

Appendix E- VCFSE Development and Market Shaping Requirements

Purpose

The Provider must act as a strategic partner to Lancashire County Council in developing, strengthening and sustaining a diverse, responsive and sustainable network of support for carers across Lancashire.

The Council recognises that many positive outcomes for carers are achieved through access to community support, peer networks, informal support structures and voluntary sector provision. The Provider must therefore take a proactive role in ensuring that carers have access to a broad range of high-quality support opportunities that complement statutory services and reflect local needs.

The Provider must support the development of an integrated carers support system that:

1. Promotes prevention and early intervention.
2. Maximises community assets.
3. Supports innovation.
4. Strengthens local resilience.
5. Reduces inequalities in access to support.
6. Improves support available to underserved communities.

Market Mapping and Intelligence

The Provider must maintain an up-to-date understanding of support available to carers across Lancashire.

This must include:

1. Mapping existing services and community assets.
2. Maintaining a directory of support provision.
3. Identifying specialist support available within localities.
4. Monitoring emerging need and demand.
5. Understanding local variations in support availability.
6. Identifying duplication and gaps in provision.

The Provider must maintain intelligence that can inform both operational delivery and future service development.

Gap Analysis and Needs Identification

The Provider must undertake ongoing analysis of the carers support market to identify unmet need and opportunities for development.

This must include consideration of:

1. Geographic gaps in provision.
2. Rural access challenges.
3. Gaps affecting specific communities.
4. Specialist support requirements.
5. Emerging demographic trends.
6. Changes in local demand.
7. Barriers experienced by hidden carers.

The Provider must provide Lancashire County Council with information regarding identified gaps and recommendations for addressing unmet need.

Community Capacity Building

The Provider must actively support the development of community capacity across Lancashire.

This must include:

1. Building relationships with local organisations.
2. Supporting collaboration between providers.
3. Sharing intelligence regarding carers' needs.
4. Promoting awareness of carers within communities.
5. Encouraging development of carer-inclusive services.
6. Supporting organisations to become more accessible to carers.
7. Strengthening neighbourhood-based support networks.

The Provider must maximise the contribution of local community assets and informal support wherever appropriate.

Partnership Development

The Provider must establish strong partnerships across statutory, community and voluntary sectors.

This must include engagement with:

1. VCFSE organisations.
2. Community groups.
3. Faith organisations.
4. Health partners.
5. District and Borough Councils.
6. Community anchor organisations.
7. Specialist support providers.
8. Equalities-led organisations.

The Provider must facilitate collaboration and reduce duplication across the carers support system.

Innovation and Service Development

The Provider must support innovation within the carers support market and identify opportunities to develop new responses to emerging need.

This must include:

1. Identifying opportunities for service development.
2. Supporting pilot projects and innovative approaches.
3. Encouraging collaborative initiatives.
4. Testing new models of support.
5. Supporting community-led solutions.
6. Sharing good practice across the sector.

Where agreed by the Council, the Provider may be required to administer or support community development funding, grant programmes or targeted investment intended to strengthen local provision.

Hidden Carers and Underserved Communities

The Provider must use market development activity to improve support available to carers who are less likely to access services.

This must include targeted work to improve support for:

1. Carers from ethnically diverse communities.
2. Working carers.
3. Rural carers.
4. Older carers.
5. LGBTQ+ carers.

6. Former carers.
7. Carers experiencing digital exclusion.
8. Communities demonstrating low levels of engagement.

The Provider must demonstrate how market shaping activity improves equity of access and reduces barriers experienced by underserved groups.

System Leadership

The Provider must act as a strategic connector between Lancashire County Council, carers, communities and the VCFSE sector.

The Provider must:

1. Promote a shared understanding of carers' needs.
2. Influence development of local support systems.
3. Contribute to strategic planning activity.
4. Support continuous improvement across the carers support offer.
5. Provide intelligence regarding emerging trends and opportunities.

The Provider must play a leading role in ensuring Lancashire maintains a diverse, sustainable and responsive network of support that meets the changing needs of carers across the county.