

## Minutes

### SOCIAL SERVICES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE



9 September 2014

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p><b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b> Councillors: Judith Cooper (Chairman) Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman) Teji Barnes Peter Davis Jas Dhot Beulah East (Labour Lead) Becky Haggar David Horne Shehryar Wallana</p>
	<p><b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> Nigel Dicker – Deputy Director, Residents Services Ian Anderson - Administration - Performance &amp; Intelligence Team - Complaint and Service Improvement Manager Sandra Taylor – Disabilities Services, Service Manager for a Personalised Service Kim Jebson – Disability Services, Team Manager Charles Francis – Democratic Services Officer</p> <p><b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Caroline Tomlinson, London Borough of Harrow</li><li>• Catherine Kiraz, London Borough of Ealing</li></ul>
10.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were provided by Cllr Ian Edwards with Cllr Peter Davis as substitute.</p>
11.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
12.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JULY 2014</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Were agreed as an accurate record.</p>
13.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED IN PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p>

All items were considered in Part 1.

14. **MAJOR REVIEWS IN 2014/15 - WITNESS SESSION 2** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Disabilities Services, Service Manager for a Personalised Service, explained that the purpose of the second witness session was to hear about how other schemes operated and consider information on best practice nationally.

The following witnesses attended the meeting:

- Caroline Tomlinson, London Borough of Harrow
- Catherine Kiraz, London Borough of Ealing

Points raised at the meeting and during the second witness session included:

London Borough of Harrow:

- The Shared Lives Scheme had been operating for about 20 years in Harrow.
- The best way of helping an individual started with identifying a great family. Then, ensuring steps were taken to acclimatise both parties over a period of time.
- Lots of carers, who had become involved in the scheme, viewed it as a vocation for life. One carer had been in the scheme for 20 years.
- Key areas where Shared Lives had made an impact were assisting service users with: Learning disabilities and those individuals with enduring mental health problems.
- About 12 months ago, Harrow's scheme incorporated 10 carers, providing care up to 16 service users. Harrow's scheme was supported by money from the Supporting People Budget.
- In terms of funding arrangements, Housing benefits and a contribution from the service user, paid for accommodation and subsistence costs. Harrow's Health and Social Care budget met the care costs.
- It was highlighted, that for the Shared Lives scheme to be successful, Housing Benefits and Housing Allowance funding needed to be maximised as accommodation costs accounted for a third, to a half of the schemes overall costs.
- To increase awareness of the Shared Lives Scheme, Harrow had started a series of fun introductory evenings, marketed as 'Shared Lives and share a cake'. The last event had attracted 80 people and had resulted in 12 new carers.
- All new carers attend a 5 week training and induction programme over the course of 5 evenings. Lots of interactive techniques are used to ensure the potential service users and carers are well matched, culminating in a site visit to the carers home.
- After a 12 week period has elapsed, referrals are matched to service users.

London Borough of Ealing:

- Ealing currently operated a small Shared Lives Scheme, comprising of 17 carers (supported by 7 long term and respite carers).

- Ealing were currently investigating opportunities to expand the service as it was considered to offer good outcomes for service users, as well as being cost effective.
- Ealing's induction programme lasted 2 whole days, while its assessment period lasted for 6 months, although this might be longer in some cases.
- The main challenge for Ealing was marketing the Scheme and increasing awareness about what Shared Lives was and the benefits this offered in comparison to more traditional forms of care.
- Key areas where the Scheme was valued included its work with services users with either learning and / or physical disabilities.

Further points and questions raised during the witness session:

- In response to a question about the training of carers and whether or not they underwent a probationary period, both witnesses agreed that training was very personalised. It was acknowledged that relationships between service users and carers took time to develop and so in both cases, there was no specific period.
- As part of the training of carers, both Boroughs encouraged carers to ask lots of questions, look at case studies and work through a variety of scenarios to ensure they were well aware and well prepared for the challenges they might face.
- Although most carers completed the training, some did drop out as the levels of commitment required were very high.
- In response to how long people chose to remain carers, the witnesses explained that it was very hard to generalise. Some had been carers for 20 years and many had been caring for between 10 and 15 years. Clearly, the better the initial match was, the stronger the likelihood was that the service user and carer would form a long lasting bond.
- Another factor which limited the length of time someone might be a carer, also related to how old they were, when they began. Many carers were retired.
- In response to a query about specific training, the Committee heard that carers did receive mental health first aid training.
- Highlighting the importance of ongoing training, the Committee were informed that all carers received regular briefings (Harrow) every three months (which included crisis training). In addition, the Committee learnt that Harrow held social events on a regular basis which was invaluable for network building.
- As a general point, it was noted that ongoing support was very important to ensure the ongoing success of the Shared Lives Scheme.
- With regards to daily support for carers, the Committee were informed that both Schemes did not currently use social media as a platform, but it was acknowledged this was a useful tool.
- In response to the question about the demographic of carers, both witnesses confirmed that carers came from a diverse range of backgrounds and included: those with families, younger people as well as people from a social care background.
- The Committee were informed that neither Scheme used Agency staff. All staff were employed on a self employment basis so there were no void posts.

- With regards to safe guarding concerns, the Committee welcomed the news that Shared Lives schemes were regularly monitored and noted that Shared Lives were scrutinised on average 4 times more than other Adult Social Care areas.
- Asked whether carers had a key link worker and what crisis provision (i.e. a heart attack) there might be, the Committee were informed that Ealing had an out of hour's service. It was noted that Hillingdon provided a 24/7 service through Merriman's House and that contingencies were built into service users' Care Plans.
- In terms of feedback, the Committee noted there were a variety of mechanisms which included: the family, social workers and care workers. It was acknowledged that Shared Lives was not an isolated service and tended to see a considerable number of positive outcomes for service users. In Hillingdon, service user's main point of contact was their social worker but they were also encouraged to complete surveys twice a year to ensure there was ongoing feedback.
- To recruit additional carers, Harrow had chosen not to stage a corporate event. It had found that submitting a good news article to the Local Press, as well as publicising an informal social event had proved most effective. Mention was made of the rapid expansion of the scheme in Lancashire and officers were requested to circulate the report for information.
- The Committee noted that it was important to incorporate Shared Lives as an option within people's Care Plans to publicise the service.
- The witnesses agreed that Shared Lives had the ability to change service users lives and that very real cost savings could be achieved. Shared Lives embodied the preventative agenda and also offered flexibility to service users which often could not be found in other care options.
- In response to a question about how to expand the service, the witnesses agreed that ensuring well inducted teams were in place was a key requirement.

The following best practice information was noted:

- Shared Lives schemes provide good quality, personalised care to vulnerable people as carers share their lives and homes with the person they are supporting.
- With Shared Lives, everyone gets to contribute to real relationships and the goal is ordinary family life. It is used by around 12,000 people in the UK and is available in nearly every area.
- In 2010, the CQC judged 38% of Shared Lives schemes a three star, 'excellent' rating, twice the percentage rating for other methods of providing regulated care.
- The primary reason to develop Shared Lives Schemes is the positive social and emotional advantages to the individual. However, research has demonstrated that increasing the number of carers and people placed, may well result in significantly better value for money than other forms of care provision.
- A Social Finance report produced in 2013 reported key findings which included: The average net cost of supporting people with learning disabilities in traditional forms of long-term residential care, nursing care and supported accommodation was £60,000 per person per year, and for people with mental health needs £28,000 per year. This

compared to an average net cost of a long-term Shared Lives arrangement for a person with a learning disability of £34,000 per year, and for someone with mental health needs £20,000 per year.

- The average net savings from a long-term Shared Lives arrangement per person per year were £26,000 for people with learning disabilities, and £8,000 for people with mental health needs.
- The UK is only just grasping the potential gains from families and communities contributing to the well-being of people with support needs, and of those people being active, valued citizens.
- Hillingdon's Shared Lives service is in the average size group of schemes with 21 long term placements and 6 short term placements. This compares to Ealing having 7 long term placements and Harrow recently increasing their numbers from 16 to 26.
- Schemes of fewer than 20 placements are at risk of being unsustainable with the average of one shared lives worker per 25 placements.
- The best performing authorities have an average of 80 carers providing placements.
- A recent national report on Shared Lives noted that 82% of carers were female, 75% are over 40 and are predominantly of white British origin. In comparison, Hillingdon differs considerably. 60% of its Shared Lives carers are from an ethnic minority group and is made up of both male and female carers which reflects the demand for culturally sensitive services.
- Hillingdon's scheme demonstrates best practice in terms of outcomes for service users. When surveyed, 100% of service users stated that they felt safe, happy and supported in their placements.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the report and witness session be noted.**
- 2. That Officers be requested to circulate the Lancashire report outside the meeting.**
- 3. That Officers be requested to provide financial information and costed case studies to the next witness session.**

15. **ANNUAL COMPLAINT REPORT FOR HOUSING SERVICES AND ADULTS' SERVICES FOR 1 APRIL 2013 TO 31 MARCH 2014**  
*(Agenda Item 6)*

The Complaint and Service Improvement Manager introduced the Annual Complaint report for Housing Services and Adult's Services from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

In relation to Housing complaints, it was noted that these had risen since the previous year. Officers explained that the main causes for the escalation were the changes to the social housing allocation policy and repairs.

In terms of outcomes, it was noted that proportionately, the number of upheld and partially upheld complaints had gone down when comparing 2013/14 (46%) against 2011/12 (64%) and 2012/13 (63%). The Committee welcomed that the average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint had been reduced from 27.8 working days in 2011/12 to 11.97 working days for 2013/14 which was a significant improvement. It was also noted that 4

people escalated their complaint to the Ombudsman. However, none of these complaints were upheld or partially upheld.

With regards to Adults Services, the Committee were informed that the number of Stage 1 complaints had declined by 39% when compared with 2011/12 and the average time taken to respond to Stage 1 complaint had improved from 27.8 working days in 2011/12 to 11.97 working days for 2013/14. Significantly, it was also noted that the number of compliments recorded had risen.

To improve complaint handling, the Committee noted that officers had undertaken a number of steps, including:

- workshops for managers and relevant staff are run in investigating and responding to complaints.
- focussed on ensuring the Council take action on conclusion of a complaint to reduce the likelihood of the same complaint recurring
- ensuring that monthly and quarterly reports are provided for managers regarding their team/service areas complaint handling performance.

In future, it was noted that officers would be make service improvements by:

- the Complaint and Service Improvement Team sending prompts, on day 7, reminding staff when the deadline for response was due. This should ensure that complaints continue to be responded within target.
- running monthly workshops for managers and relevant staff (via the Learning and Development portal)
- introducing a web page that amalgamates all complaint information in one easy place for staff to view.

The Committee thanked Officers for a clear and concise report, noting that the time taken to process complaints had fallen and the number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman had declined. Members welcomed the policy of early intervention and the steps which were in place to improve complaints handling in the future.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.

16. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Members considered the latest version of the Forward Plan. The Committee requested Officers to provide an update on Social Housing Allocation Policy - 017 at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Forward Plan be noted.

17. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Reference was made to the work programme and timetable of meetings. It was noted that the Committee would consider an update on its previous review on 'The Causes of Tenancy Failure and How It Can Be Prevented' at

	the next meeting.  <b>RESOLVED:</b>  <b>1. That the Work Programme be noted.</b>
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.27 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Charles Francis on 01895 556454. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.