



SPEAK AND BE HEARD

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Minutes of Over 50s Forum Wednesday
17th October 2007, Civic Centre

Apologies: J.Price, P. Whittaker, E.Grizzle, E.Smith, J. Purshouse, J.Russell, T. Russell, R.Girdler, C.Peat

Present: 29 members, Rose Powell

Chairperson: Brad Purshouse

Item		Action
1.	<p>Speaker</p> <p>Brian O' Leary – Chief Officer Adults and Transformation</p> <p>Brian said that he was happy to attend the Over 50s forum again to answer questions raised by his previous visit. He introduced Chrissie Clarke the new Service Manager for Older People. He explained that the City Council want to improve services for older people and adopt the Governments policy on dignity, choice and quality of care. However we are getting less money from Government and have to make adjustments and continue to improve the quality of life and add value to years.</p> <p><u>Question 1</u></p> <p>Who was actually consulted on all of these changes? You said that it was groups and representatives of older people we cannot find anyone who was included in this. Who was actually involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We wrote to a series of organisations and invited them to meetings and asked for written responses. Age Concern were involved along with care organisations, the meetings were not well attended. A real attempt was made to consult and engage. We tried to reduce the fair access to care criteria by one level but we could not make sufficient savings, so we had to reduce it by two. £700.000 of the savings has been set aside to invest in preventative services. <p>Dennis Kennedy, Age Concern - the meeting was very poorly attended there were only three of us that attended two of those were nursing homes concerned about their loss of revenue.</p>	

- Apart from the groups how many individuals were invited? It doesn't seem effective consultation the Over 50s forum which is the voice of older people weren't involved.

Brian: I accept this wasn't ideal we need to hear that message and learn from it. In future we will put the Over 50s forum and other stakeholders on the list. We are committed to improving services on less money, we will continue to try to get it right.

Question 2

Transport - the new criteria states that there may be pick up points which people will have to walk to for day care. That is causing great concern as many older people would not be able to make this journey and have to stand and wait which is why they need transport in the first place. What are your views on this?

Transport criteria is also part of fair access to care, within that is the delivery of transport. The question doesn't reflect looking at the ability to travel. If, as part of an assessment someone is unable to walk to a pick up point they will still be collected. Part of an individual's assessment will be to look at their ability, if they are able to travel independently they should, but if they can't they will continue to receive transport. We will continue to treat sensitively issues of transport.

- Marjorie "That is not what is said in the cabinet reports"
- Dennis Kennedy Age Concern – If someone is assessed as having low or moderate needs and won't qualify for funded care will they still get transport?

If they are assessed as low to moderate that doesn't mean they don't have care needs they will be linked to the preventative services.

- Dennis Kennedy the £700.000 is not yet available so a person might not qualify for services under FACS but the preventative services are not yet in place so there is no service yet that they can access which causes great concern.

Question 3

What is happening to day services? It seems to fall into the low category which means it will no longer be available. This will have a huge implication for isolated older people and also for carers as this is a form of respite for them.

There seems to be some confusion here – day services don't fall into fair access to care but will be part of the preventative services

- So will day services still be there? And if yes and transport is not available how will they get there? How will they get there with

limited mobility?

They can use their mobility related allowance.

- Marjorie – you can't get mobility allowance over the age of 65 so that doesn't count.
- Councillor Smith – when assessing older people how will you assess if they need transport and how will they be assessed if they are in the lower band

If mobility means loss of independence then you would move up the bands. If the outcome was low band we would not formally arrange services then you would be guided to preventative services if a person is on restricted income they may be able to use ring & ride or community transport.

- There is a risk that people assessed as low level may lose out. People will not be able to get out and socialise we are worried that they will miss out especially if there is no transport being available.

The council is trying to make other transport arrangements.

Question 4

- **The Council provides services for older people if you need a new assessment or your circumstances change why does it take so long for a new assessment to be carried out?**

This shouldn't take too long if it is an urgent request the assessment should be within 24 hours with services starting within 28 days which is in line with Government guidelines. The truth is that In Wolverhampton this is a lot quicker than that.

- Mr Rai – In reality this doesn't always happen when needs change or it is not urgent it takes a lot longer than that. I have examples where assessment has taken a lot longer.

We measure performance – we are good or very good in this area and within Government guidelines. There may be individual cases where this is not the case but broadly speaking our performance in this area is good. If anyone is waiting a long time for assessment they should contact the office and complain

- What is the cost of reassessing everyone?

We have taken account of these costs we have no choice, they have to be done.

- How many reassessments have been carried out and how many are there to so?

We have already done 782 and there are a further 1500 – 2000.

- How many have lost services?

Unsure – some people move up the bands, I will let you have the figures.

Question 5

What is the appeals process for people whose care is being cut following reassessment under the new fair access to care criteria?

We have a comprehensive complaints procedure if someone wishes to appeal there will be a further assessment which could include neighbours, relatives etc. If still dissatisfied then a formal complaint can be made. We would try to resolve that informally if still not satisfied It would go through the formal complaints process.

- Does everyone get that information at reassessment?

They receive a leaflet.

- Dennis Kennedy – Can carers take part in the complaint on behalf of the service user? I have dealt with a client recently and helped with the complaints procedure, this person was not told in writing about the reduction in their care.

Yes family, friends and carers can be involved if the service user wishes.

Question 6

You told us that the cuts in government funding is due to the drop in population. Do the Government take any account of the increasing population of older people and if not why not?

The Government uses the population in its calculations; Wolverhampton has a declining population which is why the grant is less. They do take this into account through the economic wellbeing formula.

Question 7

What is the eligibility criteria for each category as it is not made clear. If someone is incontinent but has no other condition do they fall into the low category and are therefore excluded from access to care?

Incontinence is one of the main elements of the assessment process along with the risk of loss of independence, it is not applied as a 'criteria' If someone had continence problems they would be referred to the continence services in the City. At assessment a holistic approach is taken and the question would be is incontinence putting them at risk?

- Would they be able to get financial assistance for things like pads?

They could ask their GP or the continence team for an assessment and pads could possibly be supplied.

- It is more an issue of personal hygiene, if someone was just incontinent would they still be eligible for personal care such as baths and showers as we are worried that people will slip through the net.

Question 8

The projected savings, you state a deficit of 1.3 million which would be achieved by taking the proposed action. There is no indication of the financial effect of the change in policy, merely a comment in para. 5.1 that setting the threshold at moderate would achieve the necessary savings. We cannot judge from the report whether the withdrawal of the low category will achieve a saving much greater than the 1.3 million deficit. Can you be more specific.

When we made the calculations we originally wanted to move from 4 bands to 3, unfortunately that did not give sufficient savings so we had to change the bands from 4 to 2. We are not saving more money than we planned, we are still struggling to make the necessary savings as some people have moved up into bands 1 and 2.

Question 9

Adaptations to homes are taking far too long – We have heard of cases where people are waiting 18 months for a walk in shower why is this happening?

I'm sorry I don't recognise this time scale of 18 months, my understanding is that 12 months is the maximum time anyone has to wait. We are targeting a reduction in the time taken. Up until October we operated the services across different divisions we now have an end to end service which should speed things up. We want to operate more efficiently,

- Councillor Smith – as Older Peoples Champion I went to the scrutiny board to report on adaptations, one person in my ward had to wait 2 years. I have a resident of 62 who has had a leg amputated; his 82 year old father has to push him in a wheelchair, why can we not provide an electric wheelchair in cases like this? This family has a car and we can't get a parking bay for him, we struggle to get parking bays and dropped kerbs for older people – Wolverhampton Homes won't do them and Neville Garrett say they won't pay. The Forum should invite the three MPs to a future forum to challenge on Government funding for older peoples services in Wolverhampton.
- Mike Nicholls – I agree that the forum should invite the three MPs suggest we send a list of meetings to them. Forum agreed.

- My sister-in-law has been waiting 2 years for her walk in shower she was told they were coming to fit it yesterday and no one turned up, she is still waiting.

This is not my area of responsibility however if you get individual stories and let me have them I will chase them up. We acknowledge the need to improve areas of the service.

Question 10

Community equipment service is a great service which we think is now being stifled. Is the equipment service and fitting of aids affected by the new FACS criteria?

Yes this service is included in the fair access to care criteria.

- I think it is under resourced there doesn't seem to be enough staff, so how can you provide a good service?

One of the problems that we are having with regard to this issue is that we cannot recruit enough Occupational Therapists to carry out assessments this is not because of money but there are not enough OTs available. We are looking at training up OT assistants to be able to take on some of this work. They are currently moving to the Science Park but they do not have enough staff

- As this service is affected by the fair access to care criteria how will that affect people on low and moderate who may need things like grab rails and walking aids?

This will be regarded as a preventative service.

Question 11

What is being done about the private agencies that do not turn up on time and do not stay for the allocated period? Sometimes they just sit and watch television. People in receipt of care are too worried that care will be withdrawn if they do not sign the timesheets.

The council provides some home support services – though the majority is provided by private agencies. We have a set of standards as part of the tendering process. If the agencies get through that then a contract is given. We have contract monitoring arrangements – officers go out and speak to services users about elements of the service. We would end the contract if it didn't meet the requirements. You should always complain if the service is not up to scratch as we would investigate the complaint it is our role to ensure that older people are protected.

- Is there independent inspection of these services?

	<p>Yes CSCI inspects domiciliary care agencies in the same way as they inspect residential care homes we also use contract monitoring officers to contact service users randomly. We purchase the service and work in partnership with the inspection agency, part of the inspection process is to audit the paper trail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dennis Kennedy – We worry about the coercion of vulnerable older people, do you encourage service users to make complaints? <p>Yes we do – protection to individuals in their own homes is essential.</p> <p><u>Question 12</u></p> <p>Couple – wife has early stages of Alzheimer's and needs washing and dressing each day. They pay £120.00 for this service. However she is frequently dressed in dirty clothes. How are the issues of quality of care monitored especially as more care is moved into the private sector?</p> <p>Answered under previous question if there are still concerns about individual cases please give to Rose and she will pass them on to me.</p> <p><u>Question 13</u></p> <p>What will be happening to the resource centres when the LIFT programme is implemented? (This is when health and social care services are integrated and moved into the community)</p> <p>There is a grant of 30 million to invest in 6 health and social care centres 3 of these will include older people's services, the resource centres will be incorporated into these. At the moment if someone is in our resource centres and they need medical care they have to be seen by their GP and/or moved into hospital. We won't have to do that in the future as medical staff will be on the premises that will be a huge improvement. All of the services that are currently in the resource centres will also be in the new centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Nicholls – will the present resource centres be closed? <p>That has not yet been ascertained.</p> <p>Marjorie thanked Brian for attending and he said that he was happy to return at a future date to update or to answer any further questions.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting Minutes agreed proposed by Marjorie Wedge seconded by Pat O Dowd</p>	
3.	<p>Matters Arising Rose reported that she had been unable to confirm that October 1st (Older Peoples awareness day) would in future become a bank holiday.</p>	

	<p>The transport passes continues to be shambolic, though the date for application has now been extended it is impossible to get through on the provided telephone numbers. Concern was expressed at actions in other parts of the country such as; a 90 year old who was trying to exercise his rights to free bus travel attempted to get onto a bus before 9.30 and was manhandled off the bus, a reminder that the campaign to give free travel before 9.30 needs to be continued. A reminder that Councillor Gary Clarke will be attending next months meeting to discuss travel issues</p>	
4.	Sub Committee Reports	
	<p>Education A reminder that the Older Learners Strategy event is taking place on Monday 22nd October at The Foyer Building, Old Hall Street.</p>	
	<p>Housing Last months meeting did go ahead and was well attended, it was a very constructive meeting. Andrew Holden and Ian Morris were in attendance and discussions took place around the East Park area and garage sites. Next housing meeting will take place on 23rd November 2007 at 10.30 in Briefing Room 2.</p>	
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There is a safety fun day at Northcote Farm on Saturday 20th October from 2-4 this is a free event and has a police dog display. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21st November 2007 Meeting room 3, Civic Centre Speaker: Councillor Gary Clarke, Centro</p>	