

RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICES

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE, ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

12TH OCTOBER, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To set out the Cabinet's response to the Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee's review of Learning Disabilities Services in Herefordshire Council.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

It was not included in the Forward Plan however inclusion in the agenda gives the required notice in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000.

Recommendation

THAT the response to the Scrutiny Committee's review of Learning Disabilities Services be approved.

Reasons

The Scrutiny Committee's review was designed to gain a fuller understanding of the operation of learning disability services, the demands on the service and, in particular, the factors behind the significant budget pressures that had become apparent over recent years.

In addition, the Committee examined the existing change project plans and reviewed the current balance of services.

The Review's aim was to provide guidance to the Cabinet Member (Social Care Adults and Health) on the current and future service needs and service models and the allocation of resources.

Recommendations from the review have been considered and an action plan prepared.

Considerations

1. Learning disability services for adults are operated as an integrated service between the Council and the Herefordshire PCT under a Section 31 agreement, with the Council as the lead agency. These arrangements are to be reviewed (along with those for mental health and community equipment services) by the end of March

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Stephanie Canham, Head of Social Care - Adults on 01432 260320

2007.

2. For a number of years, the service has been unable to meet demands within the level of resources allocated, and the Council and PCT have invested additional resources. Despite this, the difficulties in maintaining services within budgets have persisted.
3. Against this backdrop, the Adult Social Care & Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee decided on 2nd December 2005 to divide into 3 groups to look at the main areas of service provision in more depth over a 3-month period between March - June 2006. These groups were:
 - Accommodation and Support;
 - Day Opportunities;
 - Assessment and care management.
4. Following the formation of the Adult and Community Services Directorate in the restructuring of Council departments, the Director commissioned a parallel Needs Analysis project in older people's services to investigate the longer term future demands on Council services and resources up to 2020. Adult learning disability services were included in the analysis to anticipate the resource implications for the Council. This will result in recommendations about future service models and their costs.
5. The Scrutiny review group was given a series of presentations about the national and local service context, covering demography, demand for services, changing expectations, threats to existing funding, assessment and care management, accommodation and support and day opportunities.
6. Members then conducted a series of visits to services and met the Valuing People Partnership Board (which represents the major stakeholders in learning disabilities) to begin to develop recommendations.
7. The work of the Scrutiny Committee, and the intelligence gained from the Needs Analysis work will combine to inform the development of a detailed Commissioning Plan for the integrated services. Preparation work on the plan has already begun, and will soon be able to specify the commissioning and procurement intentions of the Programme Board for Learning Disabilities and the Joint Commissioning Group of the Health and Care Partnership. Cabinet will ensure consistency between these work streams. A copy of the Scrutiny Committee report is available in the Members' room.
8. The Scrutiny Committee's report is welcomed as an important and timely contribution to the consideration of the issues facing the Council in learning disability services. The report has been carefully considered and the response to the specific conclusions and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee's report are highlighted in bold type below for information and are followed by the Executive's proposed response. The corresponding action plan is shown in Appendix 1.

Scrutiny Recommendations/Executive's Response

9. **An over-arching aim of the Directorate's Learning Disability Service should be adopted that seeks to support individuals to live as full and independent lives as possible, based on the premise of "ordinary lives" and social inclusion.**

This recommendation is predicated upon the basic principles in the White Paper, Valuing People (2001). Social inclusion is also a fundamental aim embraced in the Herefordshire Community Strategy and as such is accepted and endorsed without reservation. This has implications for the Council and its partners in the Herefordshire Partnership that extend well beyond the responsibilities of health and social care. Although the agenda for social inclusion will, in the short term, be driven by social care, the aim is to highlight the role of the community as a whole and to ensure that this is translated into real support for people with learning disabilities. The recommendation is fully accepted.

10. **Appropriate accommodation is the key to achieving this aim. The Council and its partners should explore all opportunities for providing different options for accommodation and support for people with a learning disability.**

At present, a disproportionate amount of the learning disabilities pooled budget is consumed in providing residential care. It is understood that this imbalance between residential care and more independent living options is not the case in many other authorities, and that the need for a wider range of options is voiced consistently by groups of people with learning disabilities. As such, the principle behind this recommendation is accepted.

11. **All the Council's existing sites providing services for people with a learning disability must be reviewed, with a view to using capital receipts for developing alternative accommodation.**

It is accepted that it is appropriate to keep the use of the Council's resources under constant review in order to ensure the most efficient use of assets. This recommendation will be referred to the Cabinet Member for Resources, for consideration.

12. **Examine the possibility of providing an extra care housing model for people with a learning disability.**

In order to provide the range of options to meet a range of needs, it is accepted that extra care housing could indeed have an important role to play.

13. **Following the needs analysis, engage partners in the independent sector to develop the balance of community and residential services for people with a learning disability.**

The need to change and develop services is accepted in order to meet demands for services and secure best value. It is preferable to see developments progressed through a partnership arrangement with one or more key providers, in order to ensure capacity to respond to changing needs.

14. **Develop a greater understanding of the costs of individuals' care arrangements, using the In Control Model.**

The pilot project for In Control will ensure that a more equitable approach is developed to the allocation of resources to meet a range of needs. The project is founded on a Resource Allocation System that is based on levels of need and is transparent to service users, carers and staff.

- 15. The Council move away from a building-based day opportunities model and work with the voluntary and independent sector to develop more opportunities for choice and inclusion. Better understanding of the unit costs of providing transport and a range of in-house services is required.**

This recommendation is entirely consistent with Valuing People principles and the direction already adopted in the service. Once again, the approach should be through partnership arrangements between the Council and the Third Sector, who are better placed to bring in other funding streams to widen the range of options for users. Unit costing of services is being developed and will inform the commissioning of future services. The recommendation about the unit costing of transport is accepted, and Directorate transport budgets should be targeted at those whose needs cannot be met by public transport. Service users who can travel independently should be encouraged to do so, but there will continue to be a need for transport provision for those less able to travel independently and safely.

- 16. Models of provision should be developed which maximise funding streams.**

This recommendation follows the principle of rebalancing the responsibilities for commissioning learning disability services between statutory health and social care bodies and other government institutions, (as well as society as a whole). The comments under recommendation 11 apply equally here – that third sector partners in particular, can access resources that statutory agencies cannot.

Moving away from registered residential provision to more independent living will promote access to other funding streams e.g. housing benefit/supporting people.

- 17. The Council should use its wider inclusion and disability and diversity strategies to support the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities.**

It is proposed that this recommendation is endorsed in full. The conclusion of the Needs Analysis work also highlights the enormous potential within Council and Herefordshire Partnership strategies and services to enhance the social inclusion of this group and other groups with social disadvantages. There are some practical steps being adopted by the Valuing People Partnership Board to make this a reality. The Community Strategy will be used as a vehicle.

- 18. That the Executive's response to the Review, including an action plan, be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response.**

This response is being made to the first available meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

- 19. That a further report on progress in response to the Review then be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.**

A further report will be made as requested after six months. This will have the benefit of further consideration of the Needs Analysis and Commissioning Plan work.

Financial Implications

The Needs Analysis work will include costings of future models of service. This will identify the financial implications both for the Council and the Primary Care Trust.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Risk Management

The Learning Disabilities Programme Board has both commissioning and Section 31 responsibilities for the services. This Board will monitor the current and future pressures on the services and the pooled budget and report risks to the Joint Commissioning Group and the partner agencies.

The Programme Boards will form a key feature of the Public Service Trust arrangements for joint commissioning and monitoring services.

Consultees

None at this stage.

Background Papers

Report by Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Committee – Review of services to People with a Learning Disability.