

Thank you for inviting us to make a submission to the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.

In the timescale available we have compiled a short summary of issues that relate to domiciliary care that have been raised by parents lately.

We currently have over 1300 members across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, over half of whom have an adult son or daughter. With so many members we receive a variety of comments and feedback from families but the following examples are representative of the range of issues parents raise.

While it can be emotionally trying for parents to have their 'child' move into a new home, on the most part people report this to be a positive step. Confidence in domiciliary support settings is positive while not always an unqualified success – parents often report having to intervene to highlight an issue of concern. Such parental involvement 'at arms length' remains important both as an emotional prop to all concerned; helping to keep a family strong, but also in safeguarding and supporting improvements in the way that people are supported.

Cardiff & the Vale Parents Federation have previously given evidence expressing opposition to commissioning services based on a matrix where cost is the major factor, stressing that quality must be prioritised – the cost of getting it wrong inevitably exceeds any 'savings' on opting for a cheap deal.

Parents report that they feel the specific challenges facing the domiciliary care market include:

Capacity and sustainability – this includes poor wages, insufficient numbers of staff, lack of sufficient training (sometimes due to high staff turnover) and the ability of new and existing staff (sadly to make a career or living wage, experienced staff have to leave the 'frontline')

Housing Options are limited both in numbers and locations '....our hope is for our 2 boys to live together in their own house, in an area that we like and is near us. CCC find that hard to accommodate- therefore we are forced to consider a Co-op project to try and get them together...'

Monitoring of care – '...we need to keep a constant and vigilant eye on the care provided, due to complexity of conditions of various learning disabled adults in the house. ..'

Staff may find conditions challenging, complicated by lack of staff numbers and lack of training. Some parents have raised concerns over the lack of suitable management input either through managers being spread too thinly between several houses (and thus out of touch).

Several parents have raised concerns over the **lack of licenced car drivers** being on shift. This can result in a person being tied to the house in spite of having their own vehicle simply as a result of staff not having a valid licence

Involvement of families when a relative moves into domiciliary care – it has been good to see a continued move on the part of many providers to involve families and keep them informed. This works well for some but must be rolled out and maintained- it helps overcome suspicion and fears as well as offering some really useful insights from families that can improve services.

This is very important and we applaud the good examples that increasingly exist but we still have parents contact us complaining that they feel left out or ignored

Direct payments / control of budgets– there is still a great deal of uncertainty whether a person can use direct payments to commission their own package of domiciliary support. This is especially the case where the options on offer do not meet the wishes or needs of an individual.

Parents may express concerns over their relative living in a house where the dynamic between them and other residents is a cause of concern or it limits their potential but are powerless to do much about it.

Location and availability

The location of accommodation on offer may not meet the needs of an individual- moving them into an alien area where they have no networks or links can be disabling and lead to more, not less, reliance upon paid staff as well as make it difficult for other family members to maintain links.

Some families have expressed very strong opinions that we still lack suitable provision for certain individuals, especially those with higher support needs and this has led to their being supported (often very successfully) 'out of county'. This is nothing new and we have highlighted such concerns for well over a decade.

As a federation we support the development of new and better provision that might encourage some individuals to move closer to 'home' while ensuring others need not look away from their community but are against the forced repatriation of people who are happily settled in their lives, albeit well away from the area.

Finally, families need more, and varied, respite options. As an organisation we have pressed for a diverse 'market' of respite choices and this remains something that families need. A proposed respite Strategy that we along with many other agencies have supported would encourage this to develop were it adopted as council policy – it seems too big a challenge to expect overstretched local authority staff to resolve this alone.