at the point of tendering and will be required to submit a price within the range outlined.
- 43 The indicative new bandings (subject to rounding), as well as the approximate level of staff support for each band, are listed below. A more detailed description of each banding will be included in the service specification.

Bandings	Staff Ratio	Ceiling Rate - Session	Floor Rate – Session
Band 1	1:8 staff ratio	£49.42	£48.12
Band 2	1:5 staff ratio	£57.91	£56.56
Band 3	1:3 staff ratio	£73.88	£71.15
Band 4	1:1 staff ratio	£148.23	£144.01
Bandings	Staff Ratio	Ceiling Rate - Hourly	Floor Rate – Hourly
Band 5	Additional 1:1 hours (to be used with bands 3 and 4 only)	£17.14	£16.66
Band 6	1:1 community support	£20.37	£18.93
PA Band	1:1 community support	£20.37	£18.93

- 44 Any bids submitted outside the specified floor and ceiling rates will be disqualified. The remaining providers will be evaluated based on their responses to quality questions, as well as key documents and supporting evidence.
- 45 The new contract will allow services to be commissioned hourly, in addition to full-day (six-hour) sessions. Currently, day services can only be commissioned in three-hour blocks. This approach will ensure that people's support is representative of their assessed needs and the actual support delivered. Hourly rates will be pro-rata of the day rate.
- 46 Under the new model, for example, someone attending a full-day service at Band C who temporarily needs 1:1 support for travel training could have four hours of day service and two hours of targeted 1:1 support. This approach supports progressive outcomes and helps avoid over-commissioning or disempowering individuals through unnecessary levels of 1:1 support.

Changes to Service Bands

- 47 Within the current framework, Band B is commissioned based on a 1:8 staff to person ratio and Band C is commissioned based on a 1:3 staff to person ratio.
- 48 Analysis of the utilisation of the arrangements suggests the wide variation between Bands B and C in the current framework bands can lead to the over commissioning of care. It is therefore proposed to introduce a 1:5 ratio level to ensure that services commissioned are representative of the assessed needs of individuals.
- 49 It is not proposed to move existing users to new bandings immediately but as part of the annual review process, peoples' needs and outcomes will be re-assessed and any changes will be made against the new service levels.

Lots

- 50 CLC services support people with a variety of needs, which are currently categorised into lots:

- Learning Disabilities and/or Autism;
- Profound and Multiple Learning Disability (PMLD);
- Physical and Sensory Disabilities;
- Mental Health;
- Older Adults;
- Dementia;

Additionally, there is a separate lot for PAs.

- 51 When the current framework was commissioned, providers were required to submit tenders for each lot they wished to deliver, with quality questions evaluated separately for each lot. This approach has presented several challenges; for example, when providers have opened new services but had

not previously been evaluated for the relevant lot, or where individuals have complex needs that span multiple lots.

- 52 Under the new contract, there will be only two service lots: Day Services and PAs. Providers will outline the support needs their services are able to meet. As part of the assessment process, the allocated worker will determine whether the service is appropriate and able to meet the individual's identified needs.
- 53 Providers will be evaluated based on their ability to deliver within the lot they tender for, without further assessment of specialisms. The procurement process will assess the bids against various elements, including finance, insurance policies, safeguarding, and their approach to quality, alongside ensuring their submitted prices are within the floor and ceiling rates. Providers must pass all of these components.

Progression

- 54 The Council is committed to supporting people to progress, thereby promoting independence, and enabling people to achieve greater autonomy in their daily lives.
- 55 The CLC service specification and contract will provide a mechanism for the Council to encourage providers to deliver progressive, person-centred outcomes in the form of new service levels during the duration of the contracts. Providers and people who draw on support will be engaged in the development of any progression services.
- 56 There are also opportunities for the Council to consider expanding its Leicestershire Adult Learning Service to provide short term intensive courses to promote independence and progression as part of the wider CLC offer.
- 57 CLC providers will continue to make use of community assets such as libraries, cafés, and swimming pools, which will continue to be encouraged.

Call-off Process

- 58 Under the new framework, a call-off process will be developed (this is the mechanism through which new care arrangements are commissioned). In line with the Home Care call-off processes additional resources will be required to manage the brokerage of CLC services.
- 59 Packages will be commissioned competitively, based on the rates providers submitted at the time of joining the framework, subject only to any annual inflationary uplifts at the Council's discretion, alongside the provider's ability to meet the person's needs and outcomes, and the distance from the person's home to the service.
- 60 As part of the person's assessment process, their needs, outcomes and wishes are clearly established and recorded. The CLC brokerage service will utilise this, triangulating this information along with the person's location and transport

needs, to establish the most cost-effective service that can meet the person's needs and outcomes.

- 61 There is a fine balance to be achieved between meeting people's individual assessed support requirements and their need for personalised services against managing the cost of provision to the Council. While CLC services are subject to the floor and ceiling rates process, the Council cannot place a cap on the overall cost of care to meet an individual's assessed unmet needs due to its duties under the Care Act 2014. All services will be commissioned in line with the County Council's Fair Outcomes Policy.

Day Services

- 62 Successful day services will share the following information with the Council:

- The names of their services;
- The locations of their services;
- The primary support needs each service can provide;
- The needs each service is able to meet.

- 63 Where a person requires transport to access CLC services, this is commissioned separately to CLC provision and is co-ordinated by the Council's supported transport service. Each individual transport requirement is run using a competitive process. Transport will only be commissioned to services which meet the person's needs and are cost-effective to the Council, considering the rates and location of the service.

- 64 The new contract will consider location and transport needs as part of the call-off process to ensure the most cost-effective solution is in place which meets individual needs.

Personal Assistants

- 65 Under the new contract, PA providers will be required to specify the types of support they offer, the primary support areas they can cover and the districts they operate in.

Absences

- 66 Absences are allowances made within the cost model for occasions where a person does not attend a planned commissioned service for any reason. Under the current framework, absence costs are built into the rate as a percentage, and providers cannot charge for absences.
- 67 However, absence arrangements have remained a consistent challenge as many providers feel the current arrangement does not adequately compensate them.

- 68 Under the new contract, the absence component will be removed from the standard rate. Instead, providers will be compensated for individual absences, subject to the absence payment criteria.
- 69 Under the new absence payment criteria, providers may charge for short term absences, for example where services are cancelled within 24 hours of the scheduled start time and only for that period. This is consistent with the Council's Home Care procurement arrangements.
- 70 Providers delivering services on weekdays only may charge where services are cancelled within one working day of the scheduled start time.
- 71 Under the new contracts, those providers operating on the Council's contract will be prohibited from charging above their framework rates for Direct Payments. Providers will also be obligated to follow the absence payment criteria for Direct Payment arrangements.

Market Sufficiency

- 72 There are recognised shortages of PAs within certain areas of Leicestershire, including Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray.
- 73 Due to these shortages, the majority of non-framework PA packages are commissioned externally via Direct Payments through non-framework PA agencies, and their rates are higher than the framework rates. For example, many providers charge in excess of £25 an hour.
- 74 Strategic commissioners have engaged with the market and are actively working to increase availability, particularly in areas with limited-service coverage.
- 75 Particular focus will be given on developing new/expanding PA provision for some older people (for example, people with advanced dementia) and adults with mental health needs living in rural communities.

Aligning Rates across Provision (Council-commissioned and Direct Payments)

- 76 When the new contract begins, all existing Direct Payment packages will continue by default, as the contract is between the individual and the provider. At the individual's next annual review, workers will seek to source services at Council rates.
- 77 This approach ensures consistency with rates paid and best value for the Council when paying for provision whether this is through the CLC contract or via a Direct Payment.

Engagement

- 78 Engagement is actively maintained and continuously pursued as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to improvement and incorporating a diverse range of stakeholder groups.
- 79 The CLC Provider Forum is a group comprising current framework providers and those not presently operating within these arrangements. The Forum conducts in-depth discussions on specific areas of change, ensuring providers can express their perspectives on proposed developments.
- 80 Providers have been engaged on changes to the service model and have been given the opportunity to feed into proposals (in particular concerning the absence arrangements and progression).
- 81 Continuous engagement has taken place with people who draw on CLC services over the past two years to seek their views on services, changes that they would want to see, and those parts of the service that they value in particular. This feedback is attached as an Appendix to this report.
- 82 With the support of the Adults and Communities Engagement Panel, work is underway to co-produce questions by people who receive CLC services and carers to ask in the method statements (which set out how specific tasks will be carried out). The Engagement Panel acts as a critical friend to officers of the Council to discuss and challenge proposed engagement plans, service design and policy and strategy development. Panel members are all volunteers and are recognised as experts by experience as carers, or someone who has previously had a service provided by social care. They are available to support with co-production projects, offering a wide range of experience and knowledge. The Engagement Panel will also provide an explanation of what a good response will look like.
- 83 The Department uses continuous satisfaction monitoring to engage with individuals receiving services and the data is used to inform service development. This process includes:
 - Mandatory Service Reviews – Regular assessments of care and support provided to people who use CLC services , to ensure quality and effectiveness.
 - Enhanced Review Forms on the Council's adult social care case management system.

Comments of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 84 The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals for the recommissioning of the CLC contract at its meeting on the 3 November 2025. Arising from discussion the following points were made:
 - Community Assets - consideration around the use of community assets and how these are utilised across CLC services;

- Rural service availability - ensuring there are sufficient PAs in rural parts of Leicestershire;
- High-cost packages – considering the plans to encourage more providers to join the framework as part of reducing the high costs of non-framework PAs, which can be in excess of £25 an hour.

85 The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be updated with the result of the procurement exercise following the award of the contracts in the summer of 2026.

Equality Implications

86 There are no equality implications arising from this report; although the provision of services described in the report meet one of the strands of the Council's general equality obligations set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

87 An action plan has been developed as part of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), with a view to minimising any negative impacts on people where possible. The EIA has been shared with and approved by the Adults and Communities Departmental Equalities Group (DEG).

Human Rights Implications

88 There are no human rights implications arising from this report as people with eligible social care needs will remain eligible for CLC services.

Health Implications

89 A 'Health in All Policies' form has been produced to ensure health inequalities are tackled wherever possible through this commissioning process.

90 Where a person has Continuing Health Care (CHC) needs, the Integrated Care Board will fund those individuals through the CLC contract.

Environmental Implications

91 The delivery of CLC PAs requires workers to travel from a base to the persons home and onto local community settings. Where possible people will be supported to use public transport, in particular as part of a travel training programme.

92 The transport provision for CLC Day Services is provided by the Council's In-house service. The service aims to maximise route optimisation and reduce individuals' travel time.

Background Papers

- Fair Outcomes Policy for Adult Social Care
<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2020/2/18/Fair-Outcomes-Policy-for-Adult-Social-Care.pdf>
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 3 November 2025 – Procurement of Community Life Choices (Day Service and Personal Assistants)
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7855&Ver=4>
- Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26 -
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/faq/2022/4/12/Appendix-B-LCC-Strategic-Plan-2022-26.pdf>
- Delivering Wellbeing and opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Strategy 2025-29 - <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/our-approach/policies-and-strategies>
- <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6464&Ver=4>
- Report to the Cabinet: 14 December 2021 – Provision of Community Life Choices Services (Day Services)
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6449&Ver=4>
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 7 November 2022 - Update on the Provision of Community Life Choices Services (Day Services)
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6842&Ver=4>
- Contract Procedure Rules
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s189333/Part4G%20Contract%20Procedure%20Rules%20-%20procurement%20pre%2024%20February%202025.pdf>
- Report to the Cabinet: 12 September 2025 – Home Care for Leicestershire Procurement
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7879&Ver=4>

Appendix

Summary of engagement undertaken for the recommissioning of CLC services