



ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 JANUARY 2026

RECOMMISSIONING OF DEMENTIA SUPPORT SERVICE
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's views on the proposed procurement of the Dementia Support Service (DSS) and associated key performance indicators for the service.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 2 The DSS supports delivery of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Joint Living Well with Dementia Strategy 2024–2028, focusing on prevention, early diagnosis, and supporting people to live well at home.
- 3 The current DSS contract, delivered by Age UK, ends 30 September 2026. The City Council is the lead commissioner on behalf of County, and a Section 75 agreement is in place for the NHS contribution to the service allocated by the Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- 4 The LLR Joint Living Well Dementia Strategy 2024–2028 reflects a system-wide commitment to improving outcomes for people affected by dementia. Developed collaboratively across health, social care and the voluntary sector, it aligns with national priorities and focuses on:
 - Prevention and early intervention;
 - Timely diagnosis;
 - Person-centred support throughout the dementia journey.
- 5 Delivery is co-ordinated through local plans for LLR, overseen by the LLR Dementia Programme Board.

Background

- 6 There are estimated to be over 10,000 people living with dementia in Leicestershire, including around 300 people aged under 65 years. There is a need to increase pre-diagnosis support as there are an estimated 4,000 people who may have dementia without a formal diagnosis, which can delay their access to care and support (as recorded by the ICB).

- 7 In Leicestershire the diagnosis rate is just over 61%, which is below the national target of 66.7%. This gap matters because without a diagnosis people and their families miss out on vital help.
- 8 The DSS has been jointly commissioned by Leicester City Council, the County Council and the ICB for over a decade. Historically, the service was delivered by The Alzheimer's Society until 2017, after which Age UK were awarded the current contract, which began in April 2017 and is due to end on 30 September 2026. This was covered by one joint model across City and County.
- 9 The LLR ICB provide a contribution to the service of c£83k per annum. The service provides support at the following stages:
 - pre-diagnosis;
 - peri-diagnosis, i.e. at the point of diagnosis when an assessment confirms the condition;
 - post-diagnosis.
- 10 The DSS provides the following support and the Pathway Map is attached as an Appendix to the report:
 - *Information, Advice and Guidance* - Clear, accessible advice on dementia care, rights, and available services.
 - *Single Point of Access* - A central referral hub for professionals and families to access support quickly.
 - *Personalised Support Plans* - Goal-based plans tailored to individual needs, helping people live well with dementia.
 - *Post-Diagnosis Support* - Emotional support, practical advice, and signposting immediately after diagnosis.
 - *Carer Learning and Resilience Workshops* - Training and resources for informal carers to build confidence and coping strategies.
 - *Social Groups and Peer Support* - Activities to reduce isolation and promote community engagement.
 - *Co-ordination with Health and Social Care* - Works alongside GPs, Memory Clinics, and Adult Social Care to ensure integrated care.
 - *Culturally Appropriate Support* - Outreach to diverse communities and seldom-heard groups.
- 11 The current DSS supports approximately 2,500 individuals annually across Leicester and Leicestershire, contributing to improved wellbeing, reduced isolation, and enhanced carer resilience. Despite being a non-statutory service, it plays a critical role in delivering the ambitions of the LLR Joint Living Well with Dementia Strategy 2024–2028.
- 12 The service delivers a key offer in Leicestershire through support for people with dementia and their carers. However, recent highlighted challenges for people with dementia include:
 - Barriers to access, cultural appropriateness of the service and wider dementia support;
 - Wider reach of the service across Leicester and Leicestershire across some more rural and isolated communities;
 - Increased demand and under-represented groups across the County including seldom heard communities.

- 13 A formal review has been undertaken across partners (the County Council, Leicester City Council and the ICB) with key data gathered on the service to determine the gaps, areas to improve and high impact provision in the current arrangement.

Engagement

- 14 Extensive engagement via the current DSS has been undertaken with service users, carers, and practitioners through focus groups, surveys, and community events.
- 15 The key findings are summarised below:
- a) Joint work across the wider health and social care is essential to support people with dementia.
 - b) Culturally appropriate support must be embedded in service design and part of the delivery model.
 - c) The service should include and have a focus on the inclusion of seldom heard and rural communities to reduce inequalities.
 - d) Recognition of carer loneliness and need for emotional and practical support should be reflected in the service model and provider approach to delivery.
 - e) Clearer post-diagnosis pathways and timely access to services is essential in supporting people with dementia and carers.
- 16 Commissioners have begun an ongoing dialogue with the Department's Engagement Panel, comprising representatives who use the Council's adult social care services, with a view to holding a further focus group with members who have a lived experience of dementia and their carers.
- 17 Commissioners are also carrying out a communications and marketing strategy to profile the current service offer both internally and externally, in addition to engaging the wider community.
- 18 A market engagement event was held on 9 December 2025 with 28 attendees from 20 provider organisations attending from dementia specialist and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. The outcome from Providers feedback is detailed below which suggests the service would benefit from:
- a model that allows for wider work with smaller community-based organisations to support a range of communities;
 - strong governance and support from the Council/ICB to allow for joint working across Leicester and Leicestershire where feasible;
 - a focus on clear key performance indicators that are meaningful and show impact at a person level, as well as wider support deliverables (including qualitative and quantitative data);
 - the offer for carers of people with dementia to be clearly defined and linked with the Council's current Carers Support Service to allow for joint working and reduced duplication.

Proposed Service Model

- 19 Ongoing discussions are being held with LLR ICB to establish recurrent funding for the DSS for the new contracts; however, this has yet to be confirmed.

- 20 The existing arrangement is with Leicester City as a combined service model across both the City and the County. However, more recent discussions with Leicester City have concluded that a separate service for each area would be more beneficial to both areas.
- 21 Regardless of the approach to commissioning or geographical spread of the service, a specific service for Leicestershire would deliver those outcomes and provision highlighted from the formal review and stakeholder feedback. Key features of the proposed service intend to include:
- Pre, peri and post-diagnosis support for people with dementia and carers, including personalised interventions.
 - Information, Advice and Guidance and signposting to statutory, voluntary, community and social enterprise and community resources.
 - Personalised targeted support (support plans, coaching, navigation).
 - Support groups and social activity (for example, memory cafés, peer support, physical and cognitive activities).
 - Carer learning and education (including maintaining caring role, legal readiness for example, Lasting Power of Attorney).
 - Culturally appropriate offer throughout (accessible, inclusive materials and delivery).

Core Outcomes (County-wide)

- 22 The Core Outcomes include:
- Improved wellbeing, self-help and independence, avoidance of crisis.
 - Increased access and uptake by under-represented groups.
 - Contribution to the Department's aims aligning with the Adult and Communities Strategy 2025-2029, 'Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire'.
 - Consistent, person-centred support across stages of dementia; carer confidence and satisfaction.
- 23 Providers will be required to formally tender for the service and outline their approach to ensuring service requirements are delivered and a robust service delivery model is in place.

Core Key Performance Indicators (County-wide)

- 24 As part of the service specification, the successful provider will be asked to deliver against a set of key performance indicators. These include, but are not limited to:
- a) Access and Reach - numbers of people including where support is offered to people at different stages of dementia with a tailored support offer (for example, those with advanced dementia living at home with a family carer would receive a different offer to those at early diagnosis).
 - b) Quality and Experience - qualitative analysis on people's views of the support and how it has supported them (impact) and their family situation together with wellbeing measurements of satisfaction (for example, Zarit Burden Interview measurements of carer strain).

- c) Inclusion - the ability of the service to reach out across a wide range of communities and geographical spread including how the service works with small community-based organisations to deliver support and the impact of this.
- d) Impact and Prevention - measurement on service impact (collectively and individually) and how the service prevents, reduces or delays the need for formal social care provision or NHS services.

Resource implications

- 25 The County Council's annual contribution towards the proposed service will be £265,352 which is funded via the Better Care Fund.
- 26 The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

- 27 The current service contract expires on 30 September 2026 and it is intended a new arrangement will be in place for 1 October 2026 ensuring a seamless transition.
- 28 Key dates for the procurement of the service are detailed below:
 - Advert Published: April 2026;
 - Advert closed: June 2026;
 - Contract award letters issued: July 2026;
 - Provider Mobilisation: July to September 2026;
 - Contract Commencement Date: October 2026.

Conclusions

- 29 The recommissioning of the DSS is essential to meet growing demand, address inequalities, and align with strategic priorities.
- 30 The Committee is invited to comment on the core elements of the service model and associated key performance indicators.

Background papers

LLR Living Well with Dementia Strategy 2024–2028 –
<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health/market-position-statement/dementia>

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>

Equality Implications

- 31 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been drafted and will inform key decisions as part of the service specification and will be further developed as the project evolves with a completed EIA available for Cabinet in March 2026.

Human Rights Implications

- 32 There are no direct human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report at this stage.
- 33 Human rights considerations will be fully addressed during the recommissioning stage, when the detailed service specification is finalised and procurement begins.

Legal

- 34 Advice will be sought from the County Council's Legal Services Team in relation to the contractual and procurement aspects, to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and to safeguard the rights of people who use services and their carers.

Appendix

DSS Pathway Support Service Map

Officers to contact

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Dementia Support Service Pathway



