



**Forward Plan Select Committee
3rd November 2009**

**Report from the Director of Housing
& Community Care**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Authority to Participate in a West London Collaborative
Procurement for Residential and Nursing Care for Adults
Authority to Participate in a West London Collaborative
Procurement for Home Care**

Request for a briefing note to the meeting on the 3rd November 2009, on both these items, providing information as to what gains, aside from savings, would there be for service users and whether residential and nursing care would stay in the borough.

Gains for service users

The collaborative tenders are intended to use the combined buying power of six West London boroughs (Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, Ealing, Hillingdon, Harrow and Hounslow) to achieve three things:

1. Negotiate lower prices with providers, especially the large providers who operate in more than one borough.
2. Ensure that people who choose to take Individual Budgets can buy from approved providers, who have been through a checking process as part of the tender, at the agreed Local Authority rate.
3. Establish quality standards for providers that we can monitor, improving the services that people receive in both home care and residential and nursing care.

Negotiating lower prices (1) will not necessarily have a direct effect on service users, as the welfare benefit rules and the charging policy remain the same. However, they will benefit indirectly, as the control of costs will help us maintain the level of services that we can provide, assisting us in avoiding service cuts or the raising of the eligibility criteria in the future.

The direct benefits will accrue from (2) and (3). Firstly, there will be a list of at least some providers that people with Direct Payments (DP), or Individual Budgets without a DP, will be able to buy from at the local authority price, knowing that they are a provider that met Council criteria at the point of tender. We hope that this will provide some help to people who do not have families or close friends to assist and support them in their choice of where to spend their money.

Secondly, we are insisting that only providers who have achieved 2 or 3 star ratings from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), ie, those that are rated as “good” or “excellent” can be part of the framework. Those with 0 or 1 star ratings will not be included, with possibly some exception made for new providers who are classified as Not Yet Rated, because they are less than a year old. This will provide service users with a level of protection against very poor provision.

Thirdly, we are also developing an “outcome specification” for the tender which means that we will be monitoring providers on whether or not they help people maintain their health and wellbeing, which we believe will give people the opportunity to choose a more flexible service that better meets their needs, rather than being restricted to the services the Council traditionally buy.

Residential and Nursing Care – remaining in the borough

Current placements will not be affected by the tender, regardless of the results of the tender. Further, the tender will result in a Framework Agreement, which means that we do not have to use (“call off from the contract”) the providers if it is evident that the providers will not meet a need, including a need to remain in the borough. In older people’s services we have two large providers, Southern Cross and Care UK, with homes in Brent. We expect these providers to bid in the tender and become part of the framework agreement. We will still be able to spot purchase from homes that are not part of the framework should this best meet people’s needs, both in and out of Brent.

We already place a substantial number of people out of borough, usually for one of the following three reasons:

- The service user wishes to move out of borough to be nearer friends and family.
- The service user has very specific needs that can only be met by a specialist provider (this is often the case, for example, for people with learning disabilities and autism, or people who are deaf blind)
- We have a good quality home with a place available that is in a neighbouring borough, but is easy to reach from Brent. We use a home that is in Barnet, for example, that is of good quality and valued by the residents and families. We expect this category to decrease as the homes in Brent with 0 and 1 star rating improve their standards and we feel confident placing there, but there will still be some families who live

near a borough boundary where a home that is only a few streets away – but happens to be in another borough – is preferable in terms of access than a home that is in Brent but over the other side of the borough and is consequently time consuming and difficult to reach by public transport.

The tender will not increase the amount of residential and nursing home care available in Brent, but as we are strongly encouraging homes to improve their standards, we expect it to increase the number of providers with two and three star ratings.

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