

Project Brief – Commissioning Older People’s Care Home Placements – North Wales Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Audit year: 2020-21

Date issued: November 2020

Document reference: 1923A2020-21

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Project brief

Background to the review

- 1 The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on Health and Social Care Services as they work to help contain this virus and avoid the spread to particularly vulnerable people, such as those who are elderly, or have underlying health problems. North Wales councils and [Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board](#) (the Health Board) have worked hard to maximise bed capacity in hospitals and care homes and have commissioned and equipped three new rainbow hospitals to accommodate the increase in demand for care and treatment. The impact of this virus has highlighted the critical role that care homes have all year round and particularly when unexpected peaks in demand occur.
- 2 There is a cost to both human life and the sustainable financial viability of care home businesses. Business plans of these homes will rely on minimum occupancy levels and the COVID-19 virus, and other wider factors may affect demand for placements and numbers of residents going forward, resulting in the closure of some homes.
- 3 Notwithstanding the pressures on care homes described above, demand for these services from an ageing population continues to grow, increasing budgetary pressures on public bodies. There is a risk that care home provision is not shaped to meet demand, such as specialist provision.
- 4 The latest published data from [StatsWales](#) shows that North Wales councils spent approximately £66 million in 2018-19 on Nursing Placements and Residential Care Placements and NHS financial reports indicate that Betsi Cadwaladr is spending over £100 million per year on continuing healthcare. In addition to these costs, many councils have their own residential care provision.
- 5 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. All 6 councils and the Health Board have a statutory responsibility to meet requirements set out in the act.
- 6 Any strategic approach to improve residential and nursing care should meet requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA), Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011 and the Equalities Act (2010). Under the SSWBA, councils and health boards have a statutory obligation to establish and maintain pooled fund arrangements in relation to the exercise of their care home accommodation functions. Our recent work in North Wales found that the pooled fund for older peoples care home placement did not provide value for money.
- 7 The North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Services Improvement Collaborative published a [Market shaping statement – care homes for older people in North Wales](#) in 2018. Its content included what partners could expect in the future and

what partners would need from care homes and how partners would support developments.

- 8 This project brief sets out why we are undertaking the review in Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Wrexham Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and outlines its focus, method, outputs and timing.

Purpose of the review

- 9 In our Assurance and Risk Assessments for North Wales councils we identified strategic commissioning of residential and nursing care placements as a risk to both councils and the Health Board for the following reasons:
 - a. high level of spending on these services;
 - b. forecast increases in numbers of older people expected to need these services;
 - c. limited availability of new staff to support these services and recruitment competition with other health and social care providers; and
 - d. as yet untapped potential benefits of strategic commissioning across North Wales public sector bodies.
- 10 Since identifying strategic commissioning of residential and nursing care placements as a risk, COVID-19 has highlighted the fragility and current capacity of the care market and the need to plan strategically and manage the market.

Focus of the review

- 11 We will use the 'Market shaping statement – care homes for older people in North Wales' which was published in 2018 as a starting point for the review. We facilitated a scoping workshop on 29 September 2020 with representatives from the councils and Health Board to hear an update of progress in delivering the strategic aims and to inform the shape of this review. Our review will consider the following areas:
 - a. Adjustments to the strategic commissioning plans as a result of COVID-19 to support short, medium and longer term sustainability of care homes;
 - b. Sustainability of financing strategic intentions, including COVID-19 impacts such as increased care needs for patients discharged from hospital, increased costs associated with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and modification of care home environment as a result of the pandemic and use of the Welsh Government emergency care home fund;
 - c. Robustness of the data that underpins the strategy;
 - d. Impact of this strategy on other regional and local strategies;
 - e. Workforce planning for example in light of Brexit and COVID-19;

- f. The extent to which councils and the Health Board are working to reduce demand/need for residential care such as with extra care housing or integrated community care packages;
 - g. Partnership governance; and
 - h. Change and programme management.
- 12 The review will seek to answer the question: **Are partners collaborating effectively to take account of demographic changes and other external pressures in the strategic commissioning of residential and nursing home care?**

Legislative basis for the review

- 13 This project is being carried in line with duties set out under sections 17 and 61 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.
- 14 It is also being undertaken to help discharge the Auditor General’s duties under section 18 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to assess whether improvement authorities are meeting their improvement duties and may also inform an examination undertaken under section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Method

- 15 The review will involve interviews with officers and councillors, document reviews and meeting observations. We also anticipate running remote workshops when required. Our approaches will be in line with Government advice on COVID-19 at the point we carry out the work. Although we anticipate the majority of activities will be undertaken remotely.

Exhibit 1: attendees at the scoping workshop

The table below sets out the people who took part at the Scoping Workshop.

Organisation	Name	Title
Anglesey CBC	Iola Richards	Head of Adult Services
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Grace Lewis Parry	Assistant Director of Primary and Community Care

Organisation	Name	Title
Conwy CBC	Claire Lister	Head of integrated Adult and Community Services
Denbighshire CC	Phil Gilroy	Head of Community Support Services
	Katie Newe	Service Manager - Client Services
	Catrin Perry	Regional Collaboration Team
Flintshire CC	Jane Davies	Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning
	Neil Ayling	Chief Officer Social Services
Gwynedd CBC	Morwena Edwards	Corporate Director & Statutory Director of Social Services
Wrexham CBC	Mark Jones	Interim Senior Head of Service - Older People

Main review questions

- 16 To inform the design of the work, we undertook a scoping workshop with the audited bodies. This helped us focus the review and also incorporate any changes, risks or other factors that needed to be considered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic response. **Exhibit 1** sets out the key questions we will seek to answer during the review.

Exhibit 1: main review questions

The table below sets out the main questions we will seek to answer in undertaking this review.

Level 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are partners collaborating effectively to take account of demographic changes and other external pressures in the strategic commissioning of residential and nursing home care?
Level 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have partners formally committed to the strategic approach to commissioning residential and nursing home care?<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Is the strategic intent underpinned by sound data and clear workforce plans?– Is the strategic approach changing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?– Is the strategic approach considering the risks to the sector (for example fees, workforce, sustainability of care homes, changing demand and service quality)?– Is the strategic approach considering alternative forms of care?• Have partners identified and secured commitment for the resources needed to deliver the strategy and is there commitment to manage these through the pooled budget arrangement?<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Are commitments to resourcing the strategy sustainable?– Is there collective accountability and responsibility to deliver a strategic solution?– How well do partners deal with barriers (e.g. structural differences, loss of control, individual vs partner commissioning, varying standards and expectations)?• Does the strategy for commissioning residential and nursing home care align with other key strategies and meet legislative requirements?<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Are partners considering alternatives other than residential and nursing home care placements?– Are partners working to understand and address any inappropriate regional variations (cost, contributions and access to a range of services)?– Can partners demonstrate consideration of key legislation as part of strategy design?

- Is change related to delivery of this strategy being managed and reported effectively?
 - Are partnership governance structures supporting delivery?
 - Are programme management arrangements in place to deliver the strategic change required?

Output

- 17 The findings from this review will be set out in a report that will also include recommendations where relevant.

Timetable

Exhibit 2: timetable

The table below sets out a proposed timetable for the review at the Council.

Proposed timetable	
Scoping workshop	29 September 2020
Sign off of the final project brief with scoping session representatives	October 2020
Set up meetings	October- December 2020
Project brief issued	November 2020
Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document reviews • Meeting observations • Interviews 	November/December 2020 November 2020 – January 2021 January/February 2021 (unless requested earlier)
Report issued	April 2021

Fieldwork schedule

Interviews

Exhibit 3: interviewees

The table below sets out the initial list of people we would like to interview as part of this review.

Name	Title
Iwan Davies	Chief Executive – Conwy (selected to give a Chief Executive perspective as Accountable Officer)
Anglesey – Fôn Roberts Conwy – Jenny Williams * Denbighshire – Nicola Stubbins Flintshire – Neil Ayling Gwynedd – Morwena Edwards Wrexham – Alwyn Jones	Director of Social Services (Chief officers) We will also speak to Jenny Williams about Regional Workforce perspectives
Anglesey – Iola Richards Conwy – Claire Lister Denbighshire – Phil Gilroy Flintshire – Jane Davies Gwynedd – Aled Davies Wrexham – Mark Jones	Heads of Adult Social Care
Betsi Cadwaladr: Chris Stockport Ffion Johnstone Bethan Jones Rob Smith Kathryn Titchen Jane Trowman	Executive Director for primary and community care Area Director Area Director Area Director Head of CHC Lead for Care Homes
Betsi Cadwaladr – Sue Hill/Rob Nolan Anglesey – Marc Jones	Director/Assistant Director of finance Section 151 officers

Name	Title
Conwy – Andrew Kirkham Denbighshire – Steve Gadd Flintshire – Gary Ferguson Gwynedd – Dafydd Edwards Wrexham – Mark Owen	
Betsi Cadwaladr – Sue Green Anglesey – Carys Edwards Conwy – Phil Davies Denbighshire – Gary Williams Flintshire – Sharon Carney Gwynedd – Geraint Owen Wrexham – Sue Robin	Head of Human Resources/workforce planning
Denbighshire – Bethan Jones-Edwards	Regional Head of Collaboration
Anglesey – Cllr Llinos Medi Conwy – Cllr Louise Gail Emery Denbighshire – Cllr Bobby Feeley Flintshire – Cllr Christine Jones Gwynedd – Cllr Dafydd Meurig Wrexham Cllr Joan Lowe	Lead Member for portfolio covering Adult Social Care
Anglesey – Cllr Aled Morris Jones Conwy – Cllr Penny Andow Denbighshire – Cllr Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones Flintshire – Cllr Hilary McGuill Gwynedd – Cllr Dewi Wyn Roberts Wrexham – Cllr Derek Wright	Chairs of Scrutiny Committees covering Adult Social Care
Teresa Owen	Chair of the Regional Partnership Board
Judith Greenhalgh	Chair of the North Wales Health and Social Care Recovery Group; and Chief Executive of Denbighshire

Name	Title
Morwena Edwards	Chair of the NW Regional Commissioning Board
Catrin Perry	Business Manager – Commissioning
Grace Lewis-Parry	Vice Chair of the NW Regional Commissioning Board
Betsi Cadwaladr – Jonathan Lloyd Anglesey – Emma Edwards Conwy – Fran Lewis Denbighshire – Nicola Kneale Flintshire – Jay Davies Gwynedd – Rhion Glyn Wrexham – Suzanne Price	Lead officers – performance management and data analysis
Anglesey – Sandra Thomas Conwy – Fran Lewis and Emma Roberts Denbighshire – Alan Smith Flintshire – TBC Gwynedd – Hawis Jones Wrexham – TBC	Change and programme managers
Betsi Cadwaladr – Kamala Williams Anglesey – Fôn Roberts & Iola Richards Conwy – Fran Lewis and Emma Roberts Denbighshire – Phil Gilroy & David Soley Flintshire – TBC Gwynedd – Morwena Edwards & Aled Davies Wrexham - TBC	Key health board and council managers responsible for the strategic planning of services
Heléna Herklots CBE	Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Mary Wimbury Clare Budden	Care Forum Wales ClwydAlyn Housing Association

Name	Title
Carer representative on Regional Partnership Board Community Health Council	Voice of the People

Workshops and focus groups

Exhibit 4: focus groups and workshops

The table below sets out the list of workshops and focus groups we would like to run with officers and councillors as part of this review.

Focus groups and workshops
<p>Focus group with selection of Regional Partnership Board Members – to explore the RPB’s actual and potential involvement in the strategic commissioning of residential and nursing home placements.</p>
<p>Focus group with members of the NW Regional Commissioning Board – to explore the RCB’s actual and potential involvement in the strategic commissioning of residential and nursing home placements.</p>
<p>Focus group with Chair of Care Forum Wales and up to 6 local care home providers – one from each council area to explore the potential benefits or disbenefits of strategic commissioning from a care home perspective.</p>
<p>Focus group with strategic commissioners at North Wales councils and the Health Board – to understand the current approach to strategic commissioning of residential and nursing home placements and future plans.</p>
<p>Action planning workshop with the Regional Commissioning Board – to consider the review findings and potential way forward.</p>
<p>Feedback workshop with the Regional Partnership Board – to outline the key findings and enable challenge and discussion about the evidence captured during the review.</p>

Meeting observations

Exhibit 5: meeting observations

The table below sets out the list of meetings that we would like to observe during our review.

NW Regional Partnership Board
NW Regional Commissioning Board
Health and Social Care recovery Group

Document request

Prior to on-site interviews and observations, we will undertake a review of the documents identified below. However, we would be grateful if you could supply us with any additional documents which you feel may be relevant to our work in this area. The list is not exhaustive and requests for additional documents may be made during the course of the review. Where documents in the list below are publicly available on the Health Boards or Council's website, we would be grateful if you could please direct us to where we can find them.

We will also review the findings and evidence relating to councils from our previous local government study undertaken during 2013-14.

Exhibit 5: the table below sets out the documents we would like to request initially as part of this review

Document Title
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant and recent Welsh Government reports covering care homes.• Relevant and recent Care Inspectorate Wales reports covering care homes.• Progress reports related to the 'Market shaping statement – care homes for older people in North Wales'.• Council/Health Board/RPB reports demonstrating commitment to and progress in acting on 'Market shaping statement – care homes for older people in North Wales'.• Agenda and minutes of RCG, RPB and Health and Social Care recovery group.

Audit Wales contacts

Exhibit 6: Audit Wales contacts

The table below sets out the Audit Wales team that will be working on this review at the councils and Health Board.

Title	Contact details
Performance Audit Director	Huw Rees: Huw.Rees@audit.wales Dave Thomas: Dave.Thomas@audit.wales
Performance Audit Manager	Jeremy Evans: Jeremy.Evans@audit.wales
Audit Leads	Dave Wilson: David.Wilson@audit.wales Andrew Doughton: Andrew.Doughton@audit.wales Gwilym Bury: Gwilym.Bury@audit.wales Alan Hughes: Alan.Hughes@audit.wales

Appendix 1

Fair Processing Notice: Auditor General for Wales

Who we are: The Auditor General for Wales examines how public bodies manage and spend public money, and **Audit Wales** provides staff and resources to enable him to carry out his work.

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Who will see the data? The Auditor General and the WAO study team will have access to the information you provide. We may share some information with senior management at the audited body(ies) and our published report may include some information. For our local government work, we may share some data with other public service regulators, such as CIW and Estyn, where the law permits this.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.
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