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Domiciliary care and or home care delivered in peoples own homes

For the purposes of this Freedom of Information Request, domiciliary care and/or home care is defined as social care and support services delivered in peoples own homes

1. What is the current Department of Health directed hourly rate for the trust to pay to independent providers for the provision of domiciliary care services?

The regional 2025-26 rate for Home Care Providers is £21.35 per hour.

If applicable please provide rates for the following: n/a

- **Day Rates – Monday - Friday**
- **Unsociable hours / Night rates – please clarify what is deemed to be unsociable hours**
- **Saturday day**
- **Saturday night**
- **Sunday day**
- **Sunday night**
- **Bank Holidays**

2. What is the lowest hourly charge rate and highest hourly charge rate the trust has paid to an independent provider in the most recently available 3-month period?

Lowest hourly rate: £21.35 (*regional rate*)

Highest hourly rate: £28.06 (*exceptional rate for complex and specialist care*)

3. Please detail what is included in the hourly charge rates detailed in questions 1 and 2 above.

The hourly rate includes the provision of domiciliary care to the service user as commissioned by the Trust and detailed in the service user's care plan.

4. Does the trust pay an additional mileage charge to independent providers for the mileage their workers undertake in addition to the hourly costs detailed above?

No. The only exception to this, which occurs infrequently, is when outings are part of a service user's care plan. In such cases, the Trust would reimburse mileage costs in accordance with HRMC Mileage Allowance Payments (MAP), subject to the agreed conditions.

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5. If there is a mileage charge in addition to the hourly rate detailed above, does the trust have a standard mileage charge rate for independent providers or can the independent provider set the rate themselves?

In the exceptional case as referenced above, mileage costs would be reimbursed in accordance with HRMC Mileage Allowance Payments (MAP).

6. If there is a standard allowable mileage charge, could you please provide details of those charges?

In the exceptional case as referenced above, mileage costs would be reimbursed in accordance with HRMC Mileage Allowance Payments (MAP). Please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-business-travel-mileage/rules-for-tax>

7. Does the trust allow for travel time to and from service users home locations to be billed at the standard hourly charge in addition to being charged for the time the caregiver is with the service user providing care in the service user's home.

No.

8. Several responses to previous Freedom of Information requests refer to the fact that the provision of domiciliary care / home care services is open to new independent providers "who meet the criteria" for entering a contract with the Trust. Please detail the criteria the Trust requires a new provider to meet.

Domiciliary care providers must provide the following information for the purposes of pre-contractual checks and decision-making as part of the Trust's provider selection process.

- 1. A business plan:** Providers must submit a business plan, setting out the locations, by BT postcode, within which they are operating and/ or intend to operate as well as the numbers of staff they have within in each location. Business plans should also include a workforce plan for recruitment and retention of staff to ensure a safe and sustainable service. Providers may also include plans for any future expansion. Please be advised the Provider's capacity to provide services in Trust priority areas of unmet need will be a key consideration.
- 2. Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) Certificate:** Providers of domiciliary care services in Northern Ireland are required to be registered with the RQIA as a Domiciliary Care Agency. Providers must submit a copy of a valid and up-to-date RQIA Registration Certificate to confirm same.
- 3. RQIA Inspection Report:** Providers must 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).
- 4. Active RQIA enforcement action and/ or investigations:** Providers must make the Trust aware of any active RQIA enforcement action and/ or investigations which they are involved in/ subject to, and the status of same. The Trust reserves the right to liaise with the RQIA and/ or relevant other HSC Trusts in relation to

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any enforcement action and/ or investigations to aid its decision-making as part of its provider selection process.

5. **Financial accounts:** Providers must submit their current and previous years' accounts for the purposes of an assessment of their financial standing.
6. **Insurance:** Providers must provide confirmation of the insurance cover as required under the terms and conditions of the current Regional Domiciliary Care Services Contract:
 - Employers Liability Insurance (minimum £10 million for any one incident);
 - Public Liability Insurance (minimum £5 million for any one incident); and,
 - Medical Malpractice Insurance or Professional Indemnity Insurance, as appropriate, to cover all risks during the term of the Contract.
7. **Previous experience reference:** Providers must provide a reference to demonstrate their involvement in the provision of domiciliary care services, either by involvement of the provider or its Registered Manager or Responsible Person, as defined by RQIA, in one or more contracts in which the provider or its Registered Manager or Responsible Person has provided domiciliary care services over the past three years.
8. **Acceptance of the regional domiciliary care hourly rate:** Providers must confirm they are able to deliver the service at the regionally agreed domiciliary care hourly rate.

If/ when the required information, as set out above, has been provided and has been assessed as meeting initial checks, the Trust will arrange a pre-contractual visit at the Provider's premises to meet with relevant senior Provider representatives. The Provider will be asked to furnish Trust Officers with relevant information and assurances in relation to its management and governance arrangements to ensure the provision of high-quality, accountable and sustainable domiciliary care services.

Following the pre-contractual visit, the Trust will review the all of the information and assurances provided in making its decision to award a Contract to the Provider. The Trust will inform the Provider in writing of the outcome of its decision.

9. Does the Trust promote/broker their care packages on an IT system, if so, what is it and how do the trust choose between suppliers?

We are currently using a bespoke EBrokerage IT system to record package requirements and a Provider Portal to send out our Unmet Need on a daily basis. This portal is used by Domiciliary Providers to make an offer and by our Care Bureau team to receive the offers for processing. This system is used across both Statutory and Independent Sector Providers.

We have a list of Brokerage Principles which were developed with both our BT Statutory Service and representatives from IS Providers. These principles are used by the Brokers in our Care Bureau Department to support decision making where there is more than one Provider making an offer on a call or multiple calls.

10. Who is the main contact within the Trust for assessing service providers who want to be added to the approved list?

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Providers that wish to be considered for a Trust contract for the provision of domiciliary care services should email: ContractsCommServ@belfasttrust.hscni.net