

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Adult Social Care held at County Hall, Lewes on 27 March 2008

PRESENT - Councillor Gubby (Chairman)
Councillors Forster, Taylor (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Tidy, Tunwell, Webb and Woodall

Chief Officer: Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care

Legal Adviser: Angela Reid, Head of Legal Services

Scrutiny Lead Officer: Gillian Mauger, Scrutiny Lead Officer

ALSO PRESENT - Councillor Healy
- Jessie McArthur, Head of Policy and Service Development
- Jaine Huntley – Service Development Manager
- Mr and Mrs Browne – Direct Payment Service Users

35. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

35.1 RESOLVED to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the last Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 November 2007.

36. REPORTS

36.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

37. PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

37.1 The Committee considered a report from the Director of Adult Social Care that provided details of the recently released Putting People First agreement. Jessie McArthur, Head of Policy and Service Development, gave a presentation and answered questions from Members.

37.2 Putting People First would be a key change driver for the department over the next 2 to 3 years. The Adult Social Care Department would be the lead on Putting People First, but for it to be delivered effectively partnership working was key. Therefore the Local Area Agreements and Sustainable Community Strategy were important vehicles in taking this agenda forward.

37.3 Funding of £5.4 million would be provided between 2008/09 and 2010/11 to support the cost of implementing Putting People First. Linked to this funding would be key targets that the department would need to meet during its implementation.

37.4 In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The impact that the agreement would have on the provision of services, both in-house and in the independent sector, had not yet been established.
- By 2011 it was expected that significant progress would be made towards all service users having personal budgets.
- GPs are crucial in supporting improved Health and wellbeing and therefore it was essential that GPs understood the range of services available and signposted their clients to them.
- Training relating to the changes in practice that Putting People First would bring was important. This would be needed not only for health and social care professionals but also the voluntary sector, private providers and carers.
- Fairer Access to Care criteria (FACS) will be reviewed this year and this will result in changes to how eligibility is established. Additionally the Green Paper on the long term approach to social care funding due in the autumn will be important.
- At present personal budgets would only be used for the adult social care element of a service. Although it was envisaged that this could expand to include aspects of health provision in the future.

37.5 Members recognised that the Committee, the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and the Local Involvement Network (LINKs) could all have a role to play in monitoring the development of Putting People First and ensuring the successful implementation of it.

37.6 RESOLVED to (1) Include an item on the Green Paper on the long term approach to social care funding in the work programme.

(2) receive future reports as the implementation process is agreed in consultation with staff and other stakeholders.

38. DIRECT PAYMENTS

38.1 The Committee considered a report from the Director of Adult Social Care that provided an update on progress since the 2004 Scrutiny Review of Direct Payments. Jaine Huntley, Service Development Manager, and Mr and Mrs Browne, Direct Payment service users, were in attendance.

38.3 Members were advised that there was no longer a waiting list to receive Direct Payments and that 90% of service users now received Direct Payments within 8 weeks from confirmation of funding. As a result of improvements made the target of reaching 'blob banding' 4 had been achieved by February 2008. As a result the target had been increased.

38.4 Mr and Mrs Browne spoke positively about Direct Payments, the support received from A4e, and the difference Direct Payments had made to their lives since provision began in October 2007. They did however raise concerns about the length of time it had taken to get Direct Payments in place, although it was acknowledged that their situation was unique. They also highlighted concerns about the lack of direct contact Mr Browne now had with the department and how, although it was not an issue for him, there was a need to ensure appropriate safeguarding provision for those clients who used family members as carers in the future.

38.5 Members were advised that the length of wait that Mr and Mrs Browne experienced was a reflection on where the service was at that time, but had since

greatly improved. The department also recognised the need to flag up exceptional cases sooner and ensure that they are dealt with quickly. It was recognised that it would be difficult for all service users to receive weekly contact from the department, but that staff needed to be clearer with clients about the level of contact they would receive once they had taken up Direct Payments.

38.7 RESOLVED to (1) congratulate staff for the improvement in the provision and take up of Direct Payments;

(2) continue to monitor the provision and take up of Direct Payments through the Putting People First agenda; and

(3) write to Mr and Mrs Browne to thank them taking the time to come and talk to the Committee about their experiences.

39. EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVENTATIVE SERVICES IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE

39.1 The Committee considered a report from the Director of Adult Social Care that provided information following the scrutiny review on Preventative Services in 2007.

39.2 Total current investment by the department in preventative services currently stood at 3% and it was expected to remain broadly at this level in the future. Although it was difficult to say for definite if investment in preventative services had led to a reduction in spending on more intensive services, evidence at both a local and national level did support this assumption.

39.3 The majority of performance measures linked to preventative services were either on target or performing above the target. Members asked if there was an opportunity to shift resources from areas that were over performing to those that were under performing. It was noted that resources were difficult to move within the financial year and that some of these indicators were key for the department as they formed part of the Performance and Assessment Framework and high performance of these was important.

39.4 RESOLVED to note the current investment on Preventative Services and performance to date on performance measures in this area.

40. RECONCILING POLICY AND RESOURCES – FEEDBACK TO SCRUTINY

40.1 The Committee considered a report from the Director of Law and Personnel that provided feedback on the outcomes of scrutiny input into the Reconciling Policy and Resources (RPR) process in 2007/08.

40.2 RESOLVED to forward any further suggestions on areas for improvement to the Reconciling Policy and Resources process to the Scrutiny Lead Officer.

41. ADULT SOCIAL CARE DEPARTMENTAL SICKNESS ABSENCE LEVELS

41.1. The Committee considered a report from the Director of Adult Social Care that provided an update on current sickness levels within the department and on the success of the stress management steering group and physical therapy pilot scheme.

41.2 Comparative authority figures were circulated to Members which showed that East Sussex Adult Social Care Department compared favourably in terms of days lost through sickness. It was noted that there had been a cultural shift within the workforce regarding sickness and how it was managed by Managers.

41.3 RESOLVED to note the progress made in relation to the Department's sickness absence levels.

42. QUARTER THREE MONITORING REPORT AGAINST THE 2007/08 COUNCIL PLAN

42.1 The Committee considered a report from the Director of Policy and Communications that provided an update on performance against the Council Plan for quarter three of 2007/08.

42.2 Members raised concerns about the lack of detail within the commentary section of the performance table and asked that better ways be found of presenting this information in future.

42.3 Several performance measures were performing better than expected and more challenging targets were now being set. Member received assurances that these higher targets would be both achievable and sustainable.

42.4 RESOLVED to note the achievements made by the Adult Social Care Department

43. FUTURE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

43.1 The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Personnel setting out the Committee's work programme. An update on key issues around the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act was circulated to Members.

43.2 It was noted that the Directly Provided Services Board would be held on Wednesday 30 April at Bexhill Town Hall and that the Adult Social Care Away Day would be held on Thursday 10 April 2008.

43.3 RESOLVED to note the Committee's planned programme of work and to include an item on the forthcoming Green Paper on the long term approach to social care funding.

44. FORWARD PLAN

44.1 The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 March to 31 July 2008.

34.2 RESOLVED to note the Forward Plan and request that the transport Eligibility Policy be brought to the Committee meeting in June 2008.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 12.35 pm.