

Health Select Committee

A meeting of Health Select Committee was held on Monday, 3rd August, 2009.

Present: Cllr Mrs Ann Cains (Chairman), Cllr Dick Cains (vice Cllr Beall), Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley.

Officers: Michelle Graham, Joanne Heaney, Glyn Roberts (CESC); Peter Mennear, Sheila Pearson, Fiona Shayler (LD).

Also in attendance: James Newton (LINK); Chris Brown (Middlesbrough Borough Council).

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Baker, Beall and Mrs Nesbitt.

H Declarations of Interest

18/09

None

H Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd June 2009

19/09

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd August 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

H Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation Review of Fair Access to 20/09 Care Services (FACS)

- to receive a briefing from Principal Solicitor (Social Care)

- to receive evidence from Middlesbrough Council Social Care Department

The Committee were provided with evidence by Legal Services and by Middlesbrough Borough Council's Social Care Department.

Sheila Pearson, Principal Solicitor, was in attendance to provide advice to the Committee on the legal implications with regard to the possibility of restricting the bandings for Fair Access to Care Services (FACS). Mrs Pearson also provided a report to members highlighting the main issues.

In summary, Members were advised that proper consultation needed to take place with service users and appropriate agencies ahead of any decision to amend eligibility. Resources cannot be the only criteria for determining eligibility criteria, and adopted criteria could not unlawfully discriminate. Members were advised that following the adoption of any new criteria, services provided to a client could not be withdrawn or significantly reduced without reassessment and provided the reassessment shows that the client's needs remain in the banding which has been removed.

Chris Brown, Social Care Department, Middlesbrough Borough Council (MBC), provided information to Members on how they implemented changes to their banding system. It was stated that the authority undertook an extensive consultation programme prior to withdrawing the 'moderate' band for FACS. The authority currently provided care for those who had been assessed as having needs that fell into the 'critical' and 'substantial' bands under the FACS banding guidance. Middlesbrough identified that savings of approximately £360k had been made due to the change.

Clients who had services withdrawn had the option to go through a three-stage appeal process, and an eight week 'grace' period was in place following the notification of the withdrawal of services.

MBC had received 'new deal' funding for the Landsdown Centre which was an independent living centre providing equipment to assist people to remain living in their own homes. New Deal for Communities funding also provided for the Independent Living for Older People (ILOP) project; this was a consortium of four voluntary bodies that provided low level support services for housebound or isolated older people living in NDC areas. A handyman service was also available for people living in deprived areas. A central directory of support services had been established. Support was carers was discussed and it was noted that Middlesbrough had established a carers centre which had been funded through the carers grant, and the availability of assessments for carers had been highlighted. Dial-a-ride had been merged with the MBC social care transport service to reduce costs and maximise the service. MBC also only used private residential care homes. Members discussed the savings that were made due to these changes in service.

CONCLUDED that the information provided be noted.

H
21/09 **Monitoring of Previously Agreed Recommendations**
- Review of Alcohol Services Progress Update
- Review of Dentistry update

Members were asked to consider the assessments of progress contained within the Progress Updates on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations following Members review of Alcohol Services.

Members were also provided with an interim update on Dental Services. It was reported that a new dental service would be provided in Central Stockton from October 2009. A further dental service in the Fairfield area was subject to a procurement exercise and it was anticipated that the service would commence in January 2010. Members requested that consideration be given to publicising the new services.

CONCLUDED that the assessments of progress be agreed.

H
22/09 **Work Programme**
- to review the work programme in respect of the current review

The next meeting would be held on Monday 14th September 2009.

CONCLUDED that the work programme be noted.

H
23/09 **Regional scrutiny of NEAS Foundation Trust application consultation**

The Committee were requested to nominate three Members to attend the regional committee that would be set up in order to respond to the North East Ambulance Trust's Foundation Trust application consultation. Newcastle Council had taken the lead in arranging the regional panel on Monday 17th August at 6.00pm.

CONCLUDED that Councillor Mrs Cains, Councillor Beall and Councillor Mrs Walmsley attend the meeting at Newcastle Civic Centre on Monday 17th August.

H
24/09

Chair's Update

Members were informed of a number of briefing sessions on the Green Paper - Shaping the Future of Care.

Darlington - 3rd September 1pm - 4.30pm and 5pm - 8.30pm
Newcastle - 4th September 1pm - 4.30pm
Newcastle - 5th September 9am - 11.30am

Members were provided with a copy of a poster advertising the services provided at the Tithebarn Centre in Hardwick.

CONCLUDED that the Chairs update be noted.