

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**
held on Wednesday, 9th May, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor M J Simon (Chairman)
Councillor B Silvester (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors D Bebbington, I Faseyi, J Jackson, L Jeuda, S Jones, F Keegan,
B Murphy, J Saunders and D Stockton

Apologies

Councillors C Andrew

In attendance

Bill Brookes – LINk Representative

Officers

Lucia Scally - Head of Strategic Commissioning and Safeguarding
Jacqui Evans - Head of Local Delivery/Independent Living Services
Mark Grimshaw – Scrutiny Officer

64 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2012 be approved as a correct record.

65 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None noted.

66 DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIP

None noted.

67 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Charlotte Peters-Rock attended to address the Committee. She made the following assertions:

- That in undertaking the Adults Services Rationalisation, the Council had put financial considerations before the needs of service users
- That the public speaking section of the minutes from the meeting held on 13 April 2012 had been recorded inaccurately

- That a party whip had been applied to the meeting held on 13 April 2012 and that this had not been declared.
- That the temporary closure of Bexton Court had presented an opportunity for the Council to explore how service users were coping in its absence and that this opportunity had not been utilised.
- That no affordable financial arrangement for independent private respite/day care had been made available in Knutsford.

Giles Watmough also attended to address the Committee. He made a number of comments about the future managerial arrangements of the Adults Directorate and expressed some concerns about various aspects of the service.

The Chairman thanked both speakers for attending and their comments were noted.

68 PERSONALISATION POLICY

Jacqui Evans, Head of Local Delivery/Independent Living Services, attended to present the Council's policy on personalisation for scrutiny comment prior to final approval. She explained that whilst the Council had been following the personalisation agenda for a couple of years, there had not been a single policy to bring the various strands of work and responses to new legislation together. She reported that the new policy would also help the Council to achieve a consistency of approach across the service. Considering the complexity of the issues covered in the policy, Jacqui Evans suggested that a bespoke training day for Councillors could be arranged if it was felt appropriate.

Attention was drawn to page 8 and the mention of potentially using an advocate for discussions with service users with a learning disability. It was queried whether this would be an independent advocate as it was asserted that independence was important in terms of safeguarding. Jacqui Evans confirmed that the advocate would be independent. With this in mind, it was suggested that this be specified in the document.

Reference was made to a recent Notice of Motion that had stated that service users should be made more aware of the Council's complaints and comments procedure. It was noted that there was no mention of such a procedure in the personalisation policy and it was suggested that this was an oversight. Jacqui Evans confirmed that she would explore including this in the policy.

It was queried whether people could access Council services if they were in receipt of a personal budget. Jacqui Evans explained that whilst they couldn't buy back Council Services with a direct payment, a service user could have a 'hybrid' package in which part of their budget was managed and delivered by the Council whilst they used direct payments for other external services. It was suggested that this situation was unclear to a number of service users and that social workers should be encouraged to communicate it effectively. Jacqui Evans acknowledged the point and assured the Committee that work would be done to improve this.

A concern was expressed with regard to those people who presented for care but did not qualify as they did not have substantial or critical needs. It was stated that if these people were not helped appropriately through a robust referral process,

they could develop a substantial need – creating a worse outcome for the individual and the Council. Jacqui Evans and Lucia Scally, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Safeguarding, both noted that the Council's referral process was something that the service was looking to improve and that work was underway to do so.

Reference was made to the personalisation process flow chart on page 17. A general comment was made that this seemed overly complex but particular attention was paid to the language used, especially the term 'diversion routes'. It was suggested that this term needed to be reassessed. Jacqui Evans confirmed that the service would review the use of this term in the policy.

Attention was drawn to the second bullet point on page 16. It was suggested that the sentence beginning 'In addition...' be separated into a distinct bullet point in order to emphasise its importance.

It was queried what advice was available to service users on how they could ensure they were getting value for money on their direct payment contracts. Jacqui Evans reported that the Council did have a brokerage contract with Age UK but it was also acknowledged that this could be improved. She continued to describe how it was a difficult balance for the Council to ensure value for money was being achieved because it did not want to interfere too much with people's personal budgets. Having said this, the Committee was reassured that the service was looking to ensure that the contract monitoring processes were as robust as possible.

A number of comments were made regarding the presentation of the policy. It was suggested that it was too process focused and that it could have been improved by including outcomes and anonymised or theoretical examples. Jacqui Evans acknowledged the comments and stated that they would be taken into consideration in the presentation of future policies.

Regarding the potential for a bespoke training session on personalisation for Councillors, there was general agreement that this would be helpful. It was also suggested that Councillors could be invited to the final staff training day on the 23rd May 2012. It was stated that within such a bespoke training session it would be important for Councillors to gain an understanding of the processes around personalisation, particularly in terms of what outcomes the Council wanted for its service users, how was it going to try and achieve these and how well it was currently doing to do so. It was also noted that the use of examples was helpful to illustrate how the process functions.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Personalisation Policy be endorsed by the Committee subject to the following amendments:
 - a. That it be specified that the 'advocate' referred to on page 8 would be an 'independent advocate'
 - b. That reference to helping people to access the complaints and comments procedure be included in the policy
 - c. That the term 'diversion routes' used on page 17 be reviewed and changed.
 - d. That the sentence beginning 'In addition...' on page 16 be separated into a distinct bullet point.

- b) That the following comments be considered by the service:
 - a. That service users be made aware that they could access Council services even when in receipt of a personal budget
 - b. That Council's referral process be improved so that it produces meaningful outcomes for service users
 - c. That the service ensure that its contract monitoring process is as robust as possible to help service users get value for money from direct payments.
 - d. That future policy documents include examples and have a balanced focus on outcomes and processes.
- c) That Councillors be invited to the staff training day on personalisation on the 23rd May 2012
- d) That a bespoke personalisation training session for Councillor be developed and that this include information on:
 - a. What outcomes the service wanted for its service users
 - b. How the service intended to achieve these outcomes
 - c. How well the service was currently doing in achieving the outcomes.

The meeting commenced at 10.05 am and concluded at 11.40 am

Councillor M J Simon (Chairman)