



Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF991SN

5th May 2022

Dear Mark Isherwood,

RE: Care Home Commissioning Inquiry

Thank you for your letter dated 7th April 2022. Please see detailed below Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Boards response.

1. Making access to care homes for older people less complex and easier to navigate.

The current system used to access care homes for older people follows an assess, choice, and placement process. The process was introduced to make navigation as easy and streamlined as possible for people accessing services.

The availability of accurate and up to date information on services and vacancies is critical. The DEWIS system is reliant on providers regularly updating their own information.

Within the Region, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council are piloting a web based system for better sharing information with the public, managers and service users through a brokerage system/process. The system will work alongside DEWIS, in line with previously used care homes booklet. This web-based collection of information would complement existing systems and include additional information such as previous inspection reports etc. If proved successful we can then look to extending across the Region.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg has recently jointly commissioned a Market Stability Study for residential and nursing care for older people. A number of recommendations are being considered and include;

- In the absence of an independent measure of quality by Care Inspectorate Wales, a consistent regional approach should be developed and implemented to enhance the assessment of market viability and sufficiency.

2. Addressing the root causes of the division among partners that can arise from public-sector funding approaches for different aspects of care.

Timings for the completion of key activities such as fee analysis and audits are out of sync across the public sector. This can cause variations in funding models and approaches adopted to different aspects of care regionally. The timing of these activities is also impacted by wider fee affecting policies such as the introduction of the real living wage.

There are currently three different rates for care applied across each partner in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, but there is a well-established process of independent evaluation used across the region. This evaluation process ensures transparency and a level of parity when calculating fees, in line with the national agreed to agree principles. Service users and providers are involved throughout the process including sense checking the final fees.

Recommendations from Market Stability Study:

- Building on current arrangements, local authority and health board commissioners should enhance partnership working with providers in ways which result in a more open and transparent, two-way, relationship. It should embody mutual support, continuous improvement of the way the residential care system operates, and a developmental focus which supports a co-production approach to reconfiguration and reshaping provision to meet changing needs. There should be similar, ongoing, engagement with residents, carers, and families around the delivery and further development of services.

3. Improving performance information relating to health and social care. commissioning to be able to demonstrate whether policy aims are being achieved, well-being achieved, well-being goals delivered and to evidence the impact on service-user outcomes.

Work has been undertaken to improve performance information around care homes and a considerable amount of data has been accumulated through the management of the pool and hardship fund during recent years.

The regional contract incorporates elements of measuring outcomes though there is further work required to incorporate all the areas into the contract monitoring arrangements.

Although joint monitoring arrangements take place between the Local Authorities and the Local Health Board, including sharing feedback letters highlighting key messages from reviews, this is an area that can be strengthened.

Discussions are required to standardise joint arrangements and improve the collection and understanding of performance data to better appreciate the impact it has on service user outcomes.

A regional monitoring framework was developed prior to the pandemic but due to the restrictions and changing priorities during this period it was not fully implemented. With the relaxing of restrictions this is something that will be picked up and implemented.

Recommendations from Market Stability Study:

- Variation in the availability and quality of data on the residential care market across the region should be addressed. A comprehensive and consistent dataset covering the three local authorities should be developed and used i.e. interrogated regularly to provide the market intelligence needed for effective strategic management of the region's care provision.

4. Ensuring that pooled fund arrangements for care home commissioning are delivering the intended benefits.

Some of the benefits that have been recognised through the pooled fund arrangements include the transfer of funding between partners, allowing more flexibility and the ability to facilitate any carry over of funding and the development of one source of data on occupancy for all four partners. Although this process has been developed, due to the pandemic it hasn't been utilised during the past 12-18 months.

In addition, preparatory work has been undertaken, in line with the joint market position statements, to enable the next phases which have included:

- Implementation of a single care home contract for the region following consultation with providers.
- The collection of data as part of the pooled fund to establish the usage across the region which now needs to be analysed though this will need to consider the change in occupancy levels during the past 2 years.
- Jointly commissioned feasibility study for residential and nursing care for older people

This work will lead to the development of a single commissioning strategy for Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Note the original regional footprint was adjusted under the health board reorganisation to include Bridgend. The re-organisation and pandemic delayed the implementation of regional pooled fund arrangements for the extended area initially.

5. Considering whether Regional Partnership Boards are working as intended in respect of care home commissioning, in the context of statutory guidance.

Under the Regional Partnership Governance Structure there is a Care Home and Pooled budget group that reports to the Transformation Leadership Board and RPB. The group recognised that further work was required in respect of a regional approach to the commissioning of care homes across the region and commissioned Practice Solutions to support the production of a Market Feasibility Report.

This involved extensive involvement with commissioned and Local Authority providers, users of the services and their carers to ensure their views are built into future commissioning arrangements. This work is anticipated to be completed by mid-summer 2022.

The initial recommendations are being reviewed and sense checked with partners and they will be utilised to formulate a regional action plan and inform future commissioning arrangements. A workshop has taken place to discuss the recommendations with providers.

6. Understanding the reasons for the variation in expenditure on residential care and continuing healthcare costs that suggest inequitable application of policy across Wales.

Within CTM it is recognised that the availability and ability of services, especially where there are complex needs is the main factor in variation of costs and increases the need to go out of county to access the required support.

Furthermore, the number of people being discharged from hospitals with complex needs requiring care is increasing and is incurring higher costs. Current pooled budget arrangements are limited to residential and nursing placements within the geographical boundaries of Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Local strategies prioritise care services within the community to assist people to live in their own home as long as possible (e.g. supported living, extra care).

Continuing health care costs are agreed by panels across the Integrated Locality Groups who apply a consistent set of principles with baseline costs for care are informed by local care home fees however final cost is heavily dependent on the needs of individuals.

7. Considering the potentially perverse incentive for local authority commissioners of care that rises from the fact that the charging cap on service user contributions is different for care-home placements compared to people supported in the community.

The strategic direction of all partners is to provide support to people that will enable them to live safely within their communities.

There are no charging caps on service user contributions used by any partner across region, the placements are based on the outcome of the assessment and what is in the best interest of the individual. Professionals' decisions on placements are not informed by finance, though finance may be a deciding factor for the person/families themselves.

In addition to questions above fee information for the region can be found below;

2021/2022 CTM CHC rates (exclude the WG guidance on COVID hardship payments).

Nursing care	RCT	MT	Bridgend
General Nursing	£847.80	£852.71	£839.80
EMI/Mental Health	£885.80	£900.51	£881.40

Personal care	RCT
Older person	£649.00
Dementia	£688.00
Learning disability	£688.00
Physical disability (under 65)	£688.00
Mental health	£649.00

Personal care	Bridgend
Residential	£628.00
Residential EMI	£670.00

Personal care	MT
Older person	£592.00
Dementia	£657.00
Learning disability	£981.00
Nursing care (excludes health board and	

social care FNC)	
Older person	£660.00
Dementia	£708.00

These rates only apply to homes/placements accepting our standard rates, there will be homes which have agreed spot rates for some patients dependent on needs. We have not yet agreed the 22/23 rates.

For further information please contact sarah.mills@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely,



Luke Takeuchi
Vice Chair of Regional Partnership Board