

Cllr Simon Allen, Cabinet Member for WellBeing Key Issues Briefing Note

Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel – July 2011

1. PUBLIC ISSUES

Winterbourne View/Castlebeck

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has published its report on Winterbourne View, the Castlebeck run independent hospital at the centre of a BBC Panorama investigation into abuse of vulnerable adults. The CQC inspection was undertaken in May this year. Bath & North East Somerset had no one placed at Winterbourne View during the period covered by either the Panorama investigation or CQC's inspection. The CQC report found that there were "systemic failings" in protecting vulnerable people in their [Winterbourne View's] care. In all, the CQC report published on 18th July finds that the company was failing to meet 10 of the 16 essential standards at Winterbourne View prior to its closure last month. Reports on all of Castlebeck's locations will be published later this summer while 150 services with similar characteristics to Winterbourne View are also being reviewed by CQC.

2. PERFORMANCE

Domiciliary Care Strategic Partnership

Over recent months the performance of one of the five Domiciliary Care Strategic Partners has fallen, with a number of care packages being handed back to the local authority for re-allocation to alternative providers. At the present time, per week, 121 clients receive a total of 999 visits equating to 690 care hours (ordered visits and ordered hours delivered may vary slightly). Target hours in the contract are 1870, however, this level of performance has never been achieved since the start of the contract period. For comparison, hours delivered by the other four Strategic Partners range between 670 (against target hours of 770) and 1326 (against target hours of 719). The Strategic Partner delivering significantly above target hours has achieved this by being very responsive to referrals, which are offered to all Strategic Partners on a rotational basis in line with the contractual framework.

A decision has now been reached by agreement that the contract is unlikely to extend beyond the current contractual period and will therefore terminate on 31st March 2013. The remaining hours/packages of care associated with the contract will need to be transferred to other strategic partners or re-tendered and this will need careful planning and management to ensure that it does not affect continuity and quality of care for service users and carers. Staff associated with the contract will also need to transfer to alternative employers and, considering the volume of work delivered, TUPE implications are likely to apply. Initial meetings with Trades Unions representatives have been held to discuss and agree key messages for affected members and staff. A comprehensive project plan now needs to be developed with all key stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition of service for users and staff.

Extra Care Vacancies

Extra Care housing is an independent living model of service which delivers 24 hour care and support to older and vulnerable people living in their own homes, usually within a purpose built complex. In Bath & North East Somerset there are currently five extra care schemes in operation comprising 140 individual units of accommodation with associated care services provided at all locations by Community Health & Social Care Services (CH&SC). A further 10 units of Extra Care are currently being developed within an existing sheltered housing complex.

Extra Care provides a cost effective alternative to residential care and forms a key part of the Council strategy for promoting the independence of older people and reducing overall spend on residential care. However, recent use of Extra Care has fallen, with the Midsomer Norton scheme in particular seeing occupancy levels as low as 74%.

Two potential issues appear to be affecting performance. The first is that nomination arrangements within CH&SC appear to have been less closely co-ordinated since the introduction of the new single panel arrangements (a possible unintended consequence of the new process for agreeing placements above an agreed threshold). The second relates to the perception of Extra Care amongst potential health and social care referrers with feedback suggesting that the schemes are sometimes viewed as “not supportive enough”, that is, that they cannot cater for people with relatively high care and support needs, or an “unnecessary stage” in an individual’s pathway from living at home and residential care.

In light of this fall in performance, nomination arrangements have been clarified and re-affirmed with all relevant parties. Also, a road show is planned to raise awareness of Extra Care and promote it as a viable alternative to residential care.

3. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Loans Scheme for Homeless Households

The Non Acute Social Care Commissioning team has this month commissioned Bristol Credit Union (BCU) to carry out the loans function of the Homefinders service. Homefinders is a Council initiative that prevents homelessness by enabling people to access the private rented sector using loans for rent in advance and deposits. Roughly 60 household per year are assisted to take up new tenancies through this route. From 1 September, having identified a property that they would like to rent, individuals will now be able to arrange for advance payments to be covered by a loan from Bristol Credit Union, of which they would become a member. As part of this process, BCU will suggest the tenant sets up a Rent Direct payment. Rent Direct ensures that Local Housing Allowance payments are received into the individuals account and are directed to the landlord. This means that the individual is less likely to get into arrears and is more likely to make a success of their tenancy. Membership of BCU also opens up other financial options, such as current and savings accounts, loans for other purposes and information on benefits.

Housing Support Gateway

The 'Housing Support Gateway' was launched on June 23rd. This is an online single point of access to a large number of housing related support services, (supported housing and floating support) in B&NES. It is linked to the Homesearch Register.

Clients can apply online by themselves or with the help of other stakeholders and the system 'matches' the applicant to the services that can best meet their needs. We are hoping that the initiative will make it easier for people to apply, (they'll only have to do one form to be considered for lots of services); ensure that the people in the most need will receive the services; reduce void times, and give us as commissioners a lot of intelligence re demand and use of housing related support services.

The website address is www.housingsupportgatewaybathnes.org.uk