

Councillors Briefing Note

No. 302

Service area: Adult Care and Housing **Further enquiries to:** Sue Geary

Date updated: 12th August 2016 **Direct line:** 01225 713922

Help to Live at Home (HTLAH) Tender process

Background

Three of the eight HTLAH contract areas were recently tendered as a result of one provider giving notice of their intention to relinquish the contract and one provider not being given an extension due to poor performance. Leonard Cheshire gave notice in two areas across the north and east of the county covering Malmesbury, Calne, Royal Wootton Bassett and Marlborough. MiHomecare's contract in Trowbridge and Melksham was not extended following issues with missed visits and an inadequate Care Quality Commission (CQC) report.

The tender resulted in all three areas being won by Mears Care Ltd, an existing HTLAH provider, giving them six of the eight contract areas.

The new contracts are due to start on the 5th September. In the case of Leonard Cheshire areas this remains the case however, due to the inadequate service on offer in the MiHomecare area and an embargo being in place for new customers, we have asked Mears to start the contract sooner and they have agreed to a 15th August start date.

Transition planning

Mears have been working with commissioners and the outgoing providers to ensure a smooth transition process, the key milestones are set out below:

Communication with customers

All of the 500 customers, who will be affected by this transition, have been written to by the Council. This sought to assure people that it was our intention to cause the minimal amount of disruption as possible to their service.

Each customer will have received a visit from the new provider prior to the start to ensure that the service that they receive is suitable to meet their needs.

Care provider staff

TUPE applies to care provider staff and they will be able to transfer to the new provider if they wish.

Group consultations have taken place with the staff of both outgoing providers and most staff have had a one-to-one meeting with a manager from Mears, to discuss any personal implications. Details in writing are also being provided to all staff.

Reaction from staff to the change has been positive, particularly in view of the higher hourly rate that Mears are able to pay care staff. Actual numbers of staff transferring will not be known until the actual day of transfer.

Premises

Mears will be taking on the lease at Lowborne House from MiHomecare. This is a Wiltshire Council owned property close to the centre of Melksham. The intention is for this to be a CQC registered office and lessen the risk associated with having all services managed out of Amesbury.

Support Plans

In the MiHomecare CQC report a lack of up to date support plans, in customers' homes, was identified as a significant risk to customers' wellbeing. On winning the contracts, Mears made arrangements with both providers to visit all of their customers in order to put new support plans in place.

Mears were helped in doing this, visiting over 500 people, from the Council's Adult Care Commissioning and Operational teams. All new support plans should be in place ready for the contract start dates.

Training

All staff transferring to Mears under the TUPE arrangements, will be required to undergo standard induction training in order to be fully conversant with new procedures and to ensure that the wellbeing of the customer is at the heart of the service they provide.

Transition Day

On the actual day of transition, commissioners from the Council will be present at the new offices to be on hand to deal with any issues that arise and help with a smooth transfer.

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