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## Purpose of Report

To present a summary of what was agreed at the Outcomes Board for Essex Assist (EA) and what the benefits will be for Essex citizens, for Essex County Council (ECC) and for our partners.

## Essex Assist – a summary of what was agreed at the Outcomes Board

Essex Assist's operating principles focus on the putting the customer first, delivering ECC's statutory responsibilities, providing advice, advocacy and signposting customers to services.

Through the relationships ECC already has, Essex Assist will be able to ensure the high quality of the products and services available, providing piece of mind to the consumer, as well as enabling them to optimise the level of choice and control they require. Essex Assist will also provide Care Providers with advice and support and a marketing platform to advertise their services to self-funding customers.

Essex Assist will provide a range of high quality products and services to Essex Citizens

*The primary purpose of Essex Assist will be to enhance the well-being of citizens, it plans to offer the following core products & services from April 2012 and then develop the service offering over time:*

- Basic information regarding the care home market to end users
- Advertising space for Providers on the Options report and the Website
- Options Reports to allow end users to compare care options which meet their wants / needs

## Initial Service Offering

## Basic information to end users

- Basic information regarding the care home market i.e. care homes in a certain area, size and basic facilities. This information will be broadly targeted to meet the basic requirements of the end user which would be ascertained via the phone or web through a series of simple questions.
- This information will be provided direct to end users via three channels; the phone, a web-site and a paper based care directory. It could be provided via an email which

may include separate and distinct advertising. The website and care directory would be substantial; they would not be primarily advertising media.

- The provision of this 'basic information' would be free to end users.

### **Advertising space**

- Providers will be supported to market to self funding citizens
- Advertising space will be made available to Providers of care services and organisations which offer associated products and services both on the Website and the care directory.
- The offer to advertisers could be at various levels. The basic offer will be a simple listing of the provider in a catalogue of providers. For an increased offer, the advertiser will have more space, his own page, or other suitable enhancements of what appeared before the visitor.
- Fees will be charged for advertising

### **Options Reports to end users**

- Comparison information regarding the care options available to an individual. This information will be provided in a report format which details the customer requirements, the care homes which match these requirements and objective, factual information regarding the care home facilities and services i.e. CQC inspections, price ranges, quality team information.
- These end-user requirements will be collected via the phone or the web-site and the final report will be sent to the customer.
- The options report will be a free service.

### **Promoting Providers (via Advertising)**

There are two risks associated with advertising.

1. EA allows providers/suppliers which are known or suspected of being disreputable to advertise under the EA brand, this is linked to the risk associated with offering advice.
  2. EA is seen to be interfering in the market or favouring one provider/supplier over another by disallowing some providers/suppliers from advertising.
- EA will develop a simple and transparent due diligence process to ensure that all providers which advertise with EA are 'reputable'.

### **Use of Provider data**

There is a risk that EA uses Provider data for purposes other than those which have been agreed. For instance, at the time of collecting quality team information the Provider did not agree to allow this information to be used on a web-site.

- Agreement will be sought from all Providers whose information we intend to share. If Providers do not agree for their information to be used for new/different purposes this information will be excluded from any report / communication provided to end users.

### **The Benefits**

Essex Citizens will benefit because they will:

- be able to remain independent from ECC support for longer
- be able to make better decisions and plan around their needs
- have more choice and control as it will be easier for them to make the right care choices

ECC will benefit because it will:

- deliver statutory responsibilities in an efficient and proactive manner
- deliver information and advice in a cost effective manner
- enable cost recovery and re-investment back into the care market

Our partners will benefit because they will:

- be able to consolidate and optimise their advertising spend
- receive advice and guidance on how to improve their service offering
- have the opportunity to improve profit margins