

Appendix 3 - Home & Community Support Soft Market Testing (SMT) Overview

Sept-Oct 2022

A soft market testing exercise was distributed in the form of an online Microsoft Forms; this was shared via ProContract as well as directly with all current providers on the Home & Community Support DPS. 15 responses were received; an overview of the responses can be found below.

Overview of providers and current delivery

Current contracts	
Currently delivering support for CYP via the Home & Community Support DPS	4
Currently delivering support for Adults via the Home & Community Support DPS	5
Delivering Community Support through a different contract in Peterborough	1
On the Home & Community Support DPS but not currently delivering support for either Adults or CYP	3
Not currently delivering services in Peterborough or Cambridgeshire	2

Type of support delivered	
Delivers home & community support	10
Delivers home care	2
Delivers community support	2
Does not deliver home or community support	1

Experience of working with CYP	
Currently deliver support to CYP	12
Do not currently deliver to CYP but would like to do so in future	3

Location	
Currently operate within Cambridgeshire	5
Currently operate within Peterborough	2
Currently operate within Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	6
Do not currently operate within either but would like to do so in the future	2

Skill set for home & community support

Is a different skill set is required for Home Care and Community Support?	
Yes - requires a different skill set	2
Yes - requires a different skill set which is reflected in the cost	2
No - does not require a different skill set	6

How do the skill sets differ?

- Different risks to be aware of that require specific experience
- Personal care requires understanding, caring and supporting staff who have knowledge of working in someone's home and the child's disabilities
- In the community staff need skills to engage in activities, be able to manage behaviours and be aware of dangers in community
- Personal care often requires more training that is individualised based on the needs of the CYP

CQC registration

All but one provider is registered with CQC, who stated they would not be interested in registering as their current community support services does not require it.

Framework and block contracts

All providers are either interested in joining the new DPS or are already on the current DPS and interested in joining the new one.

3 providers would not be interested in having a block contract; the remaining 12 would be.

Which arrangement is more attractive?	
A block contract would be more attractive	3
A Framework/DPS would be more attractive	5
No preference	7

Why are block contracts more attractive?	Why are Frameworks more attractive?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assured work and finance - Financial security and known workload - Allow for effective planning of resources - Allow for quicker response to enquiries - Easier to set up a service from scratch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More gradual transition to expanding from Adults to Children's, ensuring the best outcomes for the service users. - Allows a diverse portfolio of work - Gives the provider the opportunity to ensure they can meet they needs of the individual within the property
Why are block contracts less attractive?	Why are Frameworks less attractive?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The price of a block contract would need to be right to enable an infrastructure to be built in Cambridgeshire/Peterborough, and the cost of children's services is more expensive than adults, with more difficult recruitment - The Provider does not have the ability or flexibility to consider if they can meet the needs of the young person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not guarantee work or income - Difficult to manage resources without underpinning funding from other sources - A framework is only more attractive due to the current situation with staff recruitment
Elements to consider to make block contracts more attractive	Elements to consider to make frameworks more attractive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The block contract is flexible in terms of the services provided - Regular monitoring arrangements in order to review what is being delivered against the contract - Fair cost of care paid by LA - Practical assistance with recruitment and training - Good relationships need to be built with the commissioners and social workers to they are able to fully understand any difficulties that the provider is presented with - Financial arrangements i.e staff salaries, price of block contract - Packages within the same postcode area - Being flexible on times to enable providers to fulfil their obligations without compromising safety of the service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved terms to cover care costs when a client is away or in hospital, allowing staff to be retained more effectively - Blocked hours and pricing - Level of guaranteed income per annum - Regular monitoring arrangements in order to review what is being delivered against the contract - Financial arrangements - Mileage allowances within hourly rate - Being flexible on times to enable providers to fulfil their obligations without compromising safety of the service users

Which arrangement would offer the Local Authority the most favourable pricing structure?	
Block Contract	5

Framework	3
No difference	7

Timescales

When asked how long it would take the organisation to set up an infrastructure within Cambridgeshire and/or Peterborough, the majority said 3-6 months depending on size of recruitment required.

Hourly rates

Pricing structure differentiation	
Different rates for generic/specialist support	9
Different rates for adults and children/young people	6
Different rates for Bank Holiday support	8
Different rates for day and night support	8

Of those who provided a single hourly rate, this ranged from £17.95 p/h to £27.02 p/h, with an average of £22.27 p/h.

Of those who gave a generic/complex rate range, the rates ranged from £18.71p/h to £22.16p/h for generic and £25.17p/h to £26.00p/h for complex, with an average range of £20.47-£25.50.

Those who did not provide hourly rates stated they are being guided by the current H&CS DPS pricing structure, or are currently reviewing their hourly rates.

Specification and contractual arrangements

Aspects that providers would like to see detailed within contractual arrangements focused mainly on inflationary uplifts and mileage allowances/travel time.

Specific detail mentions on uplifts include:

- Regular inflationary uplifts to be built into the contract
- Uplifts to not be capped; in the current DPS contract there is an uplift equation capped at 70p, but with current inflation rates the equation comes out at higher than this. It should reflect real terms.

Other aspects mentioned include:

- Complex care packages should not have a capped cost – they should be costed individually based on specific staff qualification and training requirements
- Care packages paid during periods of absence e.g. CYP admitted to hospital
- Notice periods
- Training requirements
- Monitoring arrangements

When asked whether there are particular aspects that could be detailed within contractual arrangements that would support with staff retention/recruitment and increasing capacity, responses included:

- Paying Fair Cost of Care/higher hourly rate
- Staff development
- Allowing services to have waiting lists whilst they increase staffing levels
- Mileage, particularly during the current climate
- Guarantee of work
- Retainer within the payment structure would allow them to secure a pool of carers and maintain them during any fluctuation of hours
- Notice periods
- Postcode/geographical allocations
- Support with training and progression
- Allow providers to recruit using council advertising outlets
- Welcome bonuses and reward schemes