

The Care Forum

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South Glos Health & Social Care Network Meeting 20 May 2008

South Gloucestershire Learning Difficulties Service Re-provision Proposals for Learning Difficulties Day Services - Consultation

Attendees

Bridget Gordon, South Glos Council - Community Care Department; Esther Moore, Brandon Trust; Phil Chard, Aspects and Milestones; Lloyd Young, Employment Support Service; Liz Sheridan, Aspects and Milestones; Jan Davis, Aspects and Milestones; Denise Luxton, Employment Support Service; Shirley Holloway, South Glos Council - Councillor; Maria Weenink, National Autistic Society; Frank Palma, PPI-South Glos; Valerie Lee, South Glos Council; Kay Tily, Access-Ability; Matt Britt, Brandon Trust; Gillian Turner, The Care Forum.

Apologies

Alice Cleaveland, South Glos Council - Leisure & Community Resources; Maggie Tyrrell, South Glos Council - Community Care Department; Peter Morris, National Autistic Society, The; Rosa Hui, Bristol & Avon Chinese Women's Group; Debbie Fear, Princess Royal Trust - The Carers Centre; Sheila Mead, South Glos Council - Councillor; Carol McCarthy, South Glos Council; Andy Perkins, South Glos Council; Chris Clarke, South Gloucestershire PCT; Jenny Cooper, Bristol City Council - Adult Community Care; Valerie Lee, South Glos Council; Bill Flook, Access-Ability;

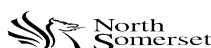
Speaker: Bridget Gordon, Planning and Partnerships Officer, South Glos Council.

Bridget explained that the options in the consultation document are about **how** the service will be delivered. Because it will be a personalised service based on individual assessments they can't say **what** the service will be as this is down to individuals.

She emphasised that it is not a cost cutting exercise. The council is putting in an extra £500,000 this year and £700,000 next year in recognition that they will have to spend more money on services for people with learning difficulties.

The building at Chipping Sodbury is owned by the Primary Care Trust and is not being closed but the people using it will still have individual assessments which could result in changed services for them away from the building. There are also plans to build a new building with room for 45 placements (currently 177 service users). The personalisation programme will be able to give a more rewarding package. People with the highest needs will probably use the building but maybe

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for fewer hours per week. In the engagement phase of the consultation people said they wanted a place that was secure, not a community building, just a learning difficulties building.

There are three options and Bridget was looking to see if there was a consensus from the group. The Options are:

Option A

A tender is developed which would see a single provider being appointed to provide all of the existing day services. Part of the contract would be closing the Resource and Activity Centres (RAC) (managing the future of Chipping Sodbury Day Service following a decision on location) and providing new services with a range of options (including a building), over an agreed period of time. Learning difficulties day services currently provided or managed in-house would be transferred to one independent sector provider who will be required to support existing service users to access more personalised services by 2011, according to assessed needs.

Option B

The Council to be responsible for closure of RACs and for managing the outcome of consultation in respect of users of Chipping Sodbury Day Service. A tender* is developed for an independent provider to take over running day services from the new building. All other day services would be bought from the independent sector.

Option C

Learning Difficulties building-based day services to be run by the Council. All other services to be bought from the independent sector. These would be grouped together by, for example, service type or geography to match locality planning groups.

Questions and Comments

Q Has the decision already been taken to close Blackhorse and Kingswood

A Yes, by the cabinet

Q where will new building be?

A Kingswood area – possibly old RAC site but not yet agreed.

Q Is there a separate budget allocation for the building?

A Yes

Q The new 45 place centre – will the provider have involvement in the development?

A It will be part of the process for tendering.

Q When will assessments start?

A Now as people come up to review. We are starting to put into place peoples own choices – it will be phased in over two years.

Q Staffing of RACs, will new service have TUPE obligations.

A I believe so.

Q Is 2009 the planned closure for Kingswood RAC?

A As assessments come up people will be given services outside the building or will transfer to Blackhorse RAC

There will be a reduction in staff needed for the building but will need more staff in community settings so we anticipate there will be opportunities for staff. Currently only the RAC staff will be affected by the closure and Human Resources and the unions are involved with discussions.

Q Until you have undertaken all the personal assessments you won't know what is needed. Managers need to be a bit more innovative. They need to have brokerage and information. You need to get that up and going so they can build good packages.

A Parents and carers want the building. Parents and carers were worried, they don't like changes and we have to listen to them. A building base will be needed for some people but as time passes and personalised care proves its worth places will start dropping and we will be able to reassess the building.

Q It is not for the council to be involved. Let the independent provider come up with options. We need a competitive dialogue contract in South Glos, a living tender it works well with Brandon trust in Gloucester.

A We will be showing parents and carers different opportunities that are available. We can only give information. We will move forward as quickly as possible but within the confines of what people want.

Q Valuing People has been around for a long time. Community Care and housing are short of imagination.

A It has taken time to get to this point. But moving too quickly can mess things up. We have to take on board what people want even if we disagree.

Q Who said they want a building?

A In the engagement process many service users said they were scared of losing friendships when the buildings went. People working in learning difficulties might not agree with that choice. We have to mesh the two – we will have a building but create more choices.

Q people with personality disorders etc aren't going to get personalised services. Lets not forget people in residential care – maybe they can make use of buildings as other people decant.

Q Health also must follow Valuing People.

Parents and carers have a huge amount to take in –in the next phase people will be leaving residential care. They can't take it all in at once. We have to listen to see if they need that time to see that these are good services in the community. It is not a bad compromise- it is something we can build on

Q Look at the Gloucester contract. We want something live that will bring parents and carers along with you and real outcomes.

Q If you are planning around individuals how will a building meet their needs?

A It depends on what their needs are eg a place to meet with friends.

Q But 45 places cost £2 ½ million

Q Service users who are saying this are not necessarily the people with higher needs who will get building based services.

A It will be down to individual need. It could be just a few hours in the building.

Q Transport is currently provided. Will the other 130 service users who don't use the building have access to the transport budget?

A The council is working on transport policy. It is looking at travel buddies and different schemes.

Q Will control of travel be with the people running the centre or the council?

A Not sure – it could be part of tender

Q It won't work if transport is split off

Q The 45 places are full time so if people are only having a few hours in the building it could provide a lot more places

A Yes, the building is for those who need it and could be transitional. We will also be looking at colleges to develop courses.

Q You shouldn't start modernising now – you should look at individual budgets and assessments and see where it takes you rather than doing it before.

Q £2 ½ million would be better invested

Q. The building is here – we need to use it as a window to build services on. Extra money will go into personalised services

A The building could be transitional, it could in future be for example a base for developing courses etc.

Q There are 170 places at present – how many are occupied by people in residential care

A 60-80

Q Those people will get no service from you.

A We will look to homes to provide or we will commission to provide services. We will give homes extra finances to commission services. If service users are losing contact with friends we will need to look at networking. This is most important to service users- friendship
The way services are provided will change dramatically over next months.

Q Will people using day service have to retire when they reach a certain age.

A Don't think so but will check this out.

Q 70 or so people are in residential care and you expect that the care provider will buy in day support but that the council will provide the funds.

A A lot of homes are just for people to live in –not designed to give day care – The council will pay money which they can use to commission services.

Q The budget for each individual will be transferred and will be ring fenced?

Q Will it be like for like?

A It will depend on assessment. We are not trying to cut services.

Q Will there be job losses in RACs

A Yes but there will be new opportunities in other services.

Q The Employment service never had targets in house – we worked with people needing 1yr –18 months intensive support. This may mean some people don't get the support they need. You have to turn it over quickly. We are concerned that the people we have worked with will not get services.

Q You could look to negotiate tenders with soft targets around supporting people into employment

Q When Kingswood closes down and people decant to Blackhorse – will some service users get reduced service because surely everyone won't be able to have the same hours.

A. The assessments will be staged and they won't all transfer.

Q I am concerned that this is more a bidding war – it is about commissioning not services.

Q. I am concerned about the way parents and carers are spoken about. It is really derogatory. Parents want the best for their children.

The Options

Q I think option A offers best option. Could become an Independent training hub.

Q. Will it include all other day services including employment, SIT team?

A We are looking at offering more supported work, working with colleges, private sector etc.

Q Employment is doing a huge amount of stuff. It should be included in the plans.

Q How could we get involved in the new building?

A Keith Dickerson is looking at opportunities. It depends on which option we go for. You need to let us know if you are running services we don't know about

Contact Details: Keith Dickerson, District manager, Joint Learning Difficulties Service
keith.dickerson@southglos.gov.uk

Q Commissioning will include community groups?

A Whatever option is chosen the council will look to commission other services.

Q I agree with commissioning from the third sector but think the document is naïve – don't like option A.

Q Don't they already do option C to some extent?

A. Within the options we will develop a tender involving the provider as to what they will want in the building. It will probably be a five year contract.

Q Is there an expectation of who might bid?

A No although obviously there are bigger providers out there

Q I favour Option B. If you went for A it would stifle because there would be only one provider. B offers a chance for new providers to come in. It creates choice and opportunities for innovation. I wouldn't want A.

Q. A is restrictive

Q With option B the council does need to be responsible for the closure to some extent.

Q It is a messy business, the closing part of the tender. The provider would have to be involved at a very early stage so involved with the building and staff.

Q I am concerned about monitoring – who will do it.

A Council will have system

The General consensus was for option B.

A. You can respond on online – we do want individual comments and concerns.

We will need to look at how the building can be used most effectively.

The consultation continues till the end of July. Then there will be a paper to cabinet – the tendering process will follow.

To respond online

Go to www.southglos.gov.uk

Click on 'Current and Future Consultations' in the 'Have Your Say' section.

Click on the title that says 'Re-provision Proposals for Learning Difficulties Day Services'

Click on the 'Associated Website'.

Click on the 'Respond to the Consultation' box and then follow the instructions.

Please respond by 31st July 2008