

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting | 7 th December 2023 |
| Report Subject | Social Care Commissioning |
| Cabinet Member | Cabinet Member for Social Services |
| Report Author | Chief Officer (Social Services) |
| Type of Report | Operational |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Commissioning in Social Services and the structures set up to support this function and to provide oversight of the regional Domiciliary Care Framework refresh that is currently being worked on.

Denbighshire County Council previously led on an electronic procurement exercise to establish a regional North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement (NWDCA) for Services for adults on behalf of the six North Wales Local Authority partners and BCUHB. This agreement was adopted by all partners, including Flintshire, and commenced 1st April 2018 and is due to end 31st March 2025.

A further procurement exercise is now in the planning phase with the purpose of reviewing the criteria and opening the domiciliary care agreement to the market. In order to provide services to a wider client group, it has been agreed for the revised agreement to incorporate complex care and children and young people.

The tender will be conducted on the basis that it provides the Commissioning Partners with the maximum flexibility in terms of the duration of the NWDCA and for attracting additional / new providers to be appointed during the lifetime of the NWDCA under Procurement Regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| 1 | That members note the work of the contracts and commissioning team, and the number of services they support and develop both in Flintshire and out of county. |
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| 2 | Members note the planning work being undertaken for the new regional domiciliary care framework agreement needed to replace the existing framework which runs to 31 st March 2025. |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| 1.00 | Background |
| 1.01 | <p>Commissioning is the Local Authority’s cyclical activity to assess the needs of its local population for care and support services that will be arranged by the Authority, then designing, delivering, monitoring and evaluating those services to ensure appropriate outcomes. In the current economic climate, with increasing demand for services and reducing budgets, social services are smarter in the way we organise and deliver services. We have adapted our approach to the commissioning of services to work closely with families, carers, service providers, other North Wales Local Authorities and the Health Board, to collaboratively come up with ideas that will allow us to use our resources more wisely, while ensuring the continued delivery of quality services. Work can be organised on a local, regional or national basis dependent on the level of need and complexity.</p> |
| 1.02 | <p>A small team of contract officers and care brokers, managed by a contracts manager support the day-to-day monitoring and commissioning of services. This team is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Monitoring and Maintenance • Service and Market Development • Collaborating and Building Relationships • Commissioning and Contract Development • Annual fee setting process for inflationary increases to care fees. <p>The team work in accordance with current legislation and procedures in ways that reflect best practice, achieve value for money and foster social value. They work closely with procurement and legal departments to manage contract variation & exception processes, and ensure reports are completed within agreed timescales and to specified terms and conditions.</p> <p>Team members represent the Local Authority in regional commissioning exercises, including the development, implementation and evaluation of regional contract frameworks and agreements. Participate in and represent Flintshire County Council in elements of national commissioning exercises as required and ensure effective stakeholder inclusion and co-production as part of all commissioning exercises.</p> <p>The care brokers facilitate placement sourcing for the majority of individuals including domiciliary care, residential and nursing care, hospital discharge, and high-cost adult and children’s residential services both within the Local Authority area and out-of-county. These roles are critical in supporting the flow of residents through the various health ad social care systems.</p> <p>In addition, we have a small team of planning and development officers who manage our large commissioning activities such as the new capital developments, advocacy services, learning disability day services,</p> |

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| | <p>community disability services, regional frameworks and third sector contracts. This can include a range of activities from the initial needs analysis and service specification development through to contract tender and award, contract management, service reviewing and decommissioning of services.</p> |
| 1.03 | <p>The team supports the ongoing relationship, contract monitoring and practice development with the range of services listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27 Older Peoples Residential and Nursing homes • 24 Domiciliary Care Agencies • 13 Children and Young People Residential Home • 10 Learning Disability Residential Homes • 12 Supported Living • 4 Extra Care • 10 Micro-carers • Out of County Placements (particularly if there are concerns within the service) • Range of third sector contracts delivering both regulated and unregulated social care services <p>This involves development of progress for providers within regulated services and managing any services of concern through the escalating concerns process. It also supports the development of new services / service providers in the area.</p> <p>Progress for providers is a self-assessment tool and training/support package delivered to services to help improve their person-centred practice and quality of service to meet individual outcomes. The programme is making a real difference to the well-being of people receiving care and support. The tools that are being used, such as one-page profiles and learning logs, are helping staff support people to do what really matters to them in their day-to-day lives and are developing staff ability and confidence to work in a really person-centred way.</p> |
| 1.04 | <p>Areas of work on the forward work plan include supporting the Cottage Nursing Home to reopen and hopefully provide essential placements for both nursing and EMI nursing needs; recommissioning of learning disability day and work opportunities; development of Croes Atti Newydd and Maes Gwern; recommissioning local carers services; recommissioning community disability services; refresh of the regional domiciliary care framework and implementation of the new regional contract for residential and nursing homes.</p> |
| 1.05 | <p>Annual Care Fee Uplifts</p> <p>The contracts and commissioning team also support the annual process for care fee uplifts working to ensure fair cost of care is considered and that value for money is achieved. The team work with a wider range of stakeholders including providers, health colleagues and other North Wales authorities.</p> <p>Fees are calculated in different ways dependent on the setting:</p> <p>Care Homes - North Wales Local Authorities and BCUHB have been working together on a model for calculating care home fees for some time</p> |

and a subgroup of the Regional Commissioning Board, the Regional Care Fees Group have been overseeing this work. An agreed and tested methodology is used to calculate a North Wales fee and each Local Authority uses this information, alongside other factors (mainly affordability) to derive its own care fees for the financial year. There is a very sensitive balance in considering fee rates which include aiming to fund the true cost of care and ensuring the rates are affordable.

Domiciliary Care is calculated in Flintshire through an open book exercise with 3 -5 care providers who provide supporting information which is independently ratified by the contracts team, to derive a sustainable care fee for domiciliary care which takes into account local authority affordability.

Supported Living and High Cost / Low Volume Placements are calculated through discussion with individual care providers to review the care packages of individuals, the outcomes achieved, existing fee rate and previous increments and costs. Fee increases are negotiated within the fee setting envelope. For providers who operate across North Wales, a regional group meet to discuss uplift requests and share information and, in some cases, jointly negotiate and agreed uplift.

Children's Residential Care Placements - Placements made through the National 4 C's framework are negotiated at a national level. Care provided off-framework is individually negotiated, however, this financial year a regional group has worked together to co-ordinate uplifts and share information. Cost calculators were requested for all placement uplift requests received and these were compared across the region and uplifts negotiated.

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Domiciliary Care Framework / North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement Re-Tender

Denbighshire County Council were the previous 'Lead Partner' when the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the existing North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement (NWDCA) was issued in 2017. This Agreement commenced on 1st April 2018 and is due to end on 31st March 2025.

Denbighshire County Council will again act as 'Lead Partner' on the re-tendering of the regional NWDCA for Domiciliary Care Services for Children / Young People / Adults and their families / carers on behalf of the six Local Authority partners and BCUHB in North Wales ('the Commissioning Partners'). The current NWDCA covers 'Standard' Domiciliary Care Services for adults only.

The North Wales Regional Commissioning Board wishes to renew the Agreement as this will enable the Local Authority and Health Board partners to work with external providers to further develop the range of domiciliary care and support services available across North Wales. This will ensure that providers appointed to the Agreement operate under agreed contractual terms & conditions.

Renewing the Agreement ensures that the Local Authority and Health Board partners meet the requirements of the 'Social Services & Wellbeing

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| | <p>(Wales) Act 2014' and the 'Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016' and can work with appointed providers to develop high quality domiciliary care and support services across the region.</p> <p>The ITT will be conducted on the basis that it provides the Commissioning Partners with the maximum flexibility in terms of the duration of the NWDCA and for attracting additional / new providers to be appointed during the lifetime of the NWDCA under Procurement Regulations.</p> <p>The specification for the service has now been developed and will be shared with providers for consultation as part of its development process. It can take 9-12 months for a full commissioning exercise to be undertaken, particularly a large regional project.</p> |
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| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | Posts are budgeted within Social Services base budget. |
| 2.02 | Domiciliary Care Framework (NWDCA re-tender) - It is projected that the funding for the North Wales Agreement would continue to be met within existing budgets within Social Services. All costs associated with the ITT tender exercise will be funded through contributions from all partners to the Regional Commissioning Board |

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| 3.00 | IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 3.01 | The team support a number of assurance processes to mitigate risks within the council not least through contract management. They contribute to supporting greater market stability, provider improvement and practice development. They manage the escalation process when the quality of a service is under question and support providers to learn and improve when mistakes happen. |

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| 4.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT |
| 4.01 | <p>The contracts and commissioning team regularly consult with a range of stakeholders on the various exercises undertaken including service users, carers, family members, other social care professionals, health colleagues, providers, regulators to name but a few.</p> <p>Domiciliary Care Framework – the draft revised specification has just been finalised and will be circulated to a range of stakeholders, including current providers, for consultation as part of the preparation for the tender exercise.</p> |

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| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | <u>N/A</u> |

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| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | <u>N/A</u> |

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| 7.00 | CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS |
| 7.01 | Contact Officer: Dawn Holt, Commissioning Manager Telephone: 01352 702128 E-mail: dawn.holt@flintshire.gov.uk |

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| 8.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS These are provided corporately on the Infonet (link) and maintained by the Executive Office |
| 8.01 | Mwy Na Geiriau Framework - A Strategic Framework for Promoting the Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care. It was published in 2016. |
| 8.02 | WeCare Campaign – An All Wales online Social Care Recruitment Programme advertising posts in care as well as providing useful information, case studies and stories about how working in care can make a difference. |