

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
INDIVIDUALS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
22 September 2015 (7.00 - 8.50 pm)**

Present:

Councillors June Alexander (Chairman), Ray Best, Viddy Persaud, Darren Wise, Keith Roberts, Steven Kelly (In place of Roger Westwood) and Phil Martin (In place of Patricia Rumble)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Patricia Rumble and Councillor Roger Westwood

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 30 June 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

6 PROVISION OF CARE NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

The Sub-Committee received a report detailing the Future of Care at Home. The current framework arrangement had been in place for the last three years and was due to expire in March 2017. Officers stated that work was commencing to review the services and to understand the needs of users and how the service could meet these needs.

Homecare was not always to the expectation of the residents and there was a need to change the way in which homecare in Havering was commissioned. The Care Act 2014 introduced a range of additional duties for Local Authorities including: promoting and maintaining wellbeing; actively involving users in designing their support plan and remuneration for travel. There was also the introduction of the new National Living Wage which needed to be considered in the commissioning.

Officers informed the Sub-Committee that there were a number of factors that needed to be addressed. These included the expectation of the user, the specification of care needed and what could be provided, capacity issues of the care workers, as well as the retention of staff. It was noted that Havering was the fourth highest paying borough in Greater London with a rate of £14.94, despite this; home care providers in Havering state that they struggle to recruit and retain staff. Another issue was the large geographical area of Havering which means that parts of the borough are difficult to reach. Some areas of the borough were particularly challenging to place care packages due to their remote locations or lack of residents also requiring support nearby.

Members asked how care workers were tracked and monitored to ensure that the service was being provided. Officers explained that it was often down to the user to provide this feedback, either directly to the service, or through their local councillor. Often this can just be a one-off situation where a care worker has not arrived, and was simply a communication issue. However where patterns emerged of care workers not providing the service, the Quality Team would investigate and follow up on any issues.

Members asked whether in the future there would be zoning for care packages. Officers stated that this would be the preference however due to capacity of care workers; agencies often had difficulties in accepting care packages.

The Council wanted to take a co-production approach working with providers, user and other stakeholders, to inform and to shape a sustainable model. ASC Commissioning had organising meetings with care providers to begin the discussions and contact had been made to determine what rates providers were paying their staff and whether they paid for travel times etc.

It was noted that rather than specifying exactly what the service should look like, it was more about defining the outcomes by working with providers and users to determine how to meet the needs. ASC Commissioning was working closely with Economic Development to help develop the market of social care business in the borough. Skills for Care and other stakeholders would be engaged with to help to up-skill the workforce and to ensure that all homecare staff had completed the new Care Certificate. It was hoped to turn care into a career which was attractive to help resolve some of the recruitment and retention issues.

It was noted that the same issues were faced across all London borough, however the turnover of staff in Havering was higher than other boroughs.

The Committee thanked officers for an informative report and asked that an update be given at a future meeting.

7 CARE ACT/ CAREPOINT UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a presentation setting out the updated information and advice service in Havering. The aim of the service was to offer information and advice that helped people to improve their wellbeing and which prevented or delayed the need for care and support. It was proved that early information prevented the need for dependence on services.

The new offer was to bring information and advice to the community via a community hub together with outreach across the borough. The suggestion was that the community hub be situated in Chippenham Road, Harold Hill, however the building would not be ready until December 2015.

Members raised concerns about the agreed location given the feedback that had been received from residents accessing that location for other services. Concerns were also raised about how the service would be accessed by residents living in the west and south of the borough. It was felt that Romford was the major town within Havering and the hub should be based in Romford.

Officers stated that the previous location, in High Street, Romford, had not been successful therefore it was agreed to provide in a different location. It was agreed that baseline data would be provided on the contract at the previous Romford hub. Consultation had shown that outreach was the right model for users in Havering. This would be monitored and revisited if necessary.

It was agreed that officers would present any initial findings at the Sub-Committee in March.

8 ADULTS ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Sub-Committee received the Adult Social Care Complaints, Comments and Compliments Annual Report 2014-15. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of Ombudsman referrals and the highest number of complaints received was within the Preventative and Assessment Team, with a sharp increase of 67% in 2014/15 compared to 2013/14. This was attributed to disputes over adaptations/ equipment as well as Freedom Passes, for which the responsibility had moved across from the London Councils to the local authority.

The main outcome in 2014/15 was 'explanation given'. However it was noted that 'apology given' was linked to 'explanation given' where it acknowledged that initial enquires may not have been dealt with or communicated effectively. More meetings had been offered in 2014/15 which had assisted both the complainant understand processes and the decision made and the Service in understanding from the complainant's perspective.

The Sub-Committee noted that there had been a drop in response times by 14% for informal complaints and 39% for formal complaints within 10 working days. External agencies response times within 10 working days had improved in 2014/15 with a complaint being dealt with by discussion with the complainant. There were 21% referred to safeguarding and therefore these cases were closed as a complaint.

The Sub-Committee noted the action plan and the work to be continued.

9 DEMENTIA AND DIAGNOSIS TOPIC GROUP REPORT

The Sub-Committee noted the topic group report and agreed to refer the recommendations to Cabinet.

10 LEARNING DISABILITIES AND SUPPORT TOPIC GROUP REPORT

The Sub-Committee noted the topic group report and agreed to refer the recommendations to Cabinet.

11 FUTURE AGENDAS

The Sub-Committee agreed to establish a topic group to look at Mental Health in the community. The first meeting would provide an overview of mental health to members which a view to looking at specific areas in following meetings. The first date of the topic group would be circulated.

The Chairman suggested that a presentation from Tapestry be given on the types of homecare services they provide at a future meeting.

Chairman