

17 November 2025

## Researching the NI Domiciliary care market place

### Commissioning Routes and Rates

**It seems that the private-funded market is very limited, with care being free at the point of delivery. There is reference to average rates of around £14.01–£16.00 per hour — do we know the specific rates paid by each HSC Trust within the proposed territory as given the averages, it would suggest each Trust has individual rates? Our proposed territory can be seen here:**

The current regional rate for provision of domiciliary care services is £21.35 per hour. Exceptions to this rate may be agreed on a case-by-case basis for complex and specialist care.

### Shared Area - Vision

**On Direct Payments, our feedback suggests many Clients directly employ their carers. Do we have data on the proportion using Direct Payments to purchase care through agencies, rather than employing individual Personal Assistants?**

We do not hold this data. As noted, the DP recipient is the employer and may either employ an individual as a Personal Assistant or purchase services from an agency.

The current DP hourly rate 2025-2026 is £18.53. The DP personal budget allocated may not meet the cost of purchasing from an agency, so the DP user may 'top up' from other resources or family members assist for example.

**Regarding short calls, is there any scope to negotiate with funding bodies in Northern Ireland (as we sometimes do in England) to secure minimum call lengths closer to our USP of 1 hour call durations?**

Calls are based on commissioned need.

**Can you clarify how commissioning is structured across the HSC Trusts — e.g., spot purchase, preferred provider lists, or framework contracts? And do frameworks require specific qualifying factors (such as having been inspected by RQIA) as we know that the methodology of RQIA is not to award ratings, but statements on compliance), before a provider can join?**

Independent sector providers may engage directly with the Trust. Providers must meet the Trust's pre-contractual requirements to be awarded a contract.

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These requirements include the requirement to be registered with RQIA and to submit either a copy of their RQIA Pre-Registration Inspection Report (if/ where they are new) or a copy of their latest RQIA Inspection Report (if/ where they are established).

### **Complex and Specialist Care**

**It is noted that complex and nursing care is tendered separately. Could you provide more detail on how this tendering process differs from standard domiciliary care?**

Complex domiciliary care is commissioned via direct award. Nurse-led domiciliary care is not routinely commissioned by the Trust. The Trust has only one such arrangement in place, which was initially awarded following a formal procurement process conducted via eTendersNI.

**What specific regulatory considerations apply to complex care? It is noted that there is reference to restrictions (e.g., rehabilitation being NHS-led) — are there other examples, such as limitations on ‘delegated health care tasks’, that we should be aware of?**

RQIA is the regulator for complex care. Please contact RQIA for further information.

**Is there any intelligence on the average rates paid for complex/nurse-led care compared with standard domiciliary care?**

We are not able to provide the information requested. Due to low numbers of <5 would reduce numbers to discoverable limits, we consider that individuals could be identified and disclosure of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which relates to the fair and lawful processing of personal data. Therefore, we have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure under FOI Act Section 40(2) Personal Information relating to a third party, of the FOI Act.