

Home Care Review

A Review by the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Background

In Sept 2006 the Council made a decision to tender for the future provision of long term home care services which were previously provided by a mixture of in-house and Independent Providers. The in house service did not demonstrate best value principles, as the cost of the in-house home care was greater than the cost of services purchased from the independent sector, and could not provide the flexibility to meet service user's needs at the times they needed it.

Efforts had been made previously to try to transform the Council-provided services into a *system* more able to meet the domiciliary care needs of its population. These were not successful and therefore a proposal was made to tender for the provision of these services, alongside the re-tender of the home care block and spot contract work already provided by the Independent Sector, with the aim of developing a more flexible and cost effective service. The in-house service was given the opportunity to tender but *was unable* to pursue it.

The Healthier Communities and Older People Panel (HCOP) has been monitoring the Home Care service since 2008 when the Council commissioned 5 outside organisations to become Home Care Strategic Partners. Each of the five partners Agincare B&NES Ltd, Caresouth, Way Ahead, Carewatch, Somerset Care, have been contracted by the Council to provide domiciliary care, including waking / sleeping nights and 24hour care as required.

During 2009 the HCOP Panel sought the views of members of the public about the possibility of a future review into Home Care, and the communications received indicated that Home Care is an issue of concern for many users and providers of home care.

Purpose

The purpose of this review is not to seek a return to an in-house service but to:-

1. ensure that local residents are receiving the best possible service under the new tendering arrangements,
2. provide a voice to those who use the home care service, and also to those who are concerned about the service being provided
3. support the Councils Corporate priority "*promoting independence for older people*" by ensuring that the Home Care services being provided are doing just that.
4. demonstrate that the authority is prepared to scrutinize its own practices.
5. Explore and analyse achievable improvements which could be made to the delivery of Home Care services, taking into account contractual conditions and financial constraints.

Objectives

The aims of the review process are to examine whether the 5 partner home care providers are achieving the Council's stated objectives from the transition and are:-

1. achieving best value for money for the Council
2. providing an appropriate and acceptable service for service users
3. meeting the contracted conditions of service providers

Scope

This review will include the services provided by of each of the five partners who have been commissioned to provide domiciliary care to residents within Bath & North East Somerset. For the purpose of this review, 'Domiciliary Care' also known as 'Home Care', will be focusing on the Home care that is provided by staff who go to the service user's own home to deliver such services as personal care and domestic tasks, including, waking, and sleeping nights and 24hour care as required.

The review will not be examining the part of the domiciliary care service which remains in house - this is the 'Intake, Assessment and Re-enablement Team' (where new referrals go for the first 6 weeks). It will also not be looking at residential home care or the work of charities.

This review will analyse the present situation of the home care service within Bath & North East Somerset and identify best practice approaches and investigate any areas for improvement. It will not be making recommendations for a change in commissioning.

The scope will comprise of 2 key areas:

1. Investigate the type and level of care being received by users of the commissioned Home care services.

Identifying whether

a) there a consistent quality of service being provided by the Strategic Domiciliary Care providers:-

- any rural & urban differences

b) Is there a clear transparency of information provided for service users about:-

- service standards
- what services are provided for them
- clear lines of accountability i.e. who to complain to?
- the cost of their care

2. Analysis of the delivery of previous and current Home Care services

a) A comparison of service levels provided prior to the contract start date with service levels currently provided by the 5 contracted partner organisations

- b) Analysis and assessment of front-line service provision:
 - sufficient appropriately trained staff to ensure service delivery
 - flexible, effectively rota'd and managed working patterns/hours
 - staff recruitment, retention and turnover.
- c) Identifying value for money -
 - Identify the difference in cost before (In-house home care) and after the commissioning process (2007-2009) identifying any savings/ loss
 - compare the charges across all of the service providers of commissioned Home Care
 - compare costs with a similar service in a similar unitary authority.

Approach

The Steering group will use four distinct work streams in their investigation

1. A call for written views and information from local people via press release, web page, through the local Care forum newsletter and other local carer's organisations.

2. Research work already carried out within the Council will be collated and analysed to inform the review and build up a background picture of the key issues.

3. Engagement work with Service providers through an Informal session to understand the key issues for staff and provide the opportunity to explain the objectives and benefits of undertaking this review.

4. Case studies will be used to identify 'users and providers' experiences of the home care service. These Case studies will require research expertise in gathering information from people with a range of care needs, who may need special support to participate.

Consideration of evidence gathered: All information gathered in this review will be considered by the steering group at a workshop and the final conclusions and recommendations will be presented and examined by the full HCOP Panel.

Note: Every effort will be made to try to engage with a diverse range of users and of the commissioned providers of home care service to capture individual views and experiences

All service user and personnel information gathered throughout the review will be anonymous. The use of any personal information is covered by our registration under the Data Protection Act 1998

Outcomes of this Review

- One of the desired outcomes of this review is to provide an opportunity for an open and honest debate of the issues, and show that the Authority is prepared to look at its own practices.
- A comparative study using notes and papers from public Healthier Communities and Older People O&S Panel meetings

Constraints

- The review must be managed within the budget and resources available to the Panel. The review has to meet an internally determined timescale and all consultation activity and formulation of recommendations will need to be concluded by February 2010.
- There are a number of potential risks which could affect the success of this review from achieving its desired objectives/ outcomes. These risks will be put through a risk management process to ensure that the risks are recognised, minimised and managed. None of the identified risks appear to outweigh the benefits of undertaking the review.
- The potential ethical issues were considered in the preparation of undertaking consultation with Home care users during this review. Guidance was sought from the Bath Research Ethics Committee, who reviewed the draft Terms of reference. (signed¹ and agreed 19th August 2009)

It was agreed by the Committee that this project does not require ethical review under the terms of the Governance Arrangements for Research Ethics Committees in the UK. However, this will need to be updated when the TOR has been agreed and a final decision has been made regarding the scope and consultation methods.

Draft Outline Project Plan

Date	Stage / Activity	Meeting Type
8 th September 2009	Draft Terms of Reference taken to Panel meeting	Public
September 2009	Steering Group meeting to further agree on review activities	Private
November to Jan 2010	Consultation activities undertaken	
February 2010	workshop to draw together Panel's final conclusions and recommendations	Private
9 th March 2010	Final Report and Recommendations presented at Panel meeting	Public

Project Team

Steering Group made up of 3 Members of the Healthier Communities and Older People O&S Panel	Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson Cllr Tony Clarke Cllr Will Sandry
Divisional Director:	Jane Shayler
O&S Project Officer:	Donna Vercoe
Panel Administrator, Democratic Services	Jack Latkovic
Service Officer Support:	Caroline Round Molly Watts

¹ Bath Research Ethics Committee, Room 11, John Apley Building, Research Ethics Office, Royal United Hospital, Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG.