

Report To: Elected Members Budget Workshop
Date: October 2014
Lead Member / Officer: Bobby Feely / Phil Gilroy
Report Author: Tony Ward
Title: Quality monitoring of External Care Services

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report is about the processes we have in place to monitor the quality of external care services.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. As part of the Freedoms and Flexibilities process, Members met in September 2014 to discuss the potential for out-sourcing our remaining in-house provider services. Members requested more information about the quality of externally provided services prior to deciding whether to put this proposal forward to Council for approval.

3. Denbighshire's current Quality Monitoring Processes

- 3.1. In order to improve the quality monitoring process in Denbighshire, the Contract Management and Reviewing Team has been created. The team have recently been brought together in Brighton Road, which will improve joint working. The good communication between the contracts, review and brokerage teams within this new Contract Management and Review Team has already started to have a positive impact upon the quality of information received. Officers from the team are now carrying out joint, unannounced, visits to care homes.
- 3.2. In the five months since April 2014, Reviewing Officers have carried out a total of 134 reviews across 43 Residential or Nursing Homes. This includes 122 reviews within 33 homes in Denbighshire; 9 reviews within 7 seven homes outside of Denbighshire but within Wales; and 3 reviews within 3 homes outside Wales. During these visits, officers pick up on any issues of concern and report back to the Contracts Team or, alternatively, the Contracts Team will alert the relevant Reviewing Officer of past concerns and they will then be able to follow these up on their visits.
- 3.3. In addition, the Reviewing Officers are ideally placed to ensure that information from the centre is shared widely with those who use our services. For instance, the team have recently been requested to provide details of how to compliment or complain about services to each person they visit and will soon be seeking information from visits during Feedback Fortnight, all of which helps to maintain relationships with the residents of Denbighshire as well as ensuring they are able to give their views on services.

4. Outcomes from Existing Quality Monitoring Processes

- 4.1. Adult & Business Services already provide a quarterly report to the Chairs & Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny regarding quality monitoring of the services we commission with the independent care sector. This report provides Members with an opportunity to consider whether the quality of care provided by the independent requires further scrutiny.
- 4.2. The position with regard to the findings of contract monitoring activity during the 14 months from 1st July 2013 to 31st August 2014 was as follows:

Number / type of provider	Monitoring Activity	Outcome
39 residential and nursing homes	Care reviews for residents feed into monitoring process. 38 formal contract reviews took place in the last 14 months, 7 in the first 5 months of 2014/15. Age Connect activity in 14 homes, although 5 are currently suspended due to loss of volunteers.	5 homes identified as requiring further quality monitoring and have been visited. 1 home currently under "Escalating Concerns", see below for details. 1 home has gone into Administration, home is running as usual but is being closely monitored.
26 care homes monitored by the regional Hub	Care reviews for residents, from all LAs, feed into monitoring process. 12 formal quality monitoring contract reviews carried out in the last 14 months – 6 in the first 5 months of 2014/15.	1 home remains under "Escalating Concerns", see below for further details.
10 providers supporting 41 Community Living Schemes	Weekly monitoring at each project is taking place. 9 formal contract reviews have taken place in the last 14 months. 1 review carried out in the first 5 months of 2014/15. One review due this month for a new provider.	Concerns regarding staff at one scheme being closely monitored. No escalating concerns. There have been some medication issues at one scheme, this is being closely monitored

- 4.3. At this time (15th September 2014) two homes are being dealt with under the Escalation of Concerns process and have a temporary suspension to any new placements. Multi Agency monitoring of these homes is taking place and improvements are evident in both homes. However, in the past month, one of these homes has been given notice of closure by CSSIW. The home is appealing against this and the situation is being closely monitored by all agencies, and all residents have been reviewed.

5. Feedback from Service Users

- 5.1. Reports from service users are very positive in response to the contracts questionnaires, carer assessor conversations and to the quality questionnaires sent by our Customer Connections Team.
- 5.2. Age Connects' Speak Up Project continues to provide regular feedback to the Contracts team for those homes they visit. This is proving to be a successful and well regarded project.
- 5.3. No complaints about independent sector provider services have been received by the council during 2013/14 or 2014/15, although six instances of feedback were recorded as concerns/enquiries during 2013/14. No concerns/enquiries have been recorded since April 2014.
- 5.4. We plan to develop a questionnaire for people in care homes during 2014/15, with the aim of piloting it in April 2015. In addition, we plan to undertake some case study work with a small number of care home residents from January 2015. This will provide us with much more detailed feedback about the experience of care home residents.

6. Future Plans Regarding Quality Monitoring Processes

- 6.1. It is recognised that out-sourcing our remaining in-house Provider Services would require additional capacity in terms of quality monitoring. For this reason, we are proposing that the savings made from out-sourcing our Provider Services would be offset slightly by the cost of employing two additional Contract Monitoring Officers to increase our capacity in this area.
- 6.2. The other major significant development in this area is the new Regulation and Inspection Bill. On 9th September 2014 Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Social Services, said that "good work is being carried out to improve social care and safeguard vulnerable people in Wales' care homes, but a new law to be introduced next year will strengthen the system even further".
- 6.3. The new Bill, which will be introduced in the National Assembly in early 2015, will strengthen the protection of people and further improve the quality of care and support available in Wales. The Bill will introduce:
 - A new emphasis on the accountability of the service provider and the responsible individual;
 - A new service-model of regulation to ensure no service escapes the regulatory regime;
 - Powers to further professionalise the workforce through protecting titles, reserving functions and regulating training;
 - Requirements for standardised, published annual reports from providers;
 - Continuation of the targeted approach to workforce regulation with powers to add new groups as required;
 - Establishment of a new National Institute of Care and Support to lead regulation of the workforce and social care improvement;

- Implementation of a set of Law Commission recommendations to improve the consistency of workforce regulation;
- New powerful duties on regulators to share information when necessary;
- New powers to issue quality judgements and rankings on service quality.

6.4. Imelda Richardson, Chief Inspector of CSSIW, has also recently stated that they have tightened up their inspection regime, saying “We have improved the way we work over recent years and have changed from an inspectorate that focuses on processes to an inspectorate that focuses on people and drives up improvement. Inspections are unannounced, including evening and weekends; inspectors are better equipped with tools such as SOFI (Short Observational Framework for Inspection) and we have a National Advisory Board which represents 50% of citizens to advise us and help shape our work”.