

**ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
24 AUGUST 2021**

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**HOME CARE AND SUPPORT BRIEFING**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current Framework Agreement for the Provision of Home Care and Support.

**Summary**

2. The Framework Agreement for the Provision of Home Care and Support commenced on 2 October 2017 and will end on 1 October 2023. The annual budget for the Home Care and Support Contract is £ 10.9m.
3. From implementation in 2017, the model has worked extremely well and this was particularly evident during the very challenging times during the Covid 19 pandemic.
4. A Service Review is currently underway to inform the future tendering of this contract, which will include feedback from providers, service users (via Healthwatch engagement sessions) and operational colleagues.

**Recommendation**

5. Scrutiny members are asked to note the content of this report.

**James Stroyan  
Group Director of People**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report (or list background papers).

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	The provision of Domiciliary Care is an essential part of Health and Wellbeing of residents in the Borough of Darlington.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address. The Service review and future re-tendering exercise referenced in this report will include a full EIA.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	Annual budget is £10.9M and MTFP. Domiciliary care is a key part of the Council's policy to support vulnerable people to live in their own homes for as long as they are able.
Key Decision	This report is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This report does not require an urgent decision.
Council Plan	All reports should detail the relevance of the proposed decision(s) to the Council Plan and what aspects they seek to deliver.
Efficiency	This is considered in para 23 benchmarking section and will be a key consideration in the Service review referenced in this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

6. The current Framework Agreement for the Provision of Home Care and Support commenced on 2 October 2017 and will end on 1 October 2023. A report was submitted to Adults and Housing Scrutiny advising of the Contract award, see **Appendix 1**.
7. The current contract model is split into a number of different 'Lots' as follows:
  - (a) Lot 1 – Standard Support – Zoned Area 1 – Darlington East (hours guaranteed) Careline;
  - (b) Lot 2 – Standard Support – Zoned Area 2 – Darlington West (hours guaranteed) Springfield Healthcare.
8. In respect of Lots 1 and 2 the providers are required to accept not less than 90% of the packages allocated to them in any annual period.

- (c) Lot 3 – Standard Support throughout the Borough of Darlington (non-guaranteed hours) framework of 10 providers.
9. The default position with this contract is that most people will have their needs met through Lot 1, 2 or 3. However, there are a small number of Individuals who may need a more specialist service to meet their assessed needs. Lot 4, 5 and 6 are for people who have additional needs and require a more specialist service to meet their assessed needs. The decision in relation to a requirement for a “specialist” provider will be made as part of the assessment process by the Social Worker.
- (d) Lot 4 – Specialist Support for People with a Learning Disability/Learning Impairment framework of 12 providers;
  - (e) Lot 5 – Specialist Support for People with a Mental Disorder including Mental Health and Dementia- framework of 10 providers;
  - (f) Lot 6 – Specialist Support for People with Autism, including Asperger’s Syndrome- framework of 10 providers;
  - (g) Lot 7 – Support for Families with Children- one provider paid at standard rate.

### **Budget and rates**

10. The annual budget for the Home Care and Support Contract is £ 10.9m.
11. Within the contract is a clause which allows for an annual review of the price based upon an agreed formula which is also within the contract. The formula takes into account the current National Living Wage.
12. Currently the rates paid are as follows:
- (a) Standard Support - £15.25 per hour;
  - (b) Specialist Support - £15.82 per hour;
  - (c) Sleepover rate - £ 98.17 per night;
  - (d) Waking Nights - £137.25 per night.
13. NB a premium of 40% of the hourly rate is paid in respect of 15 minute calls. These calls remain within the contract at the request of providers with the caveat that the calls should only be commissioned when it has been assessed that the care tasks can be achieved within this timeframe or is the individuals’ choice.
14. On Lot 3 rates vary between £ 14.90 and £15.25 per hour.

### **Contract Performance and Review**

15. From implementation in 2017, the model has worked extremely well and excellent working relationships have been established with the 2 prime providers who on an ongoing basis have continued to fulfil their contractual requirements.

16. The guarantee of all available hours to the prime providers has delivered market stability and alongside the establishment of a Brokerage Team in 2017, who liaise with the providers regarding the provision of domiciliary support has meant that packages are put in place quickly with very few (if any) delayed discharges from hospital during the contractual period.
17. The brokering of packages by the dedicated team has also resulted in social work time being freed up for assessments and reviews etc.
18. Of particular note is how effective the model has been during the very challenging times during the Covid 19 pandemic. Having staff working in a zone basis has assisted in minimising the risk of spreading infections.
19. The Council and the CCG were able to secure additional capacity from the 2 prime providers to support the Covid 19 Outbreak Response and assist in the management of hospital discharges.
20. Both of the prime providers have been able to maintain their staff pool which has meant that Darlington has been fortunate not to face the serious levels of reduced capacity within domiciliary care that most of the other 12 NE Councils have experienced. Where there have been challenges, more recently e.g. the impact of social isolation requirements on staffing levels. Commissioners have been able to work quickly with the prime providers to agree their contingency plans and to develop a streamlined approach with all partners to ensure that all priority care needs are met.
21. For the purpose of re tendering a Service Review is currently underway, which will include feedback from providers, service users (via Healthwatch engagement sessions) and operational colleagues. Initial feedback is that there is no requirement to fundamentally change the model.
22. It is also of note that during the period of the contract we have been asked to share our model with other local authorities who have been facing challenges with their current contracts and our model has been adopted by them as a means to resolve their issues.

### **Benchmarking**

23. Regular benchmarking takes place between the 12 North East Councils and based upon this intelligence the costs for Darlington compare well, with current costs sitting in the lower end of the scale, but not being the lowest.