



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**COMMISSIONING OF DOMICILIARY HOME CARE SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS  
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR CAPLE**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to make recommendations with regards to the commissioning of domiciliary home care services.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the information provided in this report, the Equality Impact Assessment (including Socio-Economic Duty) and Welsh Language Impact Assessment.
- 2.2 Subject to 2.1 above, approves that **all** reablement and intermediate care services continue to be delivered by the Council's in-house 'Support@Home' Service as set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.1 above, approves that **all** long-term home care is commissioned from external home care providers as part of a full retender of the current framework contract and a new contract awarded from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 as set out in paragraph 5.2 of this report.
- 2.4 Subject to 2.3 above, approves the retender of the long-term home care on the basis of outcomes to be achieved and organised within specified geographical zoned areas as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report.
- 2.5 Subject to 2.3 and 2.4 above, the Director of Social Services is

delegated authority, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to award contracts following completion of the retender process and to make all necessary arrangements for the subsequent transfer.

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The proposals recommended will ensure that Adult Services:

- continues to support people to be as independent as possible by continuing to provide an in-house reablement and intermediate care service.
- commissions a sustainable model of long-term home care that achieves best value and sustainability of our care offer in the future without reducing the availability of service provided to people in need of home care support.
- improves the long-term home care service specification and commissioning arrangements to enhance individuals and home care workers experience.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

4.1 In Rhondda Cynon Taf, we have two well established approaches to providing and commissioning domiciliary home care services:

#### **4.2 Reablement and intermediate care**

Reablement and intermediate care is considered to be best practice in terms of a preventative service. A priority service for Welsh Government. The service provided is a short-term programme that helps the person to restart doing things for themselves and become more independent. Often the person has this service because they have lost some ability after an illness or accident and they need to recover their strength and function, learn how to use aids and adaptations, or learn how to help themselves differently with the function they have remaining. The key aim is for the person to be able to live without any ongoing service at the end of the programme although for some an equally successful outcome would be to significantly reduce their reliance on formal care.

In 2022/23, 1089 new people completed a reablement and intermediate care programme, of which 62.8% were independent as a result of the service intervention.

### 4.3 Long-term home care

Long-term home care provides personal care and support for people who can no longer undertake these tasks for themselves, with the aim of keeping people safely in their own home for as long as possible despite many health and disability challenges. In the main, tasks include washing, bathing, dressing, helping people to use the toilet, help with moving about their home, continence and skin care, help to eat and drink, take medication and facilitate shopping.

The long-term home care service is extensive, and care is provided throughout the day and week to make sure people can access help from first thing in the morning when people are getting up to last thing at night when they go to bed. Continuity and reliability are especially valued in the long-term home care service, and it works particularly well where there is a consistent team of care workers assigned.

The long-term home care service is delivered according to an estimate of call times and a detailed description of the tasks required as established at the point of the social work assessment. This leaves very little flexibility to change the pattern of care day to day or month to month and runs contrary to the principle of empowering people to have choice and control over their lives and care and support arrangements.

4.4 The Council's in-house 'Support@Home' service currently delivers both approaches, employing 304 staff:

- 81 reablement and intermediate care workers.
- 173 long-term home care workers
- 50 indirect supervisory and planning staff across reablement and intermediate care and long-term home care.

4.5 External providers are commissioned to deliver the long-term home care service provision only.

4.6 As of 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2023, approximately 1475 people were receiving domiciliary home care support, 182 in reablement intermediate care and 1293 in long term care (135 internally and 1158 externally).

4.7 In Adult Services, we currently commission around 915,720 hours of domiciliary home care per annum through these two approaches, of which 94.5% are long term home care hours. Long-term home care is provided from a mixed economy of both internal and external service providers, with just under 90% of provision provided by the external providers. At present 84.4% of the total hours of care are commissioned from external providers. The table below shows the split by approach between internal and external service provision:

Provider	Reablement and intermediate services		Long-term home care services		Total domiciliary home care services	
	Hours	%	Hours	%	Hours	%
In-house	50,336	100	92,820	10.7	143,156	15.6
External	-	-	772,564	89.3	772,564	84.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,366</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>865,384</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>915,720</b>	<b>100</b>

- 4.8 The demand for long-term home care has steadily increased over recent years, and as is the case across social care, there is an increase in the intensity, complexity and unpredictability of need for people that are living longer at home with more significant illness, disability and expectation. Domiciliary home care capacity is not increasing in line with the increase in demand and therefore capacity remains a risk across all providers including the in-house service with regards to the Council's obligation to meet the demand.
- 4.9 Adult Services has substantial experience of commissioning long-term home from external home providers. The current long-term home care framework contract with 7 external providers commenced in October 2016 and has 2 'break clauses', the first at year 6, in October 2022, which was invoked and the second in October 2024. The external framework providers vary in their capacity to deliver but all require partnership support and good relationships with services, the purchasing and commissioning team, social work teams and the social care workforce development team to support ongoing contract compliance and quality assurance.
- 4.10 Due to well documented workforce constraints during and following the pandemic the original geographic lots for the framework contract providers have eroded. The number of framework providers were increased from 5 to 7 in 2021 and 4 non-framework "spot" external providers are currently used to ensure the Council is able to discharge its duty of care when there are peaks in demand. It is expected that Adult Services will need to continue to use these providers until a new Framework contract is procured.
- 4.11 Despite the additional capacity, external providers are working across patches often resulting in different providers delivering services to people living in the same street and also the expectation on workers to operate across wider geographic areas requiring longer travel distances between calls. This deployment creates inefficiencies for the service overall and has led to a reduction in capacity and a lack of flexibility in the workforce.

## **5 REVISED COMMISSIONING PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Reablement and intermediate care will remain a priority service for Adult Services in order to ensure we continue to deliver the Council's aspirations to improve people's ability to be independent. The reablement and intermediate care service is currently only provided by the Council's in-house 'Support@Home' service, and it is proposed that this commissioning approach continues.
- 5.2 It is proposed that all long-term home care is commissioned by external providers as part of a full retender of the current framework contract and a new contract award from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. If agreed by Cabinet, this will mean that all in-house long-term home care delivered by the Council's 'Support@Home' service is transferred to external providers. The proposed commissioning change of long-term home care will help achieve best value and sustainability of commissioned care in the future.
- 5.3 It is important to note that any service transfer for any individual between care provider will maintain their current care package, subject to the usual review arrangements. TUPE requirements mean that eligible staff employed by 'Support@Home' to provide long-term home care and any current commissioned external provider prior to transfer will transfer to the new provider on retender. This will help to maintain stability for the service user and continuity of staff support around the maintenance of activities and support for health and wellbeing during any transition.
- 5.4 It will be a requirement of both the Council as the existing provider and any new provider to work together to manage any anxiety or worries that service users and their families have about the change of provider users and inform commissioners of any issues that may arise.
- 5.5 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 promotes outcome-based care commissioning that is more focussed on what the person wants to achieve (within agreed financial parameters) for example:

*Mrs Jones is 90 years old and suffers with arthritis and general frailty. She has a home care worker call at 9am each morning for 30 minutes to help her get up, washed, dressed, have breakfast and a cup of tea.*

*On good days she can do this herself and doesn't need the full 30 minutes but on bad days she needs longer – this poses a problem for the worker as on the good days she still has to stay for the 30 minutes and on the bad days she is rushing and Mrs Jones is struggling to keep up.*

*The outcome that matters for Mrs Jones is to be up and ready for the day and this could be better achieved if the worker could focus on that rather than how long she is able to spend on the call. An outcome-based commission would focus on the average time required overall (say over the period of a month) rather than on the rigid daily slot.*

5.6 Whilst the specification for our existing framework contract sets out in detail Adult Services expectations of quality and control the contract is based on the purchase of times and tasks. There are many perceived benefits of moving to an outcome-based commissioning approach, like the example above, which is in line with the Welsh Government direction at this time. It is therefore recommended that the service specification for our retendered framework contract, if agreed, includes the requirement to deliver services according to the achievement of personal outcomes and that any procurement process is tendered on the basis of specific geographical zones to improve the efficiency and logistics for staff deployment locally, leading to increased staff recruitment and retention and improved user experience.

5.7 Subject to agreement of the recommendations in Section 2 above, these commissioning proposals will require engagement with all people in receipt of long-term home care and their families and staff. In addition, all staff, service users and carers will receive regular communications on how they will be involved in the retender long-term care home services.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed (attached at Appendix 1) reviewing the impact of the proposal to commission a model of long-term home care that achieves best value and sustainability without reducing the availability of service provided to individuals, as recommended in Section 2 above.

6.2 The recommended proposal has some disproportionate impacts on people who are older, have disabilities, are carers, and are women. Adult Services will take account of the challenges which all affected individuals, their families and staff may face, both in terms of participation in engagement activity and in ensuring that the impact of any changes is mitigated as detailed in the impact assessment, if they are to be implemented.

6.3 Following any procurement process and contract award the service would engage with all affected individuals, their families and staff to address any concerns or questions they may have, and the impact assessment will be reviewed and updated to include any further mitigated risks identified during ongoing engagement activity.

## **7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no negative or adverse Welsh Language implications associated with implementing the recommendations set out in Section 2 above.

## **8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 8.1 Subject to the agreement of the recommendations in Section 2 above, all people supported by the Council's 'Support@Home' service and their families will be kept fully informed of the process and timescales for service transfer. Following any procurement process and contract award the service would engage with all affected individuals to address any concerns or questions they may have. There would also be opportunities for individuals to meet with the new providers to discuss any queries they may have. Should a person be unbefriended then an individual advocate will be offered to support.
- 8.2 Similarly, Council's 'Support@Home' staff would be kept fully informed of progress at each stage of the tender and transfer process and updated in relation to key milestones and timescales. Further work is required with Human Resources to determine which staff will be eligible for TUPE as part of the retender process. Under TUPE there would be no changes to staff terms and conditions of employment, noting that support, as appropriate, would be available to staff throughout the process.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 9.1 The total domiciliary home care budget for 2023/24 totals £21.52m comprising of £3.165m for reablement and intermediate care and £18.355m for long term care, of which £4.941m is for the Council's in-house provision and £13.412m for commissioned external care.
- 9.2 The unit cost of our commissioned external providers is, on average, estimated at £21.81 per hour, which is lower than the Council's in-house long-term home care service, estimated at £38.04 per hour. The high hourly rate of the in-house service is due to a number of factors but primarily the management costs, local authority pension and other terms and conditions.
- 9.3 Subject to the agreement of the recommendations in Section 2 above, any financial implications resulting from the commissioning changes of domiciliary home care will be factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan in due course. Whilst the proposals would provide a

more cost-effective solution to the current arrangements, the cost will be subject to competition and other wider market forces.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 Domiciliary home care services have been provided as part of the Councils service provision to meet assessed needs under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, but it is not a specific statutory provision.

10.2 Subject to the agreement of the recommendations in Section 2 above, all existing individuals will continue to be offered support on an individual basis ensuring their assessed needs continue to be met in line with our statutory obligations.

## **11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

11.1 This report supports two of the Council's corporate priorities, namely:

- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
- Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.

11.2 In addition, the report considers the following Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 wellbeing goals of: A Healthier Wales and more equal Wales.

## **12 ELECTORAL WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 This applies to all electoral wards.

## **13 CONCLUSION**

13.1 It is important that the Council reviews its adult social care provision to ensure its current care and support offer continues to meet assessed need and remains cost effective. Through the implementation of recommended proposals in Section 2 above, Adult Services will:

- continue to support people to be as independent as possible by continuing to provide an in-house reablement intermediate care service.
- commission a sustainable model of long-term home care that achieves best value and sustainability of our care offer in the future without reducing the availability of service provided to people in need of home care support.



- improve the long-term home care service specification and commissioning arrangements to enhance the service user and home care worker experience.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**Background Papers**

None

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