



# Domiciliary Care Commissioning Framework

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## **Executive Summary**

Domiciliary Care forms part of the range of services that help to meet the strategic intent of local authorities and Health Boards of promoting citizen independence and maintaining people's dignity to live at home. By working closely and constructively with the Hywel Dda University Health Board and partner organisations, significant achievements have been made by Carmarthenshire to achieve cultural and strategic changes in how domiciliary care is delivered to meet people's changing needs.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate, Wales (CSSIW) has conducted a National Review of Domiciliary Care (care at home) 2016 against serious failings in the commissioning of adult services in Powys County Council, media coverage about the pay and conditions, care workers zero hours contracts and clipped calls and how it impacted on the care workers ability to provide an effective level of care.

Carmarthenshire County Council undertook a tender in 2014-15 for the provision of domiciliary care that introduced new ways of working to reflect the strategic and operational issues facing domiciliary care. Many of the suggested improvements of the National Review confirmed the approach taken by the Authority.

Presently, the Authority commissions with the domiciliary care sector an average of 11,778 hours of domiciliary care per week to 1023 service users per week. Approximately 76% of the market is provided by the independent sector.

Carmarthenshire has a comprehensive, effective and robust approach to managing and working with domiciliary care providers (illustrated in its Quality and Performance Monitoring Protocol for Domiciliary Care). This has been noted in recent CSSIW Performance Evaluation reports of the department.

## **Background**

In recent years, domiciliary care commissioning has been increasingly the subject of national government and media scrutiny. The United Kingdom Home Care Association (UKHCA) has raised concerns with local authorities' procurement processes accusing them of commissioning low and unsustainable rates of pay and poor standards of care; Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Office (HMRC) has investigated domiciliary care organisations for failing to comply with national minimum wage legislation; Unison's *Ethical Charter* has raised similar issues of local authorities commissioning on the cheap, workers being rushed and call cramming visits to frail older people.

The Authority tendered its domiciliary care service in 2014-15 whereby domiciliary care providers have been selected and approved on to a Framework Agreement via a corporate procurement exercise. Six domiciliary care providers were appointed to the Framework Agreement with nine other providers approved for the purposes of contingencies i.e. where a Framework provider was unable to meet the person's needs.

Both Framework and approved providers are a mixture of national and local SME providers. The Framework became effective from 7 July 2015.

The Framework Agreement set out to achieve new ways of working for the provision of domiciliary care. It not only reflects the intent of the Social Services and Well Being Act (2014) but also to address some of the concerns that have adversely affected the Domiciliary Care sector. It was fundamental to the selection of domiciliary care providers that they were able to evidence crucial quality measures such as demonstrating that their services are reliable and that staff have the appropriate level of training to deliver quality care. The evaluation of the tender was based on 70% Quality and 30% Cost.

In addition, the tender required each organisation to implement electronic call monitoring systems (ECM) to comply with the Authority's intention to pay only for care delivered. (This followed an Internal Audit report that recommended the benefit of technology to assure the Authority from both a care and financial standpoint.) This use of IT has enabled a sophisticated means of controlling and managing costs for the Authority.

### **Carmarthenshire's Commissioning Approach to Domiciliary Care**

The following key elements were introduced by the Authority to reflect the new ways of working. It is instructive that many of these elements have been identified in the National Review as suggested improvements.

#### **Six key elements:**

The Electronic call monitoring system provides live data on actual visits delivered to each service user. One of the Key Performance Indicators as specified in the new Contract Terms and Conditions and Service Specification is ' **Timeliness and Reliability of services**'. The Authority has access to the provider's system and is therefore able to identify whether there are **Missed calls or Call cramming**. Utilising the call monitoring system will also allow us to respond to changing needs in a timelier manner.

Commissioning hours per week - to meet the requirements of putting people at the centre of provision and to make sure that services are tailored to the individual, the Authority has moved away from the traditional model of time and task to a more flexible approach that allows us to work with providers to respond to personalisation, It is our expectation that this flexible approach to commissioning hours will drive improved standards of quality and safety that achieves meaningful outcomes for the service user.

Outcome focused Care and Support Plans - Social Work and Care Management have reviewed their approach to completing care and support plans. Where previously these have been task driven, the new care and support plan provides a more flexible approach to commissioning; the intention being to include realistic outcomes that are meaningful to the service user. The aim is to put people at the centre of provision and to make sure that services are tailored to the individual.

Outcomes based service delivery plans – emphasises on the requirement of demonstrable outcomes within the provider's service delivery plan. The service delivery plan will be monitored and measured against the care and support plan. The Authority will monitor that the outcomes are achieved and where possible, this will be verified or not verified by the service users themselves. These outcomes will drive performance management.

Recruitment - To address recruitment issues, a Domiciliary Care provider working group has been set up to look at the challenges faced by the sector. The working group includes representation from independent sector organisations contracted with Carmarthenshire, Un Sir Gar, Job Centre Wales (local), Careers Wales, Working Links and Community First. The main aims are:

- Raising the profile - looking at opportunities to modernise domiciliary care – portraying it as a career option into care - make it more attractive.
- Marketing and Advertising vacancies
- Recruitment initiatives - how providers can access support from other organisations with recruitment and retention.

Sustainability – In a bid to improve the conditions of employment for Domiciliary Care staff, the new contract terms and conditions stipulates that a minimum hours contract is required for all care staff employed by the organisation. (No Zero Hours) We have also considered travel implications, particularly rural areas, by introducing a new pricing model that has allowed providers an opportunity to factor in the cost of travelling from the furthest point.

The National Review highlighted a number of areas for Commissioners, each of which the Authority has incorporated or is under consideration. Some of these are as follows:

- Support regional partnership boards, local government and local health boards to develop more consistent and efficient approaches to commissioning, procurement and assurance across Council and Health Boards e.g. through a lead commissioner
- Identify an accountable officer for the commissioning of care and support in each commissioning authority to hold the ring across social services, procurement and finance departments
- Streamline transactions to address the burden of complex financial, procedural and care transactions: simplify tenders, standardised contracts, national pricing models
- Promote the use of flexible outcome based care and services and move away from time and task systems
- Adopt ethical commissioning principles in relation to the workforce including contract specification requirements for providers to operate within a range of staff contracts

- Collaborate to support Social Care Wales to improve image of care worker role

## **Evaluation**

The Authority has been satisfied with the implementation of the new contract and service specification requirements. Overall, there has been positive feedback from those involved in the new way of working. There has also been a good level of interest from other local authorities in Wales which are keen to know more about our new way of working.

Positive feedback has also been noted in relation to the number of delayed transfer of care (DTC), which has reduced since the implementation of the new Framework Agreement. We have been fortunate in that the new way of working has so far had positive results. However, we are mindful that we could be challenged with capacity issues over the coming winter months.

In line with the implementation of the New Agreement, a Single Carer Project is underway with the intent of working closely with Framework providers to enhance people's independence by reducing reliance on more than one care staff. This is tied in to the Integrated Services Division's efficiency savings approach.

Furthermore, the Authority has maintained effective and robust contract management and contract monitoring arrangements predicated on its Quality and Performance Monitoring Protocol for Domiciliary Care. This provides the basis for monitoring and measuring the performance of care providers and helps to assure the Authority that service users are receiving safe and reliable services to the required standards.

As part of its commitment to continuous service improvement, a Strategic Domiciliary Care Working Group consisting of commissioners and care providers meets quarterly to consider existing commissioning arrangements, national and local trends and best practice. The Group will consider the National Review findings and how it can consolidate and develop further the domiciliary care service across Carmarthenshire.

There is continued accountability for the domiciliary care service via the department of Communities' Senior Management Team and its Performance Management Board.