

## **Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

### **Thursday, 16 March 2017, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am**

#### **Present:**

#### **Minutes**

Mr T A L Wells (Chairman), Mrs J L M A Griffiths (Vice Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Mr C J Bloore, Mr P Grove, Mrs A T Hingley, Mr C G Holt and Mrs M A Rayner

#### **Also attended:**

Mrs S L Blagg

Sandra Hill, Speakeasy N.O.W  
Louise Blunn, Speakeasy N.O.W and service user  
Franco Laidlaw, service user  
Bob Timmins, Employment provider  
Peter Pinfield, Worcestershire Healthwatch

Elaine Carolan (Interim Lead Commissioner), Sally-Ann Parker (Employment Partnerships Officer), Bethany Pettifer (Employment Partnerships Support Worker), Peter Sugg (Commissioning Manager), Richard Keble (Assistant Director of Adult Services), Kerry McCrossan (Operation and Integration Manager) and Emma James (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

#### **Available Papers**

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handouts for items 5 and 6 (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 November 2016 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

#### **242 Apologies and Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

No apologies from the Panel had been received, however the Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Manager would have liked to attend but was on annual leave.

#### **243 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **244 Public Participation**

None.

**245 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**246 Supported employment for people with learning disabilities**

In attendance for this overview of the service and support provided to help adults with learning disabilities access employment, were:

Worcestershire County Council

Elaine Carolan, Interim Strategic Commissioner  
Sally-Ann Parker, Employment Partnerships Officer  
Bethany Pettifer, Employment Partnerships Support Worker and Peter Sugg, Commissioning Manager

Service users and representatives

Speak Easy N.O.W – Sandra Hill, Chief Officer  
'Having a Job' service user and member of the Learning Disability Partnership Sub Group – Louise Blunn  
'Having a Job' service user and Expert member - Franco Laidlaw  
Employment provider – Bob Timmins, Newland Hurst Care Home

Healthwatch Worcestershire – Chairman, Peter Pinfield

The Employment Partnerships Officer gave a presentation to provide information about the service, its purpose, outcome measures and the current position, and examples of case studies. The Interim Strategic Commissioner explained that this was a small team of two staff members (the Employment Partnerships Officer and Support Worker), although it was hoped the team could be expanded. There was a great enthusiasm for creating a new service, and employment opportunities, following a redesign in March 2016. As part of the presentation, the service users present, Louise Blunn and Franco Laidlaw, would be invited to feed back their experiences of employment support and having a job.

'Having a Job' was one of the six big aims of the Worcestershire Learning Disability Partnership Board (WLDPB). The aim was for "People with a learning disability will have access to an enhanced employment pathway alongside other members of the public who are defined as being furthest from the labour market in Worcestershire". The WLDPB met regularly and discussed and issues and barriers to employment.

There could be a lack of understanding about what a

learning disability was, and the following definitions were therefore helpful:

- a learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities
- a learning disability is often confused with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and mental health problems
- people with a learning disability tend to take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand complicated information and interact with other people.

Louise Blunn, service user and member of the Learning Disability Partnership Sub Group gave feedback on her experiences. There was not enough support for people with learning disabilities to get a job. The Supported Employment Service was helping people to find work and she had heard positive stories from people about job searches and support received; they often needed support in all areas of getting a job and this could take a long time. If a person with learning disabilities did get a job, they needed support to keep it and to help them deal with any problems in the workplace. Employers were not happy to take on people with learning disabilities and worried they would not do the work, which meant they were not given a chance to prove themselves. Job centres did not have information written in an easy read format and letters from the Department for Work and Pensions were hard to understand.

People with learning disabilities may have problems with physical access to work but this was not the only barrier. Mental health problems could improve and people could recover, however a learning disability does not. You could learn new skills but may need help and support with new things or solving problems.

The purpose of the Supported Employment Service was linked to the Care Act, including the need for:

- promoting individual well-being, integration, D&E
- working towards reducing and preventing the need for care and support
- providing advice and information for service users and also signposting those who were not eligible
- promoting integration of care and support

For some people with a learning disability, having a job could be a real part of their well-being, and also have potential for becoming independent in other areas of their lives, for example where they lived.

Employment support was now delivered from the Council's Adult Services Directorate. This had created an opportunity to bring services closer to social workers, transitions teams and commissioning, providing continuity and supporting prevention. The service was now more defined and focused on those in receipt of adult social care, who may be furthest away from access to employment. The service also worked with community partners to support delivery of their initiatives, including support for families and carers.

The service was measured by the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework measure which shows the proportion of adults with a learning disability who are known to the council, who are recorded as being in paid employment. It is restricted to those adults of working age with a primary support reason of learning disability support who received long-term support during the year. The measure is focused on paid employment.

Officers visited and benchmarked the service against other areas, and recognised that Worcestershire was quite stringent in defining *paid* employment.

Within Worcestershire there were 1276 eligible service users, and 53 referrals since May 2013. At the start of the new service, 5.55% of people were in paid employment (68 people in paid work). The last published figure gave 6.40% people in paid employment (81 people in paid work). This was pleasing, although the culture shift to the new service would take time. The target set for year ending 2017/2018 was to reach 128 people in paid employment.

The business case for employers included evidence from various research, for example that people thought more highly of companies that made an effort to employ disabled people, the fact that those with learning disabilities stayed in a job three times longer than average, were hardworking and enthusiastic, and that team dynamics and overall performance had been known to improve as a result of employing someone with a learning disability.

Employment opportunities within the Council itself were being identified, and it was very important for the Council to lead by example. Another exciting opportunity was to access links with other Trusts that are creating learning disability-specific job opportunities, which would be supported by their teams with overarching support from the Council's service.

Much of the work involved going out and talking to people. Support provided included vocational profiling, recruitment and selection, setting up supported interviews, work tasters, arranging travel training, one-to-one support, helping employers and advice on reasonable adjustments and the access to work scheme. Each service user was an individual and support provided was bespoke to their needs, whilst also being mindful of the duty of care to ensure safeguarding. One of the main problems was employers' expectation for people to promote themselves during recruitment processes, which was not an environment in which people with learning disabilities could perform well.

### Real stories of supported employment

The Panel was given details about a number of examples, including Styans Family Produce Farm in Evesham, MHS Travel in Stourport and Newland Hurst Care Home in Droitwich. These employers had proved a very good fit for individual service users, one of whom had worked as a valet for MHS Travel for over 20 years and was described as one of the company's best employees.

Comments were invited from Franco Laidlaw, who had been supported into employment and worked at Matalan. Franco explained that he worked for four hours, two days a week, unpacking deliveries for the shop floor. He had been there for over 10 years. The best thing about it was being with people, who had become friends. He liked getting paid and was happy with the support from the service.

Bob Timmins from Newland Hurst Care Home also provided feedback from an employer viewpoint. He had worked with people with learning disabilities for over 20 years and spoke about the significant benefits of the service, including individuals' sense of purpose and contribution to society from having paid employment. Employees with learning disabilities were reliable, hardworking, trustworthy and thorough, however supporting them could be high cost. The benefit to the Council was the positive increase in people's well-being, and the increase in their support network could also stave off illness, including mental ill-health.

Bob also talked about the process, skill matching and informal interviews. The new service bridged the gap between individuals and employers. Jobs included maintenance and domestic help.

## Main discussion points

- Panel members were very impressed by the presentation and information about the service.
- Everyone acknowledged that having a job plays a big part in our self-esteem and that in many ways we are defined by what job we do.
- What were the main obstacles to increasing the numbers of people supported into employment? The employer present agreed that the interview process was a big obstacle, as well as education about the process and how to communicate with people with learning disabilities.
- The Chief Officer of Speakeasy N.O.W agreed the importance of educating employers to understand that someone with a reduced intellectual capacity was still able to learn how to do a job. Ongoing support was also very important to maintain the success of employment.
- Nonetheless, there had been a shift in terms of employment as an option for adults with learning disabilities, which it was important to build on. In particular, there was potential to help with job opportunities for a small number of hours (2-4 a week), which employers often struggled to recruit for.
- The Panel Chairman felt that the numbers of people being supported was very low, and just the 'the tip of the iceberg'; more support was needed, including government incentives.
- When asked what other activities adults with learning disabilities took part in, who were not in employment, the Interim Lead Commissioner advised that many adults with learning disabilities participated in day opportunities; however this was different to paid employment, although it may ultimately lead to paid employment.
- Much of the officers' engagement work involved talking to people, which was the best way to overcome any apprehension, for example fears about loss of benefits. It was possible to work up to 16 hours a week, earning up to £115, without losing benefits. Panel members were pleased to hear that this rule would be phased out in a few years' time.
- When asked about the potential for exploitation, officers' experience over 15 years had seen very little, although it was important to be aware. Those supported into employment earned at least the minimum wage.

- Commissioners of the service had identified a need for more resources, although resources were finite. The service development was being monitored so that demand did not outstrip supply, but the nature of the service meant that everyone's support needs were different.
- Several Panel members suggested ways to publicise the service, for example the Connect magazine and the Farmers Union.
- It was clarified that the service did not deal with adults whose learning disability resulted from an accident.
- Cllr Adams, who himself worked with disaffected young people on his farm, spoke about his experiences, including the fact that having two people who worked well together, and the personalities of individuals could affect success.
- Officers worked with the Transitions Team, for example going to meet young people while they were at college.
- Officers were aware of some possible modifications to entry requirements for apprenticeships, which a member pointed out may be suitable for some people with learning disabilities. The Council's Corporate Equality and Diversity Manager was also involved in work on internships.
- The Healthwatch Worcestershire Chair pressed the importance of working collectively, and suggested that the Scrutiny Panel could look to maximise potential from the Council's role in providing social care, alongside the engagement skills provided by Speakeasy N.O.W.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution.

The Panel went on to discuss its concerns about the small numbers being supported into employment, and the potential for more resources to help this excellent service. The Panel was advised that the targets set were in line with the best services in the country.

It was agreed that a summary of these points would be sent to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the 'Having a Job' Sub Group had five targets, one being to talk to MPs, and had talked with Robin Walker, MP for Worcester, to highlight the importance of this area.

Day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities was

**247 Social work with adults: Strengths-based Approach**

suggested for future discussion.

The Panel was advised that the Council's transitional work (with children as they transferred to adult services) would be looked at during a joint scrutiny session, with the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel, on 21 June 2017.

In attendance for this item were:

Worcestershire County Council:

Richard Keble, Assistant Director of Adult Services  
Kerry McCrossan, Operations and Integration Manager

The Assistant Director gave a presentation, which provided an overview of the Council's switch to a strengths-based approach to social work with adults, based on the 'Three Conversation' model. Essentially the new approach would move away from social workers going in and asking questions about the problems, to asking someone 'what can you do?' and using a person's strengths to build on, in providing support.

The Panel was shown two slides which had been used to explain the new approach to staff involved, which put forward what social workers should be doing, based on the British Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (2012):-

- *Promote* social change, problem solving in human relationships and empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being
- *Address* the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments
- *Enable* all people to develop their full potential, promote and enhance independence and enrich their lives

The second slide depicted the current system nationally, which unintentionally had become focused on processes, referrals, cost reductions and aversion to risks. Staff immediately identified with these points.

The Three Conversations approach would replace the status quo operating model in social care, with one based on assets and strengths, and collaboration. It was a new way of working, not an additional one. Experiences from other local authorities, their service users and staff, provided compelling evidence that it worked, improved well-being, and could significantly improve staff satisfaction and productivity. It also worked in integrated



environments to improve both health and well-being, as well as consuming less resources.

The Three Conversations involved in the new straight-forward approach were:

- Listen and connect – really understand what matters, connect to resources and support
- Work intensively with people in crisis – look at what needs to change urgently for the person to regain control, put into a plan, stick like glue to help make the most important things happen
- Build a good life – what resources, connections and support will enable the person to live that chosen life? How do they need to be organised?

The numbers of conversation 3 would significantly reduce as staff mastered conversations 1 and 2.

Staff would need to know people's communities and neighbourhoods to be able to work in this way, and learn a new way of recording work, with no hand-offs, no referrals, no triage or waiting lists – and lots more accountability and seeing things through to the finish.

This represented a significant cultural and behavioural change for all staff, but one which was completely in line with core values, principles and reasons for being in social care jobs.

#### The evidence base and lessons from elsewhere

The new approach was very much based on reflective practice; the approach worked with all people and represented the most effective financial sustainability strategy, since the evidence showed a significant reduction in contacts that become ongoing packages of care. There was potential for a major impact on long-term spend, and particular opportunities for integration with the NHS.

Improving partnerships with health professionals and other key partners would be very important.

Changing the conversation with people would mean social workers would often end up helping people to happily spend some of their own money well, rather than the Council's, which would build on their assets and strengths.

The answers to a person's needs were often very individual and unexpected. By sticking with and

collaborating with the person in need, families would be much more likely to collaborate with social workers.

Risk would be viewed differently, by taking more risks but always collectively with reflection and discussion. The approach did not feel easier, but more interesting, flexible and people-centred.

### Timeline

The new approach would be introduced with two teams from 24 April, with evaluation and innovation sites to learn new ways of working from May to July. It was planned to have the model working across the county from February 2018.

It was ambitious and a massive cultural change, but the feedback from staff was that everyone supported the new way of working and was ready for it. The Operations and Integration Manager also pointed out that the importance of staff retention and recruitment, which would be helped by increased job satisfaction.

### Main discussion points

- Panel members agreed the new approach was a very good idea and could see that staff would benefit from more 'doing' and less 'processing'.
- The officers advised that although the changes would be substantial, the evidence showed that the speed of the positive impact helped staff to see the benefits of the new approach early on. There were always some people who may not like change, but this was the right way forward for Worcestershire and in truth the concepts behind the approach should ring true to anyone in social or care work.
- The new model was not a reaction to the recent Ofsted report of Children's Services, although it would help address some of its concerns.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care agreed that links with the community would be very important, and that a community model was needed to avoid acute (hospital) care being the default option. She particularly liked the fact that the new approach gave people a named contact to work with and kept in mind the fact that people can get better and regain independence.
- It was essential that health and social care came together, especially links between GPs and social workers – the Kidderminster area was particularly

progressive in this respect. Officers advised that multi-disciplinary teams would mean partnership working.

- The new approach would be a big change and was not without risks, but it was acknowledged that a change was needed to facilitate more independence.

The Healthwatch Worcestershire Chair was invited to comment, and welcomed this as a significant but challenging change for Worcestershire, which could not be achieved alone and community links would be important. Healthwatch were involved and would want to engage with service users and carers.

In thanking the officers for their information, the Panel agreed it would be helpful to be updated on progress with the new approach and the Assistant Director suggested Autumn 2017.

The Chairman paid particular tribute to Cllr Blagg, who was not standing for re-election, as an exemplar portfolio holder for adult social care. The Panel had been hugely impressed by her knowledge, commitment and involvement in scrutiny meetings.

A Panel member also paid tribute to Cllr Wells for his chairmanship of the Panel.

The meeting ended at 12.05 pm

Chairman .....