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# Social Services, Health and Housing Policy Overview Committee

## Councillors on the Committee

Judith Cooper (Chairman)  
Patricia Jackson  
Peter Kemp (Vice-Chairman)  
John Major (Labour Lead)  
David Benson  
Sukhpal Brar  
Wayne Bridges  
Kuldeep Lakhmana

**Date:** TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER  
2011

**Time:** 7.00 PM

**Venue:** COMMITTEE ROOM 5  
CIVIC CENTRE  
HIGH STREET  
UXBRIDGE  
UB8 1UW

**Meeting Details:** Members of the Public and  
Press are welcome to attend  
this meeting

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# **Policy Overview**

## **About this Committee**

This Policy Overview Committee (POC) will undertake reviews in the areas of Social Services, Health & Housing and can establish a working party (with another POC if desired) to undertake reviews if, for example, a topic is cross-cutting.

This Policy Overview Committee will consider performance reports and comment on budget and service plan proposals for the Council's Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Department.

The Cabinet Forward Plan is a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

The Committee will not consider call-ins of Executive decisions or investigate individual complaints about the Council's services.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **To perform the following policy overview role:**

1. conduct reviews of policy, services or aspects of service which have either been referred by Cabinet, relate to the Cabinet Forward Plan, or have been chosen by the Committee according to the agreed criteria for selecting such reviews;
2. monitor the performance of the Council services within their remit (including the management of finances and risk);
3. comment on the proposed annual service and budget plans for the Council services within their remit before final approval by Cabinet and Council;
4. consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision-maker on Key Decisions which relate to services within their remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet);
5. review or scrutinise the effects of decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Council Committee or an officer.
6. make reports and recommendations to the Council, the Leader, the Cabinet or any other Council Committee arising from the exercise of the preceding terms of reference.

### **In relation to the following services:**

1. social care services for elderly people, people with physical disabilities, people with mental health problems and people with learning difficulties;
2. provision of meals to vulnerable and elderly members of the community;
3. Healthy Hillingdon and any other health promotion work undertaken by the Council and partners to improve the health and well-being of Hillingdon residents;
4. asylum seekers;
5. the Council's Housing functions including: landlord services (currently provided by Hillingdon Homes), private sector housing, the 'Supporting People' programme, benefits, housing needs, tenancy allocations and homelessness and to recommend to the Cabinet any conditions to be placed on the exercise of the delegations by Hillingdon Homes.

Policy Overview Committees will not investigate individual complaints.

# Agenda

5a      Residential to Independent Living - Summary of Audit Report

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# Agenda Item 5a

## **RESIDENTIAL TO INDEPENDENT LIVING - SUMMARY OF AUDIT REPORT.**

**Contact Officer:** Helen Taylor  
**Telephone:** 01895 556132

### **REASON FOR ITEM**

As part of their review the committee asked for a summary of the recent audit of Residential to Independent Living.

### **REASON FOR URGENCY**

*The Chairman has requested this item be included on the agenda as a late item as the information contained within the report has relevance to the matters the Committee will consider at this meeting.*

### **OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE**

Note the contents of the report and seek any further explanations from officers they require.

### **INFORMATION**

This is the main section of the report. Use sub-headings and numbered paragraphs

### **SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY**

To note the information provided as part of the Committee's review

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## **SUMMARY AUDIT REPORT - RESIDENTIAL TO INDEPENDENT LIVING (SWAKELEYS ROAD)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The report received a Limited Assurance opinion as a result of the audit. However, all recommendations were agreed with the service and the Director of ASCHH provided assurances that she was aware of the contents of the report and had discussed the action plan with senior managers.

1.2. LBH's Swakeleys Road Supported Housing unit provides a transition service (from six months to two years) for adults with a learning disability to learn the skills needed for independent living. The Floating Support Outreach Team support Swakeleys Road by offering person centred services to each resident who lives in their own or unstaffed shared tenancies.

1.3. The Care Management and Review (CMR) Team in Social Care, Health and Housing (SCHH) identify residents suitable for Swakeleys Road. Once referred and allocated to a Care Manager in the Specialist Team, an initial assessment is conducted and a care plan detailing support the service user needs is devised

1.4. During the course of the audit, Management of the home brought to our attention some financial irregularities they had identified and as a result of this we reviewed the financial processes in place at Swakeleys Road as part of the audit. This included benchmarking adequate processes already in place at Goshawk Gardens, a similar service.

1.5. The objective of the audit is to ensure that the transition from Swakeleys Road Supported Housing Unit to independent living is efficient, effective and economical.

1.6. We were pleased to report risks are appropriately addressed in these areas:

- All Supported Housing Workers and the Supported Housing Unit Managers hold the relevant NVQ qualification in Care of at least level 3.
- Daily log records detailing support provided to service users at Swakeleys Road are maintained.
- Suitability assessments are carried out prior to admission to the unit

Areas where we noted the need for improvement are detailed below.

## **2.SERVICE PROVISION**

2.1. We found that there was a clear statement of purpose for Swakeleys Road, which clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of staff working at the unit. However, there was a lack of detailed operational procedures outlining who should produce, review and authorise support plans. This made it difficult to verify that support was co-ordinated or consistent.

2.2. We found that the floating support was only being provided from 9 till 5, which may not meet the needs of every client. We were not able to determine at what point extended support had been withdrawn or who had taken the decision to remove it. This concern was addressed by management before the conclusion on the audit and out of hours support was restored.

2.3. We found that support plans had not been reviewed in line with the scheduled dates. We felt that without this review there were two possible risks; users may have received excessive help, which could inhibit their ability to move on. On the other hand new needs may not be identified and there is a risk that users could be moved to the community too soon.

2.4. Staff supervision meetings and PADAs (Performance and Development Assessments) were not being regularly undertaken. The risk is that managers don't identify training or other needs of their staff, which reduces their effectiveness and consequently the quality of service to the user.

## **3. FINANCIAL CONTROLS**

3.1. Checks on the financial controls at the establishment were undertaken at the request of management, who had concerns about controls.

3.2. We found that there was no clear guidance on the level of financial support users should receive, either while at Swakeleys or when living in the community. Some residents had been lending money to others and we felt that this should be discouraged as both the giver and receiver were vulnerable and misunderstandings could easily occur.

3.3. Although users had safes they did not have unique pin numbers for these. There was no guidance given to users about the level of cash that they should retain in their safes. Some users kept large amounts to pay their rent and amenity charges and we felt that they should be encouraged to use direct debit and other means of cashless payment. We felt the service would be enhanced if staff conducted a monthly review of spending with residents.

3.4. We noted that there was no recent review of the rent and amenity charges at the facility and recommended that this be reviewed to ensure costs were being recovered.