

CARE HOME BRIEFING

Recommissioning of Adult Care Homes, August 2024



Gloriously ordinary lives...

“People live in a place they call home with the people and things they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to people.”

I. BACKGROUND

We have 89 care homes for adults within Plymouth, supporting adults who have nursing or residential needs. The current contracts for these services are due to expire on 31 December 2024.

In October 2023, a recommendation to extend the current care home contracts by a period of 1 year from the beginning of January 2024, was taken to Cabinet. The extension was to enable commissioners to conduct provider engagement to inform a future procurement of this type of provision. The providers in this market have very limited to no experience of procurement processes to date.

In the past 12 months alongside our NHS Devon Integrated Care Board partners, we have held a series of provider engagement events which gave commissioners an opportunity to share with providers current thinking around service provision, and to also start a journey of development around future commissioning approach and models of care. This had an initial focus on developing the provision of Complex Dementia Care, looking to understand the challenges to providing this and if there are opportunities for diversification.

It is apparent that there is still a great deal of work to do to reshape services to meet current and future demands prior to starting the procurement process in January 2025.

2. NEXT STEPS

What we have learnt from the engagement events so far and some examples of the feedback received:

Environmental factors such as location and layout of buildings are the main reason for not currently supporting individuals with complex dementia care. This was followed by skills, training and then funding, some of their comments.

Care Home providers said, *“current funding models can limit providers ability to evolve delivery models by not reflecting the cost of supporting people with complex needs.”*

“Meeting the requirements of people with complex and often fluctuating needs is difficult with current staffing levels, often needing a higher staffing ratio or periods of 1-1”.

“Support from other services (wrap around support) is essential to ensure confidence in meeting the needs of complex residents and having access to the right support at the right time.”

A new specification for residential care has been drafted and has been shared with the providers and system partners for comment. This includes consideration of the wider system wrap-around needed to support care homes.

We now need to confirm how we intend to commission our care homes to ensure we meet the population needs and fully support the gaps that we have around people who have more complex needs and vulnerabilities.

We are seeking via Cabinet in September to extend the current contract which has a value of approximately £50m for a 12-month period to allow us time to redesign the market in line with our strategic Commissioning intentions.

What we will do between now and January 2025:

- Continue with Commissioner led provider engagement events to ensure providers are aware of the Councils future commissioning intentions and to be an integral part of the Councils intention to redevelop and reshape our offer.
- Continue to build on relationships with other local provision/support to ensure commissioners are closely aligned to local social work teams for example, Admiral Nurse, offer from UHP around head injuries, Care Home Liaison Team.
- Continue to co-produce with providers and partners in shaping ‘wrap-around’ support to enable providers access to prevention and early intervention services quickly.
- Continue to work with partners to develop an ongoing programme of support to the sector – including improving clinical support, supporting recruitment and retention, a package of targeted support to improve services and a wide-ranging training offer ([Hive Training](#)).
- Finalise the service specification.
- Prepare the sector for the procurement exercise.
- Develop a fee model that aligns with current cost pressures to ensure sustainability of the future market (within the constraints of the Council’s revenue budget).
- Look at ways to reinvest money currently spent on 1:1 fees with providers to deliver a substantive workforce that can respond to the needs of more complex individuals.
- Look at the impact of the proposed reduction of discharge to assess (DTA) residential beds and look at alternatives to the capacity this will free-up.
- Look at the impact of a current project to create a new City-wide brokerage service for adult placements.