

FACS Consultation Plan
March 2010

Introduction:

The Health Select (scrutiny) Committee are providing oversight of the consultation process to consider the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) threshold. This change would mean that we may provide Social Care services to those with substantial and critical needs only. No decision on this subject have yet been considered or taken, and will not be made until the Select Committee receive the results of the consultation. They will make recommendations to Cabinet about the proposed outcomes.

A range of documentation has been prepared for review by Scrutiny to review which has focused on the letters and information to clients, and the arrangements for public meetings.

The Questions:

Do you agree with the idea of raising the threshold for statutory care services, and re-investing some of the savings in community based services open to all?

If so, what community based services might give more support to?

If respondents disagree with the idea we will request them to provide the reasons for this decision. Comments will be formulated at the end of the consultation process and presented to the Committee.

Confidentiality

All answers during the consultation will be strictly confidential. A system of anonymised data returns will be to enable follow up to ensure we receive a statistically valid return.

Channels:

We will meet with all stakeholders, using existing forums where possible, collecting verbal views and leaving response forms. Among others this will include planning groups for health and social care, carer's organisations, voluntary bodies, contracted service providers, and health agencies. Consideration will need to be given to involvement of the LINK.

All Statutory agencies will also be written to, asking for formal views. This will include parish councils.

All existing users supported in the community (helped to live at home) will receive a letter and questionnaire, regardless of their current FACS banding, *unless* they are not subject to a regular FACS review (i.e. in receipt of minor aids and adaptations only), *or* if their social work team indicates it is not appropriate to do so (i.e. communication issues or think it is not safe to do so at this point (e.g. terminally ill)).

We will hold focus groups with users of Learning Disability services and the Blind and Deaf community. The documentation for Learning Disability Clients will be developed in an Easy Read format.

We will carry out our broader public consultation via 6 Public Meetings and with the Area Partnerships. The Public Meetings will be scheduled for 1 ½ hours, with a PM and evening session planned across Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham. Additional meetings may be scheduled if required.

The above consultation processes will be publicised via a press notice, Stockton News and via postal letters. The website will have further information on the consultation.

A draft list of the range of groups and dates of meetings (that are already diaried) has been developed, and is attached at Appendix 3.

Period:

Responses will be sought and accepted in the period June to August 2010 report on the findings to Scrutiny pencilled in for September/October 2010.

Helpline:

A helpline is planned to be put in place during the consultation period. The operational arrangements are being reviewed to ensure that this is optimally managed.

Equality:

Those service users whose first language is not English, and who have expressed a preference to be contacted in another language, will be written to in their preferred language.

Leaflets etc will be made available in other languages on request. The Equalities group will be part of the consultation process. Audio and easy-read versions of the consultation material will be produced. The consultation documents will be available in BRAILLE.

A Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the possible change's, and reported along with the findings to scrutiny.