

Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Chairman : Cllr Ian Leake
Vice Chairmen : Cllr Asghar Majeed and Cllr Robert Plimmer
Clerk to Committee : Katie Dover



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Easthampstead House Town Square
Bracknell Berkshire RG12 1AQ
☎ 01344 352237/352283
Fax 01344 352324
DX 33611 Bracknell Minicom 01344 352045
email catherine.dover@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Ms Philippa Slinger
Chief Executive
Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Fitzwilliam House
Skimped Hill Lane
Bracknell
RG12 1LD

27 July 2007

Dear Ms Slinger,

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

As you will recall, at the meeting of the Joint East Berkshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 21 March 2007, that Members expressed their continuing and significant concern about the provision of mental health care for young people in the age range 16-18 who are neither in education nor in employment, and are therefore referred to the Council's Adult Services for support.

At our meeting on 21 June 2007, this matter was briefly raised again, because of the continued differing understandings between members and the Berkshire Healthcare Trust. As a result, Members asked me, as the Committee's Chairman to write to you to obtain clarification of the exact position.

I would therefore ask you to inform me and the Committee:

- Does the Berkshire Healthcare Trust consider it appropriate to assess 16-18 year-olds using adult criteria?
- When was the decision made that this vulnerable group of young people should be referred to Adult Services, rather than CAHMS?
- Who made that decision?
- Whether this arrangement is consistent with recommended best practice nationally?

- Was that decision influenced by the availability of PCT or other funding?

- What are the intentions to reverse the current practice, and allow this age group access to be referred to the CAMHS service?

In conclusion, the Committee firmly believes - on the basis of their direct contact with residents and knowledge of individual cases - that the CAHMs service would be much more appropriate to the needs of these vulnerable young people than the Adult Service provision. The Committee were most unsatisfied with the current arrangements for this group of people

We would appreciate a reply within 10 days of receiving this letter. Depending on your response, the Committee may wish to invite you to discuss the matter with us further.

With kind regards,

Councillor Ian W. Leake
Chairman of the Joint East Berkshire Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Dictated and signed in his absence
Telephone: 01344 319693
Fax: 01344 311820

CC. Councillor Anne Shillcock