

**29. QUESTION TO THE CARE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER
(Agenda item 4)**

(1) From Evelyn Collington, Co-ordinator, Bromley Mental Health Forum

Virtual Service User Panel

Following the Partnership Review we were advised that a 'Virtual Service User Panel' would be established to consult with Service users – please can you let us have an update on this panel and how our members can access it?

Reply:

The 'virtual service user panel' is a key feature of the arrangements that have been implemented as a result of the Partnership Review. A report to the Care Services PDS Committee on 11 March 2014 provided a 6 month review of the partnership framework, including an update on the development and implementation of the 'virtual service user panel'.

The report described the 'virtual service user panel' as "electronic systems to bring together service users, families and carers, and other key community representatives, to gather views and consult with people on specific services or issues for services, and enable users to shape service development which build on a network of service user and carer e-mail databases held and maintained by the Council's key partners in order to minimise the resource requirements for the Council".

The report then went on to outline how the 'virtual service user panel' had been used to support the consultations and engagement activities which fed into the Adult Services Stakeholder Conference in November 2013 and the Children's Services Stakeholder Conference in March 2014. For example, the Carers Survey directly reached approximately 1,400 known carers through e-mail distribution lists held by a number of our key partners, including Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group, Carers Bromley, Bromley Mencap, Bromley Healthwatch, Bromley Mind and Alzheimer's Society. It was also sent via e-mail to a number of unknown carers, including e-mails to all staff of the Council, local websites, news items, newsletters, publicity in Bromley Libraries, and other publicity. Some of the Council's partner agencies also circulated the survey to their staff.

Since the 6 month review of the partnership framework report was presented to the Care Services PDS Committee, the 'virtual service user panel' has been further used within the consultation exercise conducted prior to the Adult Services Stakeholder Conference in July 2014 – the outcome of which is on the agenda today under Item 9.

In preparation for the Conference, the Council ran a consultation exercise between 27 May and 8 July 2014 through the 'virtual service user panel'. This included two elements: an online survey and face-to-face engagement sessions. The online survey was circulated through a combination of:

- Council managed websites – the Council website, Council intranet, Bromley MyLife website
- The Council's our resident e-mail database
- Distribution lists held by the Council's partners – Age UK Greenwich and Bromley, Alzheimer's Society (Bromley), Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group, Bromley Ethnic Communities Programme, Bromley Healthcare, Bromley Mencap, Bromley Mind, Carers Bromley, Citizens Advice Bureau, Community Links Bromley, Community Options, Deaf Access, Healthwatch Bromley, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Publicity at a number of universal facilities - such as Council receptions, Community House, churches, intu Bromley, libraries, and a press release

The purpose of the consultation was to understand people's low level care and support needs over the short and medium term. The Council was keen to consult with the following groups of people: those not currently in the 'care system'; those with 'low level' care needs; those who pay for their own care and those with whom the Council has not previously engaged.

Through the use of the 'virtual service user panel', the Council was able to engage with 932 people through the consultation. This included 672 people who completed the online survey and 260 people who were consulted with through 13 face-to-face engagement sessions and focus groups.

The Bromley Mental Health Forum can be involved in the "Virtual Panels" in a number of ways including a hyperlink to the relevant online survey that we ask to be promoted in the relevant newsletters or via a direct email sent to all members of the forum (via the forum's key contact). They may also see the online survey promoted on the following MyLife web page <http://bromley.mylifeportal.co.uk/consultations> and or the main Bromley Website, they may also receive notification from the LBB resident distribution list if they have signed up for email alerts.