

ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
MEMBER VISIT TO COMMUNITY TEAM FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2009
(2:00 pm to 4:30pm)

Present: Councillors Turrell and Blatchford

In Attendance: Zoë Johnstone, Senior Head of Service: Adults & Commissioning
Nick Ireland, Head of Learning Disabilities
Victoria Bale, Support Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

1. VISIT TO THE COMMUNITY TEAM FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES (CTPLD)

Members met staff and received a tour of CTPLD, Weymead Short Term Care Unit, Day Services, Green Machine, Breakthrough and Headspace as part of the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel's programme of visits to Adult Social Care facilities.

Members met Yvonne Griffiths, the Team Manager, CTPLD who lead the tour of the office, along with Nick Ireland, Head of Learning Disabilities (LD). The following was noted about the team:

- It was formed of 30-40 staff, from 4 different organisations: Berkshire East PCT, Berkshire West PCT, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Bracknell Forest's Adult Social Care.
- It was the first point of call for people with LD where the initial consultation was carried out and assessment of their needs, such as health requirements and/or support needs, were arranged.
- The team had a holistic approach, providing social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietary advice etc.
- It provided support as and when required to assist individuals to achieve their chosen lifestyle. For instance, individuals were assisted to spend their Direct Payments to purchase appropriate care and meet their needs.
- It could also arrange for the provision of a personal assistant, identify a service provider, provide a face-to-face assessment of the individual and assist the individual to undergo a self-evaluation.
- The team currently supported just under 400 people and was working with a large number of these to pursue their chosen lifestyle. Some sought an advocate to ensure that the team was aware of their needs and wishes.
- The team shared its employees across Berkshire, providing services across the East, and ensuring continuity and consistency.
- The team had relocated from Time Square, where poor sound proofing had sometimes led to confidentiality issues, to Church Hill House which was more accessible being in walking distance for many users who felt more comfortable attending. Although there were plenty of meeting rooms at Church Hill House, the majority were upstairs and the absence of a lift presented the greatest challenge.

Members were advised that in terms of new people over the age of 18, the increase the number of new cases was not significant. Currently, few people with LD were moving into the area and therefore the number of new referrals was low enabling the Team to respond rapidly to them. Referrals from Children's Services in relation to individuals identified as having LD or a mental health condition etc were received and the Team would take responsibility for them once they became 18 years of age. The CTPLD proposed to modernise its information storage system. Information regarding

referrals from Children's Services was easily transferable despite not currently operating the same IT system.

Major challenges faced by the Team were meeting the requirements of each of the four different organisations of which it was formed. There was also an issue of capacity as demand for support was high and the provision of quality support was time consuming. These challenges were also faced by other similar teams.

In terms of staff turnover, the previous position of virtually relying on agency staff had been successfully addressed by recruiting newly qualified staff in order to develop them. In particular, care management and health were very well established within the team. The drawback of this approach was that when faced with more complicated situations, the pressure could shift to the more experienced members of staff.

2. WAYMEAD SHORT TERM CARE UNIT

Here, Members met Rachel London, Provider Services Manager for Waymead Short Term Care Unit and Day Services. The Unit was registered as a residential home for adults on short respite breaks, from one weekend per month to a week or two per month. All care was provided for the users, enabling a break for their carers, and there was now an increased emphasis on making the stay meaningful for the visitors by providing appropriate activities.

The Provider Services Manager escorted Members on a tour of the Unit where they noted the following:

- Facilities consisted of a multi-activities room providing access to the internet and a games station etc., a conservatory with television and a laundry area where residents were able to undertake their own washing.
- The kitchen was in need of modernisation in order to make it more accessible for wheelchair users to help them prepare meals, increasing independence.
- All but three bedrooms were upstairs which presented an issue as the Unit was without a lift.
- Bedrooms did not have en-suites, which were now required of all new builds.
- Although ceiling tracking hoists should be present throughout, they were not fitted in the bedrooms and only one of the bathrooms had been adapted, reducing accessibility for those who required this form of assistance.
- The bedrooms upstairs were now smaller than the regulations for room size and the bathroom was not adapted for wheelchair users.

The Unit had been recently inspected by the Care Quality Commission and received a 2 star rating owing to the need for some rooms to be improved and modernised, for training gaps to be filled and for issues with staff inductions due to changes and amendments in regulations to be addressed. The Carers Strategy sought to redevelop the whole site in order to provide a more suitable building.

With regard to staffing, the first vacancy for a while had arisen and two assistant managers had been recruited recently. Job descriptions utilised as part of the recruitment process were being amended and staff were being given the opportunity to work at both this Unit and Day Services to provide the incentive of flexibility.

3. DAY SERVICES

Members then visited the Day Services centre and met Mark Hunt, Team Leader/AUM who conducted a tour of the premises and advised the following:

- The location of the centre within an industrial estate was inappropriate and a town centre location enabling clients to be more stimulated and engaged with the rest of the community was sought.
- The building was too large for purpose and over half of it remained empty making it inefficient to heat.
- There had been numerous unsuccessful attempts in past years to identify an alternative occupier(s) for the whole building. Although the Drug and Alcohol Action Team had expressed an interest it would only occupy two thirds of the building and, owing to the nature of its work, identifying an additional occupier to share the building presented difficulties.
- The number of people utilising the service was below 40 and it was anticipated that this number would reduce the following year unless a significant transition from other facilities was experienced.
- Young people were not keen to attend the centre for five full days per week as they did not find it stimulating.
- As the majority of clients attended other facilities such as college during the day, the number present at any given afternoon rarely exceeded ten.
- The kitchen was unnecessarily large and over equipped due to the declining number of people attending the centre.
- Staff retention was enhanced by the flexibility of working both at this centre and Waymead Short Term Care Unit.

4. DEPOT: GREEN MACHINE

Members met Mark Methven, Community Development Worker for Green Machine, and Mark Sanders, Development Manager for Green Machine and Breakthrough, both of whom assisted adults with LD who wished to undertake voluntary work, gain work experience or enter full or part time employment.

Green Machine was a social firm that assisted disadvantaged and disabled people to access employment. It offered a quality gardening and maintenance service, employing people with disabilities to provide genuine work opportunities. Green Machine had recently joined the East Berkshire future jobs fund to increase recruitment and was currently staffed by eleven people, four of whom were disabled.

Due to the current economic downturn, Green Machine was considering reviewing its marketing strategy to gain more contracts and links with businesses. Optimism around Green machine's success remained. A number of advertising flyers had been recently circulated and a contract with a housing association to provide a range of services to a number of properties had been secured. This contract would allow workers to gain a reference, increasing their chances of obtaining further work. Other work for individuals would be developed and expanded and those that had offered work opportunities would be contacted again in February to seek any further placements/opportunities.

5. BREAKTHROUGH

Members then visited Breakthrough, a recruitment agency within Bracknell town centre which focused solely on adults with LD. Members spoke with Karen Scott, Team Leader, and again with Mark Sanders, Development Manager.

The Development Manager explained that the agency was due to establish a forum with other town centre recruitment agencies to encourage cooperation. Although Breakthrough had originally been part of Day Services, it had split from the centre in recent years to gain its own identity. It could now be accessed by people who did

not attend the centre and in December 2008 it had relocated to its town centre position and become recognised as an agency.

- Currently, around 41 out of 50 people registered with Breakthrough were in some form of employment. A number were volunteering to gain experience.
- Considering the current economy, Breakthrough was focusing on identifying placements to provide references and employment skills.
- The team within the town centre office consisted of the Team Leader and three supporting staff.
- Reviews with employed clients were undertaken every six months and, due to the economic climate, an increasing number were losing their jobs.
- Breakthrough supported new employees for up to six weeks within new jobs on the basis that if by that time they were unable to carry out the work it was not the correct position for them.
- The benefits system was an issue as it did not encourage people to work full time and become tax payers although some chose to.
- The LAA facilitated contact with local companies. One local supermarket had been approached on several occasions but had declined involvement with Breakthrough whilst others were happy to recruit from their books. Difficulties attracting from the corporate area were experienced.
- Unfortunately, the NHS and the Council were not leading the way in recruiting disadvantaged employees and it was felt that more could be done in this area.
- Having a robust central lead from the Council would help to promote Breakthrough as a recruitment agency.
- Breakthrough required more backing and support owing to the shrinking market.
- The team came into contact and assisted more people with LD than those with physical disabilities or mental health conditions. This was because most people with a physical disability would not come into contact with Adult Social Care and mental health problems could develop during employment, whilst those with LD were never considered to be employable.

6. HEADSPACE

Members then completed their trip with a visit to Headspace, and met Marc Box, Community Arts and Disability Officer who was assisted by six volunteers. Headspace was the result of a partnership between the Council, South Hill Parks Art Trust, U3A and Rethink and had opened in October 2008. It had received £10,000 funding from Oliver Bentalls and refurbished the building with paint and furniture from the waste and recycling centre. Headspace was within the town centre, and served as an art gallery in addition to accommodation for art, dance, music and crafts activities and sessions for disadvantage and disabled people. The sessions and activities were provided on week days and one weekend day per week, providing the opportunity for visitors to meet their peers in addition to new people. It also produced a radio show twice per week which served as a useful advertising tool.