

Costs of running CYC reablement service

The overall cost of running the CYC in-house Reablement service is just under £1.4m. Face to face staff are contracted for 1258 hours per week but after allowances are made for leave, sickness, training, travel time etc the actual contact hours is in the order of 500 hours which gives a contact time of around 40%. However if the same rationale around case management time etc is applied to the private sector then the in-house allowance should also include 20% in order to include time for planning, case management in the same way. If this were counted as contact time the number of hours currently delivered by the in-house service would increase to 600.

It is acknowledged that the running cost of an in-house Reablement service will be expensive due in most part because of local authority terms and conditions. Apart from the better pay which local authority staff enjoy they also benefit from better leave, car/travel allowances and weekly hour contracts which are much larger than the private sector. Private sector agencies would employ staff on lower weekly contracts with an expectation that additional hours could be worked as required. The majority of local authorities established their Reablement service in parallel with a reduction or disestablishment of their in-house homecare service. A minority of authorities have contracted with private sector providers to deliver Reablement services. The rationale for opting for an in-house Reablement services was often a consequence of the existence of a large in-house homecare service and the acknowledgement that this staff group had broadly similar skills.

This position is now changing as Local Authorities look to move service delivery out of in-house provision to the independent sector.

Contact Time is defined as the time care staff actually spend in direct face-to-face contact with customers, it is usually expressed as a percentage of the hours that a carer is contracted to work. Non-contact time consists of holidays, sickness, training, travel time, team meetings, supervision and down time. Contact time in local authorities is usually between 30% and 40% (source CSED). This is a low figure and is usually the root cause of the marked difference between local authority costs and private sector costs. Invariably the amount of annual holidays and time off for sickness is less in the private sector. Travel time is minimal in the private sector as they recruit more locally to where the customers live and are generally more able to cluster routes. An important part of non-contact time usually relates to the larger individual weekly contracts on which staff are employed in local government. Local government staff tend to be on contracts which average in excess of 20 hours per week whereas the private sector rarely exceed 10 hours guaranteed hours in a contract. This allows the private sector to be more flexible and by paying extra hours only utilise staff when there is work. Often in local authorities the hours that staff are contracted to work does not fit with when customers want a service eg mid morning and mid afternoon and this leads to a form of non contact time by non utilisation of contracted hours sometimes referred to as down time.