

**AWB Carers Consultation regarding Service Remodel 27/02/17 at Canal Road
1.30pm**

Hosted by Crossroads - Facilitated by Laura Ferguson

Present;

AWB Commissioning Rep – Laura Ferguson

unpaid carers X 5

Crossroads staff x 2

Introduction

LF set the context of the meeting regarding the proposed reduction in budget to carers support services, and thanks all for allowing her to attend . Laura asked people to introduce themselves and asked them if you would talk about their caring role and the services/support they receive

Scenario 1

“Crossroads allows me to get to work one day a week, without this service I would not be able to cope. They care for my husband at home .Work is a lifeline to me.”

Through discussion we ascertained that the services mainly referred to by this lady were home care services, and were outside the scope of this service redesign. This immediately put this lady and a number of others at ease as they had assumed this was the service under discussion.

We discussed the difference in front line services to support the cared for, and the need to look at where any budget reductions would have least impact for all. This was also in the context that Herefordshire had typically delivered over and above its legal expectation in a commitment to carers.

“I am currently looking for a nursing home for my husband and I have some difficult decisions to make. I am not a car driver so I find it especially difficult to visit places to look. I am not completely sure about the funding process for CHC”

We discussed the dilemmas and the facts around this process. Other members of the group were able to offer their experiences and knowledge of some of the homes in Herefordshire.

Scenario 2

“I have never received the money I was told I was going to get”

Through discussion we discovered some carers when told of the (indicative)budget to meet assessed need they thought they would receive this as a cash value. We discussed in principle how this works and that the council meets assessed needs by paying for these services, and the cash is spent by organisations to deliver the agreed support, rather than the cash given to the carer (unless it is a direct payment)

Scenario 3

“Crossroads have been our salvation” When asked to describe what it is crossroads do I was told they listened, you can ring them up and ask for help. They are on the end of the phone when I don't know who to ring. The carers have all been exceptional with xxxx (husband - again alluding to the home care service)

Scenario 4

“I have spent time training HC staff, I don't think staff are thinking out of the box enough to look for solutions to carers problems. The family unit has changed, families are not looking after their own as much as they used to “

There was discussion about how organisations like crossroads might be better placed to provide signposting and support than a social worker, and how the role of the social worker has changed.

We also talked about the number of referrals to crossroads has been much lower than expected, which may make us think that there might be some room for changes here as the demand is not there as predicted.

Scenario 5

I care for my husband at home, he is nursed in bed. I really value being able to have social times, and its difficult to do this together as my husband needs to be hoisted . I can go out with crossroads and its something to look forward to.“

Crossroads talked about meeting the needs of their current cohort, and that referrals do not come through hospitals or GP's.

They have sought to build a programme of events both on and off site and see themselves as filling gaps in provision. It was noted that the contract related to an information/advice and support service, and that outcomes were delivered in the spirit of the contract, but not as specified in the contract.

At the end of the meeting we concluded by asking some key questions from the questionnaire.

Scores are given from a possible 5 if all agreed

Q6. Do you get help and support from any of the following?

- Family – 3*
- Friends – 3 (qualified as mostly emotional rather than practical)*
- Local community Groups –*
- Schools – n/a (all older carers)*
- Herefordshire Council -2 (justified as blue badges, bus passes- but then discussed them meeting their duty through commissioned services and this was acknowledged)*

- *Crossroads care – 5*
- *WISH – 3 (very positive from those that used it. The other 2 had no direct experience of it)*
- *Herefordshire Carers support - 3*
- *National Charities -4 (Dementia Cafe, Singing for the brain)*
- *Other (Future learn- on line courses x 1, Parkinsons nurse,Memory Clinic,, 2G, Leominster meeting centre)*

When asked what people value most -

The general feedback from this cohort was that direct face to face/ voice to voice services are valued over online services. Support networks and social engagements/trips

“ today has been useful, the council should do this more”

When asked what would they miss most- things we could do without they suggested less duplication of process and services (eg single assessment)

Summary of event/ findings

Initial assumption of carers was that direct services delivered by crossroads (home care services) were under threat, even though the majority of people in the room were self-funders. The consultation event allowed people to better understand the proposed element of the services that are within the scope of the consultation, and although these were valued by carers, this enabled people to feel less anxious and concerned.

It was also clear that crossroads contract is underutilised due to low number of referrals, and that the provider has been creatively achieving added value within the spirit of the contract, but over and above the original offer to its carers, due to the numbers anticipated below a fifth of the growth anticipated.

AWB Carers Consultation regarding Service Remodel

Hosted by Herefordshire Carers Support (HCS)

Facilitated by Laura Ferguson

Consultation meetings – arranged by HCS

08.03.17 – Leominster (15 unpaid carer representatives attended)

14.03.17 – Hereford (26 unpaid carer representatives attended)

27.03.17 – Kington (11 unpaid carer representatives attended)

Attended by commissioning offer- Laura Ferguson

Introduction

Laura set the context of the meeting regarding the proposed reduction in budget to carers support services, and thanks all coming to discuss.

The meetings enabled people to ask questions and express their thoughts about the proposal. It also allowed the context to be set in the light of reduced spend on social care, and the councils position to protect front lines service where ever possible. This will minimise the impact upon carers and the careered for.

The meetings throughout the county had a slightly different feel, but all were underpinned by the message that carers did not want to see the funding to HCS cut and that they valued the service and the support they received.

During each meeting wherever possible each individual was encouraged to express their thoughts on the proposal. This was facilitated in the main, but the larger group in Hereford was time restricted and in each of the meetings where were some more vocal members who dominated the discussions in part.

Initially in all meetings carers challenged the proposal and asked if the decisions had already been made. The process and timescales were clarified and the short timescale acknowledged.

Direct quotes from carers at the meetings

There is always someone there at the end of the phone

I object to being told to self-manage, I already do this as much as I can

I am against the cuts

I value the support group in Weobley

HCS keep me going in my own home

I trust HCS, I don't feel alone. HCS are like a family

They offer practical advice as well as emotional support

I am frightened about what the future holds.

I didn't feel listened to on Carers rights day

Being a carer can be isolating. The support groups allow me to make friends

At the support groups I find out answers to questions I wouldn't of thought to have asked.

Its difficult to put a price on the value of HCS

They are my lifeline, my safety net

Unpaid carers save the council lots of money. How much would it cost if I stopped caring and the council had to pay? Cutting HCS is a false economy.

I am concerned about the suicide rate if carer support gets cut.

HCS have an open door policy, you get familiar faces and ongoing support

They provide training which has really helped me in my role as a carer such as medication, first aid, dementia, Contingency planning, free will writing, etc.

I have paid my dues; we shouldn't be the target for cuts

Carers give up their life for others.

You cant get hold of a social worker, HCS are always there

Questions

- *What is the cost of carers support per person?*

If we use the figure of the carer register which HCS hold of 4671 then the total spend on HCS and Crossroads Care, the cost per head from the 2016-7 spend is £112,230 per carer. However we can also calculate that if we were reaching all the predicted unpaid carers in Herefordshire the spend would be £25.41 per person, so the current spend is in excess of 4 times the allocation per person.

- *The council has been given extra money into the social care budget, why aren't you using this?*

The extra money will be allocated to support specific themes; we are still learning what these are and will be shared with health. It looks likely this will be directed towards supporting the hospital discharge pathway, but we will know more soon.

Ideas

Carers raised a few questions that were directed back to HCS, as follows;-

- Could we pay for membership to keep things going? I don't mind paying to join.
- Could we meet less often but still meet? I already meet with friends I have made through the group in between meetings.

When asked what people value most -

The general feedback from this cohort was that direct face to face/ voice to voice services are valued over online services. Support networks, time to talk and be listened to. Time outside of the caring role.

Training was also valued, and HSC delivered some specific training (dementia awareness) and acted as a coordinator for training.

Summary of event/ findings

The services delivered by HCS are very much valued by the people that use the services. The cohort that came to the meetings found value in the meetings and some additional people had come along that weren't regulars to the support groups, but wanted to have a say about the proposed budget reduction.

It is also acknowledged that it was difficult to get time with the carers as meetings were arranged in advance and they already had speakers lined up at venues, however officers made themselves available to attend all meetings offered by HCS and actively sought out these dates.

The consultation event allowed people to better understand the proposal and the process but did little to allay the fear of people attending the meetings. People arrived anxious and did engage in the process, but the theme of self-reliance and resilience was not embraced by the provider and the audience presented more as victims than recipients.

It is clear the current spend is reaching only a few, but those few are anxious about the impact to HCS whom they have a close alliance with.

