

National Commissioning Board

Supporting the development of market shaping activities in Wales

Workshop Report

July 2017

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1 Introduction

The National Commissioning Board for Wales (NCB) has identified as a priority in 2017 to continue to support the use of Market Position Statements (MPS) as a tool for facilitating better commissioner-provider relationships in care. The NCB asked the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University (IPC) to facilitate a workshop for commissioners on 14th July 2017 which provided an opportunity to share emerging good practice in MPS and wider market shaping activities, as well as identifying areas where further collaboration or sharing of learning would be valuable. The workshop was attended by representatives from each region and included both social care and health commissioners.

This brief report summarises the key areas of discussion from the event, as well as developing the ideas from participants about potential support activities.

2 Workshop discussions

2.1 The context for MPS and market shaping

Recent legislation in Wales, notably the Social Services and Well-being Act, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and most recently the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act, has provided the framework for a shift of focus in the relationship between commissioners and the providers of services. The twin pressures of demographic change and the current economic situation have meant that a more collaborative approach to that relationship is critical if shared resources and expertise are to be brought into play effectively to reshape social care.

2.2 An ongoing relationship and understanding

The Market Position Statement is seen as one tool used to facilitate an ongoing relationship between commissioners and providers. The two key questions needing to be considered by commissioners are:

- Do we understand our local market, and the businesses of our local providers? Do we have a sense of the stability of the market?
- What activities can we undertake to influence the current and future range of care and support available, tailored to respond to specific local issues?

So as to improve the understanding of the business pressures on providers, Sanjiv Joshi (Heart of Wales Care Ltd and Treasurer of Care Forum Wales) described the level of scrutiny care providers faced from lenders, including, for example, monthly reporting on void levels and types of placements, and quarterly reporting on status against lending covenants. He also described the impact of market failures on other providers as financial institutions became more cautious about new lending, and increased the level of scrutiny on existing loans.

2.3 Market shaping activities

The workshop heard from three examples of market shaping activities:

- **Accommodation for an Ageing Population in Powys:** this MPS considered accommodation in Powys in its broadest sense (ie both care homes and all forms of housing) and explored provision at a community level.
- **Care Homes in North Wales:** this project looked at Care Homes across the six local authority areas in North Wales and highlighted the challenges of taking a regional approach given the variation in local characteristics.
- **National Care Home Survey:** the draft report was circulated, and the value and importance of having information at a local and national level was highlighted.

2.4 Key learning

Participants reported the following learning points from their discussions:

- Commissioners need to employ flexible commissioning approaches and develop mature relationships with providers.
- Participants reported having a better understanding of the business pressures and financial stress for providers – this understanding needs to be shared more widely.
- There is variation amongst providers in terms of their business acumen, so some will be less sophisticated and/or skilled and need a different level or type of support.
- We need to involve providers more generally and actively in our work, and not treat them as passive recipients.
- Providers need specific information about what commissioners are looking for in their local areas.

3 Next steps

The following areas were identified as potentially valuable in taking forward national support for good market facilitation and engagement by the NCB..

3.1 Accommodation

The challenge: participants felt they did not have sufficient understanding of the options available in terms of housing for older people, what was possible and what was affordable; they felt they needed to draw in housing departments and housing providers to explore what was needed particularly in the context of the accommodation with care capital fund within the Integrated Care Fund.

Options: whilst there is significant material available about housing for older people it does tend to focus on extra care housing and on England. The issues presented by participants suggested this was about a level of understanding of housing more generally, and also a lack of confidence or ability to draw in housing departments and housing providers to support the development of wider accommodation options. On this basis the NCB could consider:

- Develop materials which health and social care commissioners could draw on to inform discussions with housing colleagues and housing providers. These could be developed as outputs from actively working through the issues in one local authority or regional area, ie from a live case study.
- Working with WG housing colleagues, develop clear guidance about what good looks like in terms of housing design, provision, costs, and the role of housing related services within the wider accommodation agenda.
- Work with interested commissioners to design and deliver workshops which develop understanding and expertise, involving both commissioners and providers.

3.2 Palliative care

The challenge: participants raised concerns about a lack of clear direction about palliative care, particularly in the community, and the role of community providers such as domiciliary care providers. This was leading to the inappropriate/ineffective involvement of community providers, for example domiciliary care providers being called in to support people too late.

Options: NCB could consider:

- Developing a clear statement of good practice specifically in relation to the involvement of community services in the end of life pathway.

3.3 Self funders

The challenge: participants felt they had insufficient understanding of both the numbers and needs/expectations of self-funders, and were not working with providers to improve this situation.

Options: This challenge incorporates two key elements: how do you best estimate the number of self-funders in your region, and how do you work with providers currently providing services to self funders to improve your understanding. On this basis NCB could:

- Develop and/or tailor existing toolkits for the estimation of self funders (eg IPC's [Understanding the self-funding market in social care: a toolkit for commissioners](#)) to ensure they are applicable in Wales.
- Work in a pilot area to develop and test out the use of a co-productive approach to improving understanding of the needs of self-funders, working with local providers and local communities.
- Develop a training offer with/for commissioners and providers to improve skills and expertise in this area.

3.4 Workforce

The challenge: participants felt there was insufficient understanding amongst providers and the system more widely about how to ensure a stable workforce particularly but not only in terms of nursing. For example, there was a lack of clarity about the role of the nurse in nursing homes, and about alternative models of nursing provision which might help address nursing shortages.

Options:

- NCB could explore and develop different models of nursing care in relation to care homes to ensure they are deployed effectively and their care and support is targeted at those who need it.
- Work with care home provider organisations/networks to improve understanding and practice in terms of workforce planning, particularly as it relates to nurses.

3.5 Market intelligence

The challenge: it is important to maintain up-to-date and comprehensive intelligence about the care home market nationally and at a local level, so as to monitor trends and benchmark local performance. Participants felt the national survey was an important and useful exercise and should be repeated.

Options:

- NCB could set up a standard database which enables the data collected in the 2016 survey to be collated more easily and regularly.
- NCB could explore how existing systems could deliver this information with/without additional bespokeing.

These options will be considered by the National Commissioning Board at its next meeting

Institute of Public Care
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