

Mountview Consultation Summary - Appendix 2

A consultation on Mountview Community Support Centre in Congleton was held between 7th March- 25th April 2013. Its aim was to understand the views of customers and the public on the proposal to review the delivery of services at Mountview. It was underlined that whatever the outcome, customers would continue to receive a service which would meet their assessed care needs.

Customers were informed about the consultation by letter; this was followed up with a reminder letter and a telephone call. The review was publicised with the general public using local press releases, the radio, a consultation booklet and poster in key locations and by featuring it on the Cheshire East Council website. Feedback could be provided via a questionnaire, face to face meetings (for customers attending Mountview and their carers), letter, telephone and email.

193 responses were received in total during the consultation with 74 of these from customers attending Mountview or their carers. This meant that 72% of customers were represented. The Council also received 58 questionnaires. In addition to this, a petition was presented to the Council stressing the importance of keeping Mountview. This contained 1,608 signatures.

Summary of Feedback

Care:

- The services at Mountview were seen to be of high quality and were highly valued. Staff in particular were singled out for praise by many, with recognition that they were responsible for making it 'a home from home'.
- Respondents stressed the importance of continuity of care. Firstly, because conditions such as dementia meant that a change of service would be very disruptive to customers' wellbeing. Secondly, because the social interaction that Mountview offered was highly prized. Many comments were received stating that long standing friendships had been made at the centre.

- Mountview was seen as crucial for providing a break for carers. Without this help, many reported that they might not be able to cope, which in turn would mean the cared for person having to go into long term care.
- The need to provide improved care facilities in Cheshire East such as by the provision of en-suites was seen as secondary to the importance of their continuing to be a facility in Congleton.

Occupancy

- Many respondents felt that Mountview was well used. Respondents evidenced this by citing difficulties they had experienced in getting a respite place. It was also argued that factors such as building work, customer no-shows and the complex needs of customers limiting how many people the centre could take at anyone time, distorted statistics showing usage.
- The likelihood of demand increasing in the future for day and respite services in Congleton was highlighted. Documents such as the Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, a report by Adult Social Care Scrutiny, the Local Plan for Congleton were used to evidence this. As such, closing Mountview was seen as a short term cost cutting measure which would be inefficient in the long term.

Alternative Services

- It was argued that there was insufficient capacity at alternative Council centres to take customers from Mountview. It was also felt that there was a lack of suitable services in the independent sector. Moreover, those that were available were felt to be of a lower standard in terms of care and to be more expensive.
- Some respondents stated that Direct Payments were too much work, and only suitable if choice was available in Congleton. Home Care and the Shared Lives Services were seen as unable to offer the social element that was a key strength of day care.

Transport

- Travel to services outside Congleton (such as in Crewe or Macclesfield) was seen as expensive and time-consuming for both customers and carers. In particular, it was argued that it would significantly reduce the amount of time for a carer to have a break. It was also felt that it would make it more difficult to respond in emergency situations.

The Consultation

- Comments were made about the consultation process itself. This included a feeling that it was a 'done deal', that there was insufficient information in the Consultation Pack for an informed judgement to be made, and that there should have been a public meeting run by the Council.

Example Quotes from respondents

"...it is clean, comfortable, staff friendly and the food is nice. Nice little touches such as a little valentines cake on valentines day....".

"Generally people who attend Mountview do not like change, they build friendships and relationships that would cause them a lot of upset if it changed."

"Closure would be a short-sighted decision because any removal of this local service will lead to the Council having to intervene more often as the carers themselves start to suffer burnout and stress."

"The lack of en-suite facilities cited by Cheshire East Council appears to me to be an excuse to close Mountview down".

"To have only three Community Support Centre's operated by Cheshire East Council is currently inadequate especially given the Government predictions for the increase in those aged 80 and over in next 20 years..."

Note: The full consultation report is available for Members to consider at http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/social_care_and_health/adult_social_care/consultation_and_participation/consultations_2011_to_2013/mountview_community_centre.aspx