



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

**NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL
NEATH PORT TALBOT SOCIAL CARE HEALTH & WELL-BEING
CABINET BOARD**

21st October 2021

**Joint report of the Director Social Services Health and Housing
and the Head of Finance**

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected All Wards

**FEE UPLIFTS TO SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF
DOMICILIARY CARE AND SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES**

Purpose of the Report

For the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing to receive delegated authority to implement a 10% uplift to the fees paid to providers contracted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council ("the Council") for the delivery of Domiciliary Care and Supported Living services.

Executive Summary

The social care market is currently experiencing unprecedented challenges in meeting the ongoing demand for delivering services. The current instability of the social care market is significantly impacting on the Council's ability to purchase suitable statutory services to meet peoples assessed needs.

In order to increase sustainability within Domiciliary Care and Supported Living services, it is proposed that the Council implements a 10% uplift for the 2022/23 financial year. It is further proposed that in

order to respond to the immediate critical situation within the sector, that this uplift is brought forward to commence in October 2021.

Background

The social care market is currently facing significant and unprecedented challenges, which is negatively impacting on the Council's ability to offer timely and sustainable services to those assessed as requiring statutory community services.

Commissioned providers are increasingly finding themselves in situations where they are unable to deliver services in line with their contract. In addition, the Council is finding it increasingly difficult to attract providers to take on additional contracts to provide services to those that need support to remain safely living in the community.

Officers are experiencing ongoing situations where Domiciliary Care providers have been unable to continue delivering contracted services. In some cases the Council has been required to find alternative provision with less than 48 hours' notice. To date, Officers have been successful in sourcing alternative interventions; however there is significant concern that this ongoing issue will eventually become unmanageable and people will need to be placed into Care Homes or hospitals.

Alongside the increasing incidents of Domiciliary Care providers being unable to deliver existing contracts, the Council is also experiencing significant waiting lists for people to commence a Domiciliary Care service. These waiting lists continue to increase and is detrimentally impacting on hospital discharges and informal caring arrangements.

As at 08.10.21 the Domiciliary Care brokerage list comprised of the following:

- 53 people in their homes waiting for a package of Domiciliary Care (causing additional pressures on informal caring arrangements).
- 29 people that are no longer eligible for the Hospital to Home Service but are continuing to receive that service whilst they wait for a Domiciliary Care package to commence (which is

- impacting on the ability for eligible people to commence this service).
- 21 people that are medically fit to be discharged from hospital but are unable to return home until they have a package of Domiciliary Care (causing delayed transfers of care and adding to hospital operational pressures).
 - 20 people that need to be placed with an alternative Domiciliary Care provider as the current provider no longer has capacity to meet the person's needs (resulting in risks to people's continuation of service).
 - 6 people in a Care Home because they cannot return to their home without a package of Domiciliary Care (presenting a risk of people losing their independence).

Another complicating factor is that the Council is experiencing increasing demand for Domiciliary Care services. This is adding further pressure to the system, as the social care market is not in a position to increase capacity to meet this additional demand.

Table 1 illustrates the increasing number of requests for Domiciliary Care made to brokerage between the period 1st May to 31st July in 2021 compared to 2019 and 2020.

Table 1: numbers of referrals for Domiciliary Care to Brokerage

Referral Numbers	
1 st May – 31 st July 2019	161
1 st May – 31 st July 2020	172
1st May – 31st July 2021	235

Table 2 demonstrates the increasing average number of referrals per month to brokerage in 2021, compared to 2019 and 2020.

Table 2: average monthly referrals for Domiciliary Care to Brokerage

Referral numbers by year		
Period	Total to Date	Monthly Average
1 st January -31 st December 2019	505	43
1 st January -31 st December 2020	641	53
1st January -31st July 2021	468	66

Officers meet regularly with social care providers and have undertaken significant work to understand the reasons why the sector has become destabilised. The key factor behind the current situation is that providers are experiencing significant challenges with retaining and recruiting staff.

Domiciliary Care providers have seen extremely high levels of staff resigning from their posts and have been unable to recruit into the vacancies at sufficient levels. This means that they become unable to fulfil their current contracts and have to give notice on their existing care packages. In addition, these providers are also unable to grow their capacity to take on new contracts, resulting in increasing numbers of people waiting for a package of care.

Supported Living providers are also experiencing similar issues with retention and recruitment of staff, with 12 schemes reporting ongoing staff absence rates of between 20% to 50%. Although these providers have implemented contingency plans to ensure that people's essential support needs are being met, these contingency plans are a short term measure and is not a long term sustainable option. As such, there is real concern that this ongoing position will lead to a crisis situation.

Rates of pay within the Domiciliary Care and Supported Living sector are not comparable with other relevant sectors and providers are finding it increasingly challenging to attract and retain staff in the current competitive environment. Most providers are only able to pay carers around the National Living Wage and offer significantly less than both the rates of pay offered by the Council's in-house care service

and healthcare assistants employed by Swansea Bay University Health Board.

Furthermore, those employed to deliver Domiciliary Care and Supported Living services must be registered with Social Care Wales. This means that carers must undertake training and complete continuous professional development in order to undertake their roles. Providers are facing significant competition from other work sectors such as hospitality, delivery and retail, which not only offer better rates of pay but also do not have the significant regulatory requirements.

It is the view of Officers that without intervention the care sector will continue to destabilise and that this ongoing destabilisation will present a significant risk to the Council's ability to continue meeting peoples statutory care needs.

As such, it is proposed that the Council implements a 10% uplift to the current contractual rate for services delivered by Domiciliary Care and Supported Living providers for the 2022/2023 financial year. Additionally, it is also recommended that the implementation of this uplift is brought forward in order to commence from the 1st October 2021.

This proposed uplift will be granted to providers on condition that the money is used to increase rates of pay for the workforce with an aim of achieving Real Living Wage for carers. Thereby supporting the sector in offering comparative rates with other employers.

Financial Impacts

The total cost of implementing a 10% uplift for commissioned Domiciliary Care and Supported living services is £1 million for the 6 months to the end of March 22.

Initially this will be funded from the additional £2m received from Welsh Government Social Care Recovery Fund 2021-22.

In relation to 2022/23 there is sufficient provision within the Social Services equalisation reserve to meet this additional cost whilst discussions remain ongoing with Welsh Government regarding long term sustainable funding for the Social Care sector.

Integrated Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix 1, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below.

Service Users

- This proposal will have a positive impact on service users that have a protected characteristic of age and/or disability by ensuring the sustainability of services they require to help them meet their identified outcomes.
- This proposal has no impact on service users due to other protected characteristics as a person would not be in receipt of domiciliary care or supported living due to those protected characteristics. The decision to implement this uplift to services has no impact on the person centred assessment process or requirements for the service to deliver care in a person centred way, which takes into account a person's protected characteristics.
- This proposal has no impact on Welsh Language as it does not change requirements for people to receive a service in their language of choice.
- The proposal embraces the sustainable development principles, as it will help to ensure more sustainable services that help

service users to remain independent in their own homes and communities.

Care Staff

- This proposal will have a positive impact of staff that have a protected characteristic of age and/or sex as increased pay will help improve their economic and socio-economic situation.
- This proposal has no impact on staff due to other protected characteristics as it relates to rates of pay and does not have an impact on other workforce terms and conditions, such as equalities.
- This proposal has no impact on Welsh Language as it relates to rates of pay and does not have an impact on other workforce terms and conditions, including the use of Welsh Language.
- This proposal embraces the sustainable development principles, as it helps improve rates of pay for a low paid sector, which will help support longer progression of term socio-economic benefits.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Valley communities are traditionally harder areas to source social care services, due to the challenges of attracting staff from these areas and the time carers have to travel in order to attend care calls. As such, some valley communities are at higher risk of providers no longer being able to deliver existing services, or experiencing increased waiting times for a package of care to commence.

This proposal will help to support workforce retention and recruitment, thereby promoting sustainability of services within valley communities.

Workforce Impacts

No implications

Legal Impacts

No implications as our existing contracts allow the Council to implement uplifts to the contract price.

Risk Management Impacts

This proposal is to help mitigate the current risks to the Council in discharging its statutory duties to people with assessed care needs through the provision of Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Services.

A regionalised approach has been agreed in principle across Swansea Bay University Health Board and City and County of Swansea Council. This reduces the risks associated with providers that work for all three agencies having different rates of pay for staff.

There is a risk that not implementing the same level of uplift to the Older People Care Home sector could result in Care Home staff leaving their current employment to work in Domiciliary Care or Supported Living due to the higher rates of pay. Care Homes are also reporting workforce issues, which is impacting on their ability to accept new referrals. In addition, the Care Home sector is facing significant financial pressure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been set out in the report *“Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainability of Older People Care Homes in Neath Port Talbot”* (Background Paper 1).

Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item. However, significant work has been undertaken with the relevant providers of social care services in the development of this proposal.

Recommendations

Having had due regard to the integrated impact assessment it is recommended that the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing is granted delegated authority to:

- Implement a 10% uplift to the current contract price for Domiciliary Care and Supported living services commissioned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council for the 2022/2023 financial year;
- That this uplift is brought forward to commence 1st October 2021.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To help re-stabilise the social care market.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

First Stage Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers

Background Paper 1: Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainability of Older People Care Homes in Neath Port Talbot 16th September - <http://moderngov.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=322&MId=9998>

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