

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Services Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	11 April 2013
TITLE OF ITEM	Home Care
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor R H Wyn Williams

1. Context

This report is submitted following a request by the Scrutiny Committee regarding the provisions of home care. It was requested that the report addresses the following:

- “How does the provision of home care work?”
- Respond to a concern expressed about the “lack of Welsh speakers”
- Update on the hours of work contracts for Council home care workers.

2. An overview of the provisions in Gwynedd

Some Facts:

- Currently approximately 9,250 hours of home care are provided weekly in Gwynedd to 1,300 people (March 2013).
- The total hours of home care has decreased in recent years e.g. approximately 11,000 hours per week were provided in 2008-9 compared with 9,250 hours currently.
- Home care is provided by the Council’s internal provider service and mainly by 8 companies in the independent sector.
- The percentage of provision of the independent sector has increased in recent years to about half of total home care hours.
- Unit cost of home care provided by the Council is £17.92 per hour.

- Maximum unit cost in the independent sector is £14.35 per hour for urban service and £15.50 per hour for rural service. Rural is defined as any place which is 5 miles or more outside a town.
- Since February 2013 home care providers are required to register with the Care Council for Wales. All companies that operate in Gwynedd comply with this requirement.
- On average 76.5% of care staff of independent companies have received NVQ level 2 or 3 qualification. There is variation between companies, with the highest having trained 90% of its staff and the lowest with 50% of its staff qualified in NVQ level 2 or 3.
- 70% of home care staff of the Council's provider service have received NVQ level 2 or 3 qualification. The intention is to ensure that 100% of the staff have the appropriate qualification within the next two years.
- All managers of the independent sector companies as well as the Council's provider service managers have qualified to NVQ level 4 or Diploma 5 Management and Leadership in Health and Social Care.

3. Service in accordance with linguistic practices and linguistic needs of the user.

It is noted in the home care contract that home care service should be provided in the preferred language of the individual who receives the service. It was recommended by the Language Planning Centre that this clause should be changed in the context of More than Words – Strategic Framework for Welsh Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care to “in accordance with the linguistic practices and linguistic needs of the user.”

Our intention by commissioning home care service is to ensure compliance with this expectation.

Nevertheless there are exceptions where the provision has not been provided in accordance with the linguistic needs of the individual. In order to improve this it is expected by now that clear information is shared with home care companies about the language through which the individual wishes to receive his/her home care service.

The percentage of bilingual home care staff of the independent sector companies is on average 84%. The range is between 98% of bilingual staff in the company with the highest percentage and 55% of bilingual staff in the company with the lowest percentage.

All companies are very keen to recruit bilingual staff. In some areas this can be difficult.

A question was raised in the request for this report on the investigation by the Language Commissioner into use of the Welsh language. This Commissioner's investigation will not relate to social care but rather focuses on elements of the Health service.

4. Hospital Service

The Scrutiny Committee also asked for an update "about the relationship between Hospitals and Social Services" in the context of home care and enablement at weekends.

There is no provision of social work available at weekends apart from the Out Of Hours Team which is mainly responsible for responding to emergencies.

In terms of enablement provision, care plans are organized relating to this during the working week of social workers in the adults teams in the three areas and by Ysbyty Gwynedd social work teams. If a patient is discharged from hospital at the weekend then an assessment is arranged as soon as possible on the Monday or soon after and enablement provided if appropriate.

5. Work Hours Contracts of Gwynedd Council Home Care workers

During February and March 2013 the Provider unit has been conducting interviews with the workforce in order to give them permanent work contracts. As this report is being written, it is anticipated that the contracts will be operational in April 2013.