

Enquiry Number FS2954546

Request and Response:

Q: Clarity regarding the tender for the Community Care and Support Service.

A: The tender was evaluated according to quality alone; this was the case as the Council set the rate that it would pay. However, while the council set the rate, there was an assessment of Providers' financial viability in entering into a contract with the council.

The contract award process consisted of two stages;

Stage 1 - Assessment of Tender Documentation

Stage 2 – Provider Presentation/Interview

Stage 1 of the process required Providers to submit a written response to a number of questions; these questions were designed to determine the organisations competence and experience in the delivery of the service. Stage 1 required Providers to meet a minimum threshold to progress to Stage 2. At stage 2 Providers were required to give a presentation and respond to a series of questions and the aim of this process was to determine how organisations would deliver the services required within Sandwell, and for them to demonstrate that they were competent to undertake the contract.

Following Stage 2 of the process, the scores from the two stages were combined to determine an overall score for each Provider and tenders were ranked accordingly and contracts awarded.

Once the award of Contract had taken place, the council undertook a number of actions to ensure that the transition of care provision was managed effectively, these actions included:

- Meetings with outgoing providers to discuss the transfer of information and their exit strategies;
- Regular meetings with incoming providers to discuss their plans for contract commencement and implementation;

- The development of an action plan and establishment of regular meetings of the council's internal domiciliary care transition group prior to and after the contract commenced;
- The management of the Direct Payments process;
- The establishment of contingency arrangements.

Care packages delivered by providers who did not secure a contract under the new Framework were allocated to incoming providers by the council. In a very small number of cases new providers were unable to take on packages that transferred to them and these were referred back to the council to be reallocated. Where this was the case, the council where possible utilized other Framework providers. Communication between the council and all Providers ensured that all calls were covered and that individuals continued to receive the care services that they required.

The ongoing review and evaluation of the standard of services occurs in a number of ways, these include the management of contracts with external providers by the council's Independent Sector Management Team, as well as the sharing of information between the Care Quality Commission and the Council to ensure that any issues about regulated services, such as domiciliary care agencies, are actioned where this is necessary. Safeguarding concerns reported to the council under the safeguarding process are managed formally through the Safeguarding Team. In addition, individual reviews are undertaken to ensure that packages of care continue to meet the needs of customers.

If you wish to receive further information in regards to this request or wish to submit a Freedom of Information Request please forward your request to contact@sandwell.gov.uk or Information Management Unit, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE.