

**CHILDREN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE**  
**ADULT OPERATIONS**

**FULL STAFF MEETING**  
**BLenheim HOUSE**

**1 October 2010**

**Those Present:** Hazel Grant: Adult Operations Project Manager  
Denise McGuire: HR Manager Advisory  
Chris Todd: HR Business Partner  
Carrie Burns: Unison  
(Full staff attendance list available)

**Apologies:** Sean McEneaney: Head of Adult Operational Services

The purpose of the meeting was to provide Blenheim House staff team with the outcome of the report considered by Cabinet on 30 September 2010.

The report recommended:

*That Cabinet authorise officers to enter consultation with staff, clients, carers, trades unions and stakeholders regarding the potential cessation of services at Blenheim House with the aim of re-deploying existing employee's, as appropriate, in recognition of the ongoing re-provision of alternative services to long term clients, in line with their individual preferences to live more independently in a location of their choice. It is also in recognition of the low number of clients whose carers request respite breaks at this facility*

Cabinet agreed to the request and sanctioned the start of formal consultation with employees and the continued consultation with clients and their carers.

Staff were advised that Councillor Jim Beall paid particular attention at the Cabinet meeting to commend the staff and the Home in general for their excellent record and commitment to their clients The meeting was advised that the second service from the EIT Review which was under similar consideration is STEPs at Tithebarn.

Consultation for employees runs for 30 days from 1 October 2010 to 31 October 2010. Consultation with clients and their carers began in May 2010 and will end in mid November 2010. Officers would then return to Cabinet with the outcome of the consultation and with a preferred option for consideration. Cabinet will be on 25 November 2010

Denise then discussed the implications for all staff and clarified some of the details.

1. While emphasising that consultation had to be meaningful and thorough, it was noted that Blenheim House has been a service in decline following the decision not to accept further long term clients in 1996. At that time it was considered inappropriate for adults with physical disabilities to be cared for in an institutionalised setting. That belief is even more relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and is similarly extended to respite care.
2. Denise explained that there was a requirement by law to submit a HR1 notification to the Redundancy Payments Services as potentially there were more than 20 employees affected. She explained that the two

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- combined services accounted for approximately 40 employees. That notification was forwarded on 1 October 2010.
3. Everyone was aware that throughout the EIT Review process, any vacancies that were or could be appropriate to staff facing redundancy had been held to provide the widest range of opportunities possible. At the time of the meeting there were 20+ posts.
  4. Expressions of interest in three posts at Intermediate Care had been received and this will be followed by trial periods. One more post remains and will need to be advertised if no interest is evident in the teams. One criteria of these posts is the ability to drive and have independent transport.
  5. Another service needing to fill in excess of 100 hours of vacancies was raised. This is Martin Tart's Community Support Team. He was prepared to vary hours and posts as far as possible. Although the grade is higher for these posts the absence of an unsociability payment, (which most Blenheim staff are entitled to), would render them appropriate
  6. Everyone was furnished with a letter with all the vacancies listed in it but it was emphasised that more vacancies were still possible. Some of those listed are currently being undertaken by temporary employees so the pressure to fill them is less than for other services.
  7. It was emphasised that in order for all employees to have the opportunity of work trials it was essential for those remaining behind to be flexible in their working patterns and accept that rota's will need to be amended to fill the gaps. The reducing number of clients will create capacity for staff to take trials but this will inevitably lead to gaps in the cover that must be filled to CQC requirements.
  8. The option of a notice board specifically for job, meetings, union and other employee related information was raised and it was agreed that this will be in the staff room.
  9. Chris Todd and Hazel will arrange one to one meetings with everyone in order that individual preferences and concerns can be raised and addressed. At these meetings Chris will also bring each employee's estimated redundancy payment information in order to help people to make an informed choice.
  10. Chris also offered to meet with individuals who would like assistance in completing application forms or advice regarding interview technique. Similarly if anyone wanted Chris's opinion regarding an application form they have completed she will be happy to help.
  11. It was explained that while job security in any alternative post could not be guaranteed, it would provide further employment and pension contribution where applicable.
  12. Denise explained that as no firm decision will be made until after Cabinet on 25 November 2010 it was entirely up to everyone to decide what they wanted to do now. Everyone could wait for the outcome of Cabinet and then start to look at any actions arising from the recommendations or the process of looking at alternatives could start now. The consensus was for an early start.
  13. It was therefore agreed that the front sheet of any job will be provided on request. Trial periods will be planned as far as is reasonably practicable. Interviews for posts will not take place until after Cabinet on 25 November 2010.
  14. A number of issues were raised regarding what would happen if a trial failed or was not suitable etc and it was agreed that Chris would draw up a number of scenarios as a guide

15. Should redundancy be a consideration a formal redundancy meeting would be convened for all those affected. This is due to the need to serve notice which will be determined by individual length of service. The maximum being 12 weeks. Although the outcome of the Cabinet decision will be known by the end of November it had been decided that no notices will be served until 3 January at the earliest.
16. The October spending review from Central Government was discussed briefly and its potential impact on services in general.
17. Carrie advised everyone that she was available for either individual or group meetings should any members require her assistance. The meeting recognised that there was a lot to take in and it may only be later that questions arise. The same applies to Hazel and HR. If you have a question that will not wait until the one to one meetings begin please advise Angela or one of the other managers and they will pass them on. We will also come out to meet with you again as a group if you request it. We will certainly come out on 26 November 2010 after Cabinet in order to advise you of the outcome promptly.

### Q&A

Answers to the questions asked will be addressed in the information sheet being prepared.

- If interested in more than one job will I need to interview for all?
- What happens if a re-deployment fails?
- Will travel to new post be paid?
- Will my hours/grade/rota be protected?
- Will we return to Blenheim after a work trial?
- Can I stay in this post for as long as possible?
- If I have a work trial for 4 weeks and it does not work, can I try something else?
- What happens if the grade of the new job is higher than my current post?

Thank you for your positive attitude to the meeting. We will start booking one to one meetings very soon

**Hazel Grant**  
**Adult Operations manager**  
**05.10.10**