

## **CARE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 26 March 2015

### **Present:**

Councillor Robert Evans (Chairman)

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Kevin Brooks, Councillor Hannah Gray, Councillor Pauline Tunncliffe, Linda Gabriel and Rosalind Luff

#### **4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Jefferys, Councillor Terence Nathan and Councillor Melanie Stevens.

Apologies for absence were also received from Care Services PDS Committee Co-opted Members, Catherine Osborn and Justine Godbeer.

#### **5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **6 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH DECEMBER 2014**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 be agreed.

#### **7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

Three written questions were received from Mrs Susan Sulis and are attached at Appendix A.

#### **8 CONSULTATION RESPONSE - PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE NON-RESIDENTIAL CONTRIBUTION POLICY 2015** Report CSPH15SP01

The Portfolio Holder for Care Services considered a report outlining the outcome of the engagement process undertaken with service users, their families, carers and stakeholders on proposed changes to the Non Residential Contributions policy as a result of the Care Act 2014 and recommending that a number of changes be adopted.

A report outlining proposed changes to the Non-Residential Contributions policy as a result of the Care Act 2014 was considered at the meeting of Care Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

The Care Services PDS Committee supported the proposed changes and requested that engagement be undertaken with current service users, their families, carers and stakeholders across Bromley on the proposed new standard Disability Related Expenditure allowances which reduced the existing system of three standard rates to two standard rates comprising £5.50 per week for the lower rate and £11.00 per week for the higher rate, prior to any change being agreed. The engagement process took place during January and February 2015, and included a hard copy survey and fact sheet sent to 2,000 current service users, an easy-read survey and fact sheet sent to 399 current service users who had a learning disability, and an online version of both surveys promoted via the Bromley MyLife website and a range of key partners including Bromley Mencap.

In total 283 responses had been received to the surveys, which comprised 219 responses to the standard survey and 64 responses to the easy-read survey, and was a response rate of 12%. In considering the responses received, 143 comments were provided to the 'Comments' section of the survey, of which 4% of respondents were supportive of the proposal, 40% of respondents disagreed with the proposal and 55% of respondents provided other comments, including that the proposal did not affect them personally, that they did not understand the proposal or that they had comments relating to another proposal.

The proposed changes to the Disability Related Expenditure allowances were expected to realise savings of £200k per annum, in additional to £15k per annum through other changes introduced as a result of the Care Act 2014, and had been included as part of the Care Services Portfolio budget for 2015/16.

In response to a question from the Portfolio Holder for Care Services, the Assistant Director: Adult Social Care advised Members that the proposed changes to the Disability Related Expenditure allowances would affect approximately 1,000 service users who would be expected to contribute an average of £5-£9 per week towards the cost of their care, and that an appeal process was in place.

In considering the Draft Contributions Policy for Non-Residential Care Services, a Co-opted Member of Care Services PDS Committee was concerned to note that service users who had more than £23,250 in savings and investments would be liable to pay an arrangement fee of £240, charged at the weekly rate of £4.61 from the start of the care package and annually thereafter, to cover the cost of putting the required care and support in place. The Head of Education, Care and Health Services Finance confirmed that local authorities were permitted to charge for the cost of delivering this support, and that it was projected to impact up to 50 Bromley service users per annum. Service users were not required to access this support from the Local Authority and could arrange their own provision as needed, for which no charge was made. The Co-opted Member also underlined that where a carer had eligible support needs of their own, and the Local Authority was meeting the needs of the carer by providing a service directly to the carer, the carer

would be charged the full cost for the service, subject to a financial assessment. The Assistant Director: Adult Social Care emphasised that carers and the cared for were treated equally under the Care Act 2014, and that it was important for service users to understand their eligibility to apply for care and support and any amount they would be expected to contribute to the cost of their care.

The Portfolio Holder for Care Services advised Members that he was minded to agree the recommendations of the report, but that there was a need to inform all service users of any changes to the Disability Related Expenditure allowances prior to the introduction of the changes, as well as outlining full details of the appeal process. The Assistant Director: Adult Social Care confirmed that a letter would be provided to all service users on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 as part of the annual check-up. Any change agreed to the Disability Related Expenditure allowances would be explained in this letter, which would include full details of the appeal process. The Disability Related Expenditure allowance would be reassessed on an annual basis as part of the review of each service user's care package.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1) The response to the engagement process be noted;**
- 2) The proposed changes to the Disability Related Expenditure allowances as detailed in Section 3.4 to Report CSPH15SP01 be agreed; and,**
- 3) The agreed changes to the Disability Related Expenditure allowances be implemented from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015.**

**9 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

**RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.**

**10 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS**

The Committee considered the report and supported the recommendations.

The Meeting ended at 8.12 pm

Chairman