

Report to	Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	18/12/17
Lead Officer	Gary Brandrick, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Kevin Roberts, Senior Fire Safety Manager
Subject	Funding the Community Assistance Team



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report is to update Members on the progress of the Community Assistance Team (CAT) pilot which seeks to assist people who have fallen in their own home and are unable to get up on their own but have not sustained an injury.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The CAT pilot continues to produce excellent results in assisting people who have fallen in their homes but have not sustained an injury. The numbers remaining in their homes and not requiring hospital care continues to be in excess of 85%. A funding bid for two years from April 2018 for a pan North Wales CAT provision has been submitted to the Efficiency through Technologies Fund. Partial funding to the end of the financial year (2017-18) has been secured through the Intermediate Care Fund. Members will be asked to consider that the pilot is financially supported if needed, by providing up to a maximum of £66k until the end of May 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 Members note the continuing excellent service and results provided by CAT.
- 4 Members note the Efficiency through Technologies Fund bid submission and its timelines for the expansion of the CAT provision across North Wales from April 2018 along with the confirmation of partial funding up to 31 March 2018 from the Intermediate Care Fund.
- 5 Members are asked to support the project to the end of the fixed term contracts by agreeing to underpin the potential costs to a maximum of £66k.

BACKGROUND

- 6 In 2016 the Tri- service Collaboration Programme Board developed the concept of NWFRS responding on behalf of WAST to promptly assist people who had fallen but not sustained an injury. In addition to assisting people to get up, to be reassured and supported they are also offered a "Safe and Well" check in their home, which provides them with advice on security and fire safety.

- 7 The setting-up costs of the team that undertook this work was supported by a £100k grant sourced through a collaborative bid between NWFRS and Galw Gofal. The team itself was made up of existing FRS employees who were seconded from their existing roles and suitably trained to provide the service. They work in shifts of two people to cover the period of 7am – 11pm, seven days a week, 365 days per year.
- 8 To cover this shift pattern seven people were seconded into the Community Assistance Team (CAT) which provided one team to cover the Denbighshire and Conwy area.
- 9 The evaluation of this project shows how this pilot was a resounding success with 375 people helped by CAT between 1 August 2016 and 31 March 2017. On 96% of occasions no further support was required from WAST and, most importantly, the response time from CAT was on average 26 minutes, which contrasts with an ambulance attendance time which can be up to 4 hours. This ensured that the person who had fallen received prompt help and that their condition did not deteriorate.
- 10 The numbers of incidents attended by the CAT continues to grow on a daily basis with the latest confirmed figures on 23 November at 906 calls attended. On 86% of occasions the faller remained at home without the need to attend hospital for further treatment.

INFORMATION

- 11 The aim of the pilot was to prove the concept with the long term aim that this service should be provided by firefighters. It was recognised that due to ongoing national negotiations on broadening the role of the firefighter, this was not the right time to make a local agreement to transfer this work to firefighters. It was therefore decided to operate the scheme with employees on Green Book terms and conditions (National Joint Council For Local Government Services - National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service) for one more year until the end of March 2018.
- 12 The project had been presented to the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) board and they were eager to see this continue encouraging a bid to be submitted under the "Caremore" scheme. This bid was developed with and monitored by senior WAST managers. Officers were reassured by WAST managers that this was a strong bid and it was submitted at the end of February 2017.

- 13 The timescales for assessing the bid were more extensive than had been indicated by WAST and in the meantime the secondment of the employees who had been part of the pilot had come to an end and they returned to their previous roles. Because of the delay in the bidding process and the strong desire not to have a gap in service provision the decision was made to recruit seven people to replace the original team. The intention was that when the grant bid was successful then more people would be recruited from a holding list to extend the project across the whole of North Wales.
- 14 New members were appointed to the team on a one year fixed term contracts from the end of May 2017; they have been trained and are currently providing the service primarily in Conwy and Denbighshire but have also responded to all Local Authority areas in North Wales.
- 15 Unfortunately at the end of June 2017 it was confirmed by WAST that the "Caremore" bid had not been successful.
- 16 Members at the Executive panel meeting in July 2017 agreed to continue funding of the pilot using reserves if necessary until January 2018 whilst further funding opportunities, including via Welsh Government, were investigated.
- 17 To date the costs for the team have been met through managed underspends within service budgets, though these underspends are related to support staff vacancies being held open.
- 18 In August 2017 a grant funding bid was submitted to the 'Efficiency through Technologies fund' (ETTF) seeking to provide support for the pilot over three years from April 2018. The funding bid of £600k would provide an expanded CAT response across all Local Authority areas in North Wales for the years 2018 to 2020. This will then allow time for the pilot to evolve into a commissioned service during the third year as health would have the opportunity to identify future funding sources. A response to this bid is expected late December.
- 19 To maintain operation of the CAT until the end of the financial year £40k is required.
- 20 To support the operation of the team until the end of the financial year, a further bid has been made for 'slippage' funding from BCUHB via the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF). On 5 December, it was confirmed that £20k had been granted and we await confirmation if further funds may become available from this source.

- 21 Should the grant funding bid submitted through the ETTF be successful and no further support via the ICF is forthcoming, the service will need to meet maximum salary and associated costs until the end of the financial year of £20k. In this case we would seek to fund this project within the current budget through managed underspends, however should this not be the possible it is recommended that the costs are underpinned from the use of reserves until the end of March.
- 22 Should the bid submitted through the ETTF be unsuccessful there are two options.

Option 1. Operate the CAT pilot until the end of the team members fixed term contracts which end on 30 May 2018. The revenue costs associated with this would be £40K plus potential maximum redundancy costs of £26k.

Option 2. Cease the pilot at the end of the financial year realising the costs of £20k as detailed above plus potential maximum redundancy costs of £26K.

Whilst we would seek to fund this through managed underspends, should this not be possible it is recommended the costs are underpinned from reserves.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	To facilitate the development of a better integrated fire and rescue service, which contributes to the wider health promotion agenda.
Budget	Maximum funding of £20k would be needed until the end of the financial year should the ETTF bid be successful. Should the ETTF bid be unsuccessful a maximum of £66k would provide revenue and associated redundancy costs required up to the end of the fixed term contracts.
Legal	CAT is a non-statutory service for the Fire and Rescue Authority.
Staffing	If the ETTF funding bid is unsuccessful, the fixed term contracts of the 7 CAT employees will come to an end on 30 May 2018 or potentially sooner subject to FRA decision.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	None identified.
Risks	By agreeing to underpin this pilot from general reserves the risk is that, if it is needed, it reduces the amount of reserves available to underpin the whole budget in future years.