

Appendix Two

Adult Social Care Next Stage Integration interim consultation report

Adult Social Care Next Stage Integration interim consultation report

Workshop
review

Herefordshire Council Citizen
Engagement Team July 2013

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Introduction

Currently Herefordshire Wye Valley Trust provides Adult Social Care Adult Social Care services under a section 75 agreement. This contract will end in September and the council wants to find alternative ways to provide services to support adults. The council intends to give people more choice and control over how they use Adult Social Care services and how they use personal budgets to meet their needs and aspirations.

The way services are provided is going to change. The council will engage with providers, organisations and staff to provide support and engagement activities, with the aim to bridge the gap between the services customers want to purchase and those which are currently provided within Herefordshire.

The changes will encourage a market place which offers more choice and control to customers so that they can enjoy happy independent lives for longer. There are five services which the council wants other organisations, groups or individuals to provide in the future

These are:

Community equipment stores

A service for people who need to access equipment such as handrails and specialist beds.

Adult placement scheme

Management of a Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered scheme that involves placing adults with critical and substantial needs with families with a view to sharing their homes and their lives.

Norfolk House sheltered accommodation

Delivering support services to tenants living in the council's Norfolk House extra sheltered accommodation scheme

Reablement

Temporary support (up to a maximum of six weeks) to help people through illness, injury or trauma, to get their lives back to where they were prior to their illness.

Day opportunities

A range of activities and support services that people can use their personal budgets to purchase.

This preliminary report details the results from the first round of meetings for the Adult Social Care Next Stage Integration consultation. It excludes analysis of the on-going survey as this runs until 19th July. A full report of the qualitative data received from the events held with service users, families and carers and the survey will follow once the consultation period has ended.

Methodology

All specific services which were affected by the proposals were contacted and officers from the Citizen Engagement Team, Operational Staff and the Interim Transformation Officer Elected Members and the Director were also involved were made available to discuss the proposals and gain feedback in a comfortable, group environment.

Apart from two open events, the consultation activities focused on utilizing buildings where the affected services are provided in order to engage with as many interested parties as possible. Services teams and users were spoken to directly and service users, carers and families are also being offered a dedicated phone line number for people to discuss how the changes may affect them personally, and to provide feedback over the phone if they have had difficulty with any aspects of the consultation.

In addition to the above feedback is also offered and collated via the following methods:

- Providing feedback via the manager at the affected service
- Providing feedback over the phone
- Writing a letter or email feedback to the consultation address
- People can also write to their MP, councillor or council staff to raise their concerns

Table 1 Number of local meetings* and number of attendee's**

Method of completion	Number of meetings held	Number of attendee's
Council consultation events	2	81
Service specific consultations	12	374
Total	14	455

*** Please note further meetings are still to take place**

**** Some people attended more than one meeting, and are counted more than once**

At the consultations names and contact details were taken from those attending if they were interested in joining a representative group, details of which can be found in Next Steps within this document.

Overarching/ key themes

The purpose of the consultation activity was to gain feedback on the proposals, give an opportunity to ask questions and, importantly, to ask how the proposals may affect people. These comments are to be fed into the project information so that decision makers are aware of the full impact of the proposals on various, protected groups. The consultation also asked what service provision should look like in the future to meet need and demand, but this will be the main focus of the representative groups.

Fear that services will stop on September

The key concern/ question amongst the service user, carer and parent groups were that services were going to stop or be interrupted when the current contract with Wye Valley Trust ceases in September. This fear was compounded, in some cases by worried staff affected by the project giving incorrect information and adding to the concerns of those affected by the proposals

Initial communication

Many concerns were raised about the initial communication:

'Some service users cannot read and require a carer to read it to them'

'Some have difficulties in understanding contents even when read to them and most do not have capacity to use email or internet independently, if they have queries regarding the letter'

'All the letter did, when explained to my service user, was to make them very scared that services would be stopped, changed or altered to 'Live independently' as described in the letter'

A new, clearer communication has followed and in addition the Council has created a frequently asked question (FAQ) document and dedicated phone line for use by anyone concerned by the proposals

Personal Budgets and Assessments

A lot of emphasis has been made about people buying services using Personal Budgets (PB's) but there are very few currently utilising one. Many cannot see the proposed benefits to them nor do they have many local examples of people using PB's and direct payments (DP's in a positive way to demonstrate increased choice

and control opportunities. There is currently no word of mouth and few good news stories to promote the change within the client groups.

The biggest issue is around people who have been through the assessment process, and the time scales taken for this process to happen. In a number of cases, as communicated at the meetings, this has taken many months; even years to complete or they are still ongoing.

At the meetings it was communicated that the council is aware of the difficulties around the assessment process and an important piece of work within the Adult Social Care Programme is ensuring improvement of the process. It was suggested that this be looked at by the service user reference groups to allow those using the process to input directly in the further improvements and redesign.

There are many examples of where service users with PB's and service providers are *doing things differently*. An example of this is at Marshfield Day Centre (Leominster) and within the representative groups this could be used as best practice example for promoting other ways of working and the effective use of PB's.

Timescales for change

Many were concerned that all the projects that seem to be running alongside each other could not be done in the timescales given. Whilst this was part of a misunderstanding around what the September date meant in reality, it was still a concern that the assessment process and the perceived lack of an appropriate market place for other services still needed to be addressed as part of the process. The reality is that this is a long term change programme.

Worried that good services are going

Again where good work has been done by current services it is a concern that by having new providers, services would be starting all over again and mistakes from the past could be repeated. All the services engaged so far (Adult Placement Scheme (APS), Day Centres and especially Norfolk house) saw this as a big issue and in some instances a very emotive one.

Many are uncomfortable that those running these projects or making decisions do not understand the large amount of change that is being required to happen and that this cannot be achieved within the timescales proposed.

It was also highlighted that there is no other service provision or choice in Herefordshire. This is covered in more detail below.

Reassurance sought about current levels of provision remaining

There were concerns raised that after assessments and moves to PB's that hours or time was being cut or budget provision no longer covered what the service user received previously. An example of this was given using a scheme called 'Pack it' noting that a service users days had been *cut from 5 days to 4 days as that's all his*

budget can afford. This was one of a number of similar concerns raised at the meetings.

This fear was compounded by the worry of a cut in hours/ support. This is a common anxiety with those who currently attend Day Centres who see that whilst the service will/ may still be there post September 13th they fear that the actual support given will be less due to fewer staff being available following current staff reduction plans.

Some carer groups were also very clear that current provision is very cost effective when compared to 'Individual outings' and there are concerns that PB allocation may no longer cover these activities or future planned services.

This is just privatisation

One of the phrases heard often is

That this is just about '*Privatisation by the backdoor*'. It is seen that the council wants to '*Wash its hands of services and service users*'

There is a large mistrust of private companies who need to make a profit by being cheaper and not being able to offer the same services for less money.

Many felt that '*Decisions had already been made*' with regards to new providers being found.

The message given to this was that the council is currently restricted in what services it can provide and how it can do it. This process is not a closed one to just private companies, but is open to charities, the third sector and there is a strong emphasis on encouraging community and independent organisations.

Lack of market place for other options/ services

It was stated when ever giving the message that we wanted to offer more choice and control, that Herefordshire currently does not have an appropriate market place of providers to support this. Many may well be happy with being able to shop around and find alternative provision but currently it is recognised that this provision isn't currently available. Again a fear of losing something without any another options was raised.

There are small pockets of quality, alternative services currently demonstrating good practice in Herefordshire and it was noted that perhaps these need more promotion with a centralised '*Menu of services*' so service users could see what's is available across the county.

Lack of advocacy and support

'What happens if something goes wrong?' Was a question asked at a number of meetings. Currently, as mentioned above, there is a visible gap in how services are promoted and picked up by the service user. This is also the case for any advocacy services to provide both a voice and support for the service user if they are unhappy or need impartial support in making a complaint

Fear of change

Fear of change is a major issue. What came through strongly was that service users felt *attached both* to their current service and the people providing those services. They didn't want or need change. For most it was their only outlet for social activities, to meet with friends and they highlighted that they had formed strong trusting relationships with staff and carers. Several service users families and carers were worried that alternative services would not be as safe as the ones they currently use. Disruption to this or any cut in hours/ provision was seen as a major detriment to the service users and to home life where families and carers are already under pressure. Any cut in service could be detrimental to all parties and could put additional increased need for health and social care services.

Specific service concerns

Detailed below are some specific concerns to come from the conversations unique to the service.

Day Centre's

After the anxiety around closure the main concern was around loss of the social circle and the trust which had been built up between service users their families and staff over months and years.

In some Day Centre's there are areas which are unused or could be utilised to supply other activities. Groups were unhappy that these were being under used and felt that re opening or changing use of some areas may encourage further attendance at the centre. This is something that can be discussed when working with the reference groups.

Adult Placement Scheme

The biggest concern was that if current staff were lost any move to another provider will impact on the work that has been done to improve services after previous years of poor management.

The point was also raised around the prevention work of the service and the amount of money adult placement saves on both social care intervention and hospital admissions.

Work Placement

Concerns around the council's view of work placement were a worry. Services have been moved a great deal already and it was felt this service in particular was continually under threat. All saw this service as valuable and increasing social capital for both those using the service and those contributing to it.

Norfolk House

Being a residential service this had unique feedback. The primary concern was that the kitchen staff would be made redundant meaning the residents would no longer be able to access hot meals that most residents are reliant upon.

Fears of staff reduction also raised questions around how the service could continue to function as it currently does given any staff loss.

Next steps

The first round of meetings have been very helpful in identifying concerns and answering questions attendee's may have had around the project.

The next steps are to set up small, reference groups for the affected services to help advise the project as it moves forward into its next phase.

The aims of these are to:

- Demonstrate a commitment by Herefordshire Council to work with service users, families and carers to help shape services now and in the future.
- Ensure service users, families and carers have input and ownership of existing and new services.
- Use co production methodologies to explore new models of service delivery.
- Look at alternative methods of delivery outside of costly, established services already being provided.
- Investigate and address other areas of concern such as the assessment process, how services are promoted and sourced and an advocacy service to feed into the commissioning and procurement of such provision.