



WOLVERHAMPTON OVER 50s FORUM
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Minutes of Over 50s Forum
Held on Wednesday 21 October 2009, 10am

Present: 34 Members, Rose Powell

Apologies: Ros Cole, Jenny Purshouse

Speaker (1)

Dave Cocker explained that Heath Town were launching a new initiative to support the over 50's into the workplace. It is a drop-in centre run by volunteers; no appointments are necessary. Opening times are Monday 1-4, Thursday 1-4, and Friday 10-1. Although the service is for anyone in the City priority is for WV9-10 postcodes. Tel:553916 or adminicf@blueyonder.co.uk

Speaker (2)

Tony Rooke and Marie O'Donaghue: Presentation on Personalisation:

This is going to be a new way of delivering services and support. The government has a policy to transform adult social care but it is unclear how this will happen. There is the impact of the Savings Programme to consider.

The starting point is: What services are needed and who needs them?

- Shift focus to individual and prevention i.e. more resources to help people stay independent.
- Re-enablement programme = support to stay independent.
- Whole citizen approach not just about those already receiving services.
- The programme should be in place by March 2011.

Personalisation means that you decide what approach you want and what services you need. People are living longer but may also be managing illnesses for a long time, they want to remain independent for as long as possible; we need to challenge the stereotype of old age. Few people aged 50+ access higher education, employment based learning or social opportunities. Older carers are not always supported or enabled to live beyond carer responsibilities (ie by respite).

- Long-term care and support should still involve choices
- Need to consider the options; things are being developed such as individual support plans and brokerage arrangements.
- Most people who get care now will continue to get it.
- If you qualify for services you will have control of money allocated for your care

(individual budgets).

Resource Allocation System (RAS) (or 'points mean £££s)

No one has yet designed an effective tool to allocate resources fairly but Wolverhampton is in the process of generating one. Trial assessments still need to be undertaken. Direct payments help people to manage budgets. There is still a need to improve communications and this will involve consultations to involve people in the decision-making process.

Q: Are there funds to support this programme?

A: This is not about making cuts but about making best use of existing funds.

Q: What is the point of re-training initiatives for 50+? How relevant is this when industry is dying and there are fewer jobs? Personalisation seems far too woolly. It may have a negative impact on communities. 40 years ago a similar system was proposed and this failed.

A: The Personalisation agenda is having things imposed on it. It has a stepping stone agenda and **must** happen because future funding from the government is dependent on this. The government is looking at how to get older people into employment especially 50+ but many older people may not be able to or want to work.

There are huge financial concerns for the government and older people are an untapped resource as paid and unpaid workers

Q: The government talks about individual needs, but we are part of larger groups and communities. This scheme is for the whole country yet you talk about 'individualisation'; how is this possible

A: This is not tokenistic. We need to involve older people to make it work. The consultation will not be tokenistic.

Q: Carers are frightened about the implications of managing and handling budgets. By telling people that they have choices about the management of money is frightening. It is even more difficult to balance a budget when you get older and this will cause unnecessary worry. It is just devolving responsibility down.

Q: The assessment criteria has changed from four to two levels, now you are talking about Prevention, yet you are removing the processes to identify and put support in place.

A: Money is being shifted to prevention to save money as people would not then require services as soon, but there are two systems overlapping at the moment.

Q: We all feel that older people are just seen as a financial burden.

A: This is about Quality of life for older people.

Q: Can people still elect to have everything done for them?

A: Yes they can.

Speaker (3)

Fiona Gough – Supporting People Strategy is currently being written and is looking at housing related support.

Background: This is not about Social Care, it is about enabling people to remain independent and to remain in their own home for as long as possible.

The main issues or concerns are around frail older people and those with mental health issues, as well as disabled and the young. There are national, regional and local strategies around choices and the type of Services that people want/need.

The strategy will include:

- Fitting Services around you
- Working in partnership to commission services

- Managing the transition between service areas throughout life
- Services should be easy to access and available at the right time
- People need to know about them (currently information-gathering about existing services).

Findings to date:

- According to the Citizens Panel: Those who know about housing related support , understood it but many are unaware and could have accessed it for support, so need to make sure everyone knows about it.
- Those with housing support were happy with it.
- Disabled said they needed more support
- BME needed support
- Men asked for more help than women
- We perform well against other areas but not: a) work and qualifications for older, disabled, those with mental health– ie the most disadvantaged, b) services support women mostly c) People want to live in local council properties because they are not informed about other options d) People stayed independent longer if they receive timely support

Q: People don't know? Why not include in T&R newsletters?

Q: Is focus on Council tenants

A: Everyone; including owner occupiers: there is a floating Support worker to support everyone.

Q: Put info out with council tax bill or free newspapers and community magazines. What about Signpost? Go to Area Housing offices and events

Q: Is there any help for essential repairs?

A: We make referrals to the Home Improvement Agency, Kickstart and Age Concern.

Q: What is the link with Wolverhampton Homes? Their Lettings policy is unacceptable; it has placed ex-offenders next to 50+. Many properties have had 3 new bathroom/kitchens yet other areas are neglected.

A: Refer directly to Wolverhampton Homes

Q: But if you work with other agencies where there are problems this reflects on you.

People who pay rent, taxes etc should have priority over those coming in from outside the area.

A: Invite Wolverhampton Homes to Forum

Minutes from last meeting:

proposed Roy, seconded Brad.

Matters arising:

No matters arising

Chairs remarks:

Non

7. Treasurers Report:

£1,813.98 – most set aside for Environmental group.

8. Correspondence:

None

Sub-Committee Reports

Health Scrutiny Panel:

Marjorie reported that she was given 52 pages to read, but was not allowed to sit at a table whilst she did this. She felt that she was treated very badly. She wasn't allowed to speak or ask questions. There were three matters for Scrutiny but most of the panel didn't even look at the paperwork. They seemed ready to leave as soon as they arrived. Although there were only a few people on the Panel there were 48 chairs around the table, yet Marjorie was not allowed to even use the end of the table – and the support officer was very rude to her.

- The Swine flu vaccinations will be available from October (there is plenty to go around)
- There are now a number of Dentists to provide NHS work
- Penn Hospital still has mixed sex wards but have to change so they have decided to reduce the number of In-patients. More will be treated in the community, which could be a greater burden on Carers.
- Despite moving the Eye infirmary to New Cross Hospital, there are now going to be more changes. Services seem to be very fragmented.
Marjorie felt that she could access information about these matters without going to Scrutiny and thought it was a waste of her time going. However, she is prepared to continue if O50 wanted it.

It was proposed that a letter should be sent to Scrutiny expressing our dissatisfaction with the way our rep was treated.

This was endorsed by the membership.

Day Care Changes

The proposals about the savings programme which includes a review of day care has been to Cabinet and Scrutiny and is now out for consultation. Marjorie has written to Sarah Norman – Director of Adults and Community about her concerns about the increases in charges but has not had a reply. She went on to inform the membership that:

- Day Centres will close, including the EKTA Centre
- Dementia care will be reduced over weekends
- The costs for transport to Centres will cost £1.50, return
- Hot meals will increase by £2
- Attendance at day centres will no longer be free but may cost £13.65 a day. This will mean £20 a day rather than a few pounds for the meal.
- Carelink will cost £14 a month.

How does this fit with the talk of Prevention? Apparently these proposals have ready gone out to Consultation – but they must be stopped.

Rose advised the forum that there are a series of public meetings being held at the Civic Centre:

Monday 16th November, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Tuesday 17th November, 10:30am – 12:30pm

Stakeholder Day – Monday 30th November.

Marjorie urged members to make their views known. She asked members to send their questions or concerns to Rose and to dedicate the next O50 meeting to the matter. It was suggested that all members should be sent a summary of the proposals and be

invited to submit questions- even if they are unable to attend the meeting.

Housing

Meeting held on 18th September regarding the obstructions on landing; tenants have not received letters and one block had everything removed, including the carpet! They also discussed the proposals for care: and agreed that cuts always hit pensioners. The £2 40p increase in pension will not go anywhere towards meeting the increasing costs of things.

The Lunt are having new fences again but there are area where nothing has been done to improve their homes.

Mike is retiring from Housing Committee . The next meeting will take place on 29th November 10:30am.

Transport

A member reported that he attended a meeting in Scarborough which discussed the changes to bus passes. It seems that these may be means-tested in the future. At aged 75 people will have their driving licences revoked and they will then be entitled to have a bus pass.

Travel Companies get 68p for each person that uses as bus pass but they do not think this is enough, however, many would be driving empty buses at times without the older passengers. Members are urged to lobby their MP about proposals and continue to fight for 24hr bus pass. Work will start on Wolverhampton Bus station stages at the end of November.

Environment:

When the Bus Station is closed for renovation this will mean the closure of the toilets, how fortunate we are to have the toilets opposite Beatties!!

The next Litter pick will be in Bilston on 25th November 10am-12pm. The next meeting is 17th November.

AOB

Wolverhampton Carers Centre will be moving to the Electoral building whilst the Bus station is being renovated.

Date of next meeting is Wednesday 18th November 2009, 10am, Meeting Room 3, Third Floor, Civic Centre.

No speaker: Meeting dedicated to the savings programme proposals