

PUBLIC PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.00 pm on 4 April 2011

Present:

Councillor Tim Stevens J.P. (Chairman)
Councillor Douglas Auld (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors David Hastings, Harry Stranger, Kate Lymer,
Peter Fortune, Will Harmer, Kathy Bance and John Canvin

Dr Robert Hadley

Also Present:

Councillor Peter Morgan

STANDARD ITEMS

102 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Clifford Longley. Mr Alf Kennedy acted as his alternate.

103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hastings declared a personal interest as his wife is employed by SLAM.

104 SLAM - LEARNING FROM ABSCONDING

Tom Fahey, Clinical Director Forensic Services of South London and Maudsley addressed the committee. He updated Members on developments and Improvements since the Trust last addressed the committee in March 2010.

The "Buddi" system, which the Trust commenced using in 2010 and which was outlined to members in March 2010 was working well. The system was used for patients with moderate to medium risk and also for higher risk patients. The system was a "state of the art" tracking device for use with mental health patients. It enabled the patient's location to be identified to within 50 yards. It recorded and time logged movements so it was possible to track a patient's journey and timescale at any point during their leave. The devices were tamper proof and alerted the monitoring system of any attempt at removal.

Most patients had welcomed it but there were a few patients who had instructed lawyers as they felt it was against their Human Rights to be “monitored”. The challenges were also about consent and SLAM lawyers were currently looking at the levels of consent that were needed. He added that it was in the patients’ best interests and safety that the system was used.

Since the introduction there had been very few patients who had breached the conditions of their leave and due to the Systems GPS tracking staff were able to locate them quickly and they were escorted back to the hospital. In all cases the protocols agreed with Ward Councillors had been followed. The number of incidents occurring during leave from River House had halved since the introduction of the “Buddi”. The numbers of “abscond” incidents had almost halved and the actual number of incidents had reduced by 80%.

The Chairman of the Public Protection and Safety Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee thanked the members of SLAM for attending the meeting and giving an update.

The Vice Chairman of the Public Protection and Safety Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee asked about the reference in the report that a management specialist was taking over the prosecution of cases. He asked if the CPS would still have the input. David Smith from the Metropolitan Police explained that there was a permanent CPS lawyer now based at Bromley Police Station but explained that there were few cases that would get to the prosecution stage.

When asked about the costs of the “Buddi” system, Slam explained it was £100 a month to rent the units and £115,000 had been spent in the last year on technology and staff training.

Members raised concern about violence towards the public and also to themselves. Prof. Fahy explained that SLAM were building links with other services to scientifically evaluate the “Buddi” system. There had been improvements in the system such as portable charger.

SLAM was then asked about how they monitor patients’ medication when they are on leave Prof. Fahy explained that most medication is given by a fortnightly injection. When patients were discharged they usually went into a hostel or supported living where their medications could be properly monitored.

Members raised concerns how and for how long the data of patients’ movements was kept. Prof. Fahy responded that the data was stored by the security company but was only kept for the duration the patient remained at the hospital.

The Chairman of the ACS Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee felt that, with the changes in the service, it would be interesting for her committee to have an opportunity to scrutinise the changes.

The Public Protection and Safety Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee Chairman asked about a visit by members to SLAM. He had tried to arrange a visit after SLAM attended in 2010 but it had not been arranged. Jill Locket stated that this would definitely be arranged and that the clerk would contact her to arrange a date.

The Public Protection and Safety Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee Chairman thanked SLAM for an excellent update report and requested a further update in 12 months time.

RESOLVED that the report is noted.

The Meeting ended at 6.32 pm

Chairman