

ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PDS COMMITTEE
29th September 2020

**ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO
HOLDER**

**Oral Questions to the Adult Care and Health Portfolio Holder received from
Councillor Simon Jeal**

- 1) Could you please outline the measures London Borough of Bromley has taken to support charities who are commissioned to provide services funded partly or fully by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically those operating day centres and other similar services, normally using premises rented/leased from London Borough of Bromley, that were forced to close during lockdown.

Reply:

The Council has continued to fund block commissioned services during the pandemic. Other services, that are heavily dependent upon direct payments, have received some financial support to help ensure continued service provision after the pandemic.

Rental charges for day centres have been waived for the first six months of the pandemic and are being reviewed going forward.

The Council has worked in partnership with Community Links Bromley (CLB) to ensure that all charities providing services to Bromley residents have been well supported during the pandemic. This has included the following:

- *joint video conference sessions to obtain stakeholder feedback on charities' support needs (both at the start of and during the pandemic);*
- *regular weekly newsletters. These have provided advice on funding available; as well as advising on best practice in relation to furloughing staff, risk assessments, service user engagement. The newsletters have also included the promotion/highlighting of (including lottery funding) and the support available from CLB with their applications;*
- *regular liaison with the charities to offer them additional volunteer support from the army of 4,500 LBB volunteers that came forward, to ensure that their most vulnerable clients without online access could still access services;*
- *promotion of charities' volunteering vacancies in the LBB electronic newsletters; and*
- *access to a special one off Direct Line Community Funds which charities were able to bid for to support their work*

Supplementary Question:

Has the London Borough of Bromley offered rent holidays to those charities who are leasing properties from the Council, and obviously have had to close

since March, and have not been able to receive income in relation to those services within the properties?

Reply:

Yes. We have applied rent waivers for the first six months of the pandemic, and those are constantly under review. It is possible that we may be extending those moving forward.

- 2) What alternatives to face to face care service provision have been offered since the lockdown in March and how has the London Borough of Bromley, working with commissioned providers, ensured that residents with learning disabilities, mental health issues and those who are most vulnerable have continued to be able to access services, particularly those who are unable to access services online?

Reply:

The block service provider has offered outreach support to service users during the closure.

Service users have been contacted to ensure that their care and support needs were met in the family home by increasing Direct Payments. The Council has been creative in its approach, for example, where needs were identified in relation to college needs, i-Pads have been funded to meet learning needs and outcomes.

In relation to respite, the Council has funded family members to provide respite and 1:1 workers to support within the home or wider community if appropriate.

Care Managers have provided strength based assessments and explored alternative options with adults and/or their carers. Where there were no community alternatives we have provided additional care and support to both the adult and their carer either by a managed service or by a direct payment.

Supplementary Question:

The responses and feedback I have been getting from some residents is that residents with particular issues, such as dementia and other additional needs, are completely unable to access additional services and technology. Could you provide some reassurance that where this is the case, and where residents are unable to access services digitally or online, that there will always be an alternative available.

Reply:

I would obviously be happy to take forward any individual concerns that you have from residents within your local area. I know from my own constituents that I have had feedback from residents, that they are receiving letters and support through the post from various agencies; and from the point

of view of my own mother who is actually receiving various notifications through the post from clubs and providers that she attends. If you have any concerns around the online issues, then I would be happy to take those up with the Director of Adult Social Care if you give me the individual details after the meeting.