

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

Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel – October 2011

1. PUBLIC ISSUES

Launch of Sirona Care & Health CIC (Community Interest Company)

- Approval for the transfer of both community health services and social care services to Sirona Care & Health CIC (Community Interest Company) on 1st October 2011 was given by the PCT Board and Council on 15th September and by the Council's Delegated Decision Making Group on 16th September.
- The new name and logo for Sirona was chosen and registered with Companies House following work with over 150 staff, volunteers and stakeholders.
- Both the Business Transfer Agreement and Community Services Contract were signed by the Primary Care Trust, Council and Sirona on 22nd September.
- Sirona has achieved Admitted Body Status in relation to Local Government Pensions and a Directions Order has been obtained in respect of transferring PCT staff.
- The Due Diligence process has now been completed. No significant concerns have arisen for any of the Council, PCT or Sirona from this process.
- All of Sirona's critical systems (Payroll for both transferring NHS and transferring Council employees, General Ledger and Accounts Payable systems) are in place and have been tested to the satisfaction of commissioners.
- A post-transfer action plan is being developed to ensure completion of any outstanding tasks. Implementation of the action plan will be monitored formally through Contract Review meetings.

Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Commissioning

Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset & South Gloucestershire are undertaking the joint commissioning of a single Home Improvement Agency for the sub-region.

HIAs help vulnerable people live independently by providing housing related support, such as minor repairs, handyperson services, adaptations and advice. The core customer groups for HIAs are disabled, elderly and otherwise vulnerable households across all tenures, although the focus is on owner occupiers. The service is means tested: provided free to those on benefits, with a modest charge levied for those who can pay. HIAs also provide services through self-funding options to non-vulnerable households.

Analysis of both current need and provision (set out in full in the West of England HIA & Independent Living Centre Services Commissioning Strategy) has identified the need to:

- provide HIA and ILC services to a greater volume of users, including those;

- households that can afford to pay;
- avoid duplication and make the best use of resources across the sub-region;
- adopt a joined up approach across care, health and housing;
- involve service users in service design, particularly the identification of outcomes, and performance monitoring;
- generate greater efficiency, effectiveness and best practice;
- build up local market potential.

The service improvement objectives agreed for this project are:

- delivering customer satisfaction through timely, good quality and appropriate work;
- maximising the number of older people assisted to live at home;
- aiding rapid discharge from hospital;
- integrating agency, assessment and advice functions;
- establishing assessment and aids testing centres;
- delivering services appropriate to rural and urban areas;
- delivering better value for money;
- targeting services at those most in need ;
- increasing the level of funding from households who can pay for services.

These improvements will be achieved by i) identifying clear stakeholder outcomes from the consultation; ii) asking potential providers to outline innovative and efficient methods of delivery during procurement; and iii) including robust performance management arrangements within the contract.

The lead commissioners organised a workshop with Foundations, the Government appointed advisors on HIAs, to investigate whether the business case supported this partnership approach. This highlighted the following potential benefits for commissioners and users of the service:

Financial Benefits:

- Savings in procurement costs. With an increasing complex and hostile procurement environment these costs are increasing. By working together we can, and do, make significant savings.
- Economies of scale in the commissioned service associated with the reduction in back room duplication, particularly around governance, management, IT and other professional support costs.
- Reduced contract management costs, through less duplication by the contract and field officers of the 4 authorities.

Non-Financial Benefits:

- A larger contract value is likely to interest more potential providers, thus generating greater competition. The increase in bidders would also improve the sustainability of the sector reducing the likelihood of only a single or even no bidders for a single authority commission.
- A larger contract value would provide the economies of scale to develop services which may prove unviable for a single authority.
- It is more effective for a single provider to market themselves across the sub-region, particularly given that referrers, such as client's children & siblings may live out of district though within the sub-regional.

The successful provider will be expected to offer authorities a range of services including:

- information and advice, particularly around housing options for older people,;
- casework, advocacy and support;
- home safety assessments;
- hospital discharge and reablement services;
- independent living centre services, including product and equipment testing;
- independent living centre assessment facilities;
- co-ordination and technical support for repairs, maintenance, adaptations and improvements; and
- handyperson repairs, maintenance and security improvements.

Each local authority will identify at the outset the particular services that it wishes to buy throughout the contract. The contract will work flexibly to allow local authorities to take up unpurchased services in future.

A twelve week consultation period will be undertaken from the beginning of October in accordance with local authority compacts. This will include public availability of the commissioning strategy and equality impact assessment, the opportunity to feedback through an online survey, local stakeholder drop in events and a single market providers' day. The consultation feedback will be used to draw up the tender specification. The tender will then be advertised at the beginning of February with a contract award anticipated in by mid-June 2012.

2. PERFORMANCE

New feedback system in place for social care services

Each time a social care service user or carer has an annual review or un-scheduled review, the practitioner is now required to complete a feedback form with them. This process allows service users to give feedback about how they experience the care they receive from a range of provider organisations e.g. Domiciliary Care Strategic Partners, day care services, which have been commissioned as part of the user's care and support plan. The information is collated by commissioners in the Non-Acute & Social Care Team and is used to inform contract/service reviews and to highlight quality or performance concerns which can then be addressed with providers.

3. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Supported Lodgings for Young People

Extensive promotion of the Supported Lodgings scheme including a very positive newspaper article has resulted in a significant number of new households coming forward offering to provide accommodation in their homes. This scheme provides accommodation and support for homeless young people in family homes with spare capacity. This increase in availability will result in reduced use of temporary fostering and emergency accommodation and financial savings. It also provides improved outcomes for these clients.

Access to Housing Advice & Options

Housing Services are now able to provide clients with daily appointments to provide a full housing advice and options interview over the phone. Users receive a return call

from the adviser at an agreed time, and advice given will be backed up with written information. The new appointments ensure that people in isolated and rural locations are not excluded from the service, and reduce the need to travel. This is in addition to the housing advice and options services operated from the Guildhall, The Hollies and Keynsham Town Council Offices.

Home Energy Efficiency

Joint working between the Council Housing Services and the Public Health Team at NHS BANES resulted in the Council's Warm Streets home energy efficiency scheme being promoted with this year's Flu Jab mail out to over 36,000 residents over 60 years of age. As of last Friday this had resulted in 671 referrals for loft or cavity wall insulation. This may increase further in the weeks ahead. Past experience would suggest that this is likely to result in at least half as many actual installed after a follow up survey by the contractor. Improving the energy efficiency of these homes has the potential to provide vulnerable residents the triple benefit of:

- Better health through warmer homes
- Lower fuel bills
- Lower carbon emissions to help reduce climate change

To ensure that these most vulnerable residents are able to receive the maximum impact from this scheme the Council is providing "top-up" funding where the Government sponsored schemes fail to pay the full costs. The likely cost of this top up to the Council will be in the region of £50,000 funded through the Housing Renewal budget.