

NOTES OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH JULY 2011

1. Closure of Bucknall Hospital (Mental Health Services)

North Staffordshire combined Health Care N.H.S Trust needed to change its model of service to respond to commissioning intention and provide a better service. There would be sufficient time to consult and make sure the services would be fit for purpose. This consultation will take place at the end of July. Work with families involved will take place so that they know what would happen. A care programme approach, which would include an assessment of the individual's care and carer's needs to structure a package of mental health and other services will take place.

2. Carers Consultation – Payments to Carers

Direct payments to carers had been intended to provide short term funding straight to carers to support them in their role but there had been too many instances of the payments being spent on things that did not address the issues that carers experienced. These payments had been agreed in the carers support plan and should have been monitored.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing stated that a lot of assessments had already been done, working out with individuals what they could do and what support would be provided including respite care and ensuring a better approach to targeting resources. Significant work is going on to expand the availability of day opportunities that people wanted to access with some 120 new services being stimulated by the Community Wellbeing fund. A single telephone number and Staffordshire Cares purple pages were implemented. This new plan for each carer would be reviewed annually with staff keeping a close eye for anyone getting into difficulty. There are just under 90,000 recorded carers in the 2001 census but more are expected in the 2011 census.

Members were concerned about the situation of young carers and how they were catered for, highlighting the finding of a previous review by Lichfield District Council that young people did not speak up about their caring role for fear of their family being split up. Work is being carried out by GP's, businesses and schools on this subject, including workshops with carers associations. There are practical actions, such as offering flexible appointments to carers and carers registers kept by GP's for all.

The Members indicated a wish to receive feedback on the outcome of the consultation. Matthew Ellis is the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing.

3. Report of Scrutiny and Support Manager

The Chair had written to the Chairman of Walsall Council's Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel, to take further steps to satisfy themselves about action on mortality rates at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust. Staffordshire had been successful in a bid to become a Scrutiny Development Area for the Centre for Public Health Reforms Programme and there had been contact with the advisor to come up with a plan of work.

Brenda Constable