

Policy Review item: Walton House Day Service

Second Stakeholder Briefing Paper

8th March 2005

The previous briefing dated 9th February (“Proposal to consider Future Changes in Day Care Services”) outlined the main issues relating to this WF Council Policy Review item.

The key issues now are as follows:

Walton House Day Service

Walton House is a 28 place day centre in South Chingford. It is part of the residential unit and has been providing services for older people since the 1970's. The average attendance at the centre is between 12 to 15 people per day, Monday to Friday. It has a staffing compliment of 11 staff. The Manager of the day unit also manages the residential service. The budget for the service is £258k and the PR requirement is £250K.

A recent North East London Mental Health Day Service review found that the building design and layout was unsuitable for older people with severe dementia and higher dependencies. This was because of the L shaped layout, the large number of exits (15 in all) and the lack of space for activities. Attempts to modernise this space would be very costly. For these reasons the service has been unable to accept higher dependency referrals from the nearby Greenthorne Centre, which is a mental health day hospital.

This service has failed to keep step with current demand trends towards higher dependencies and increased levels of dementia. This contrasts with the two other in house services (Crownfield Road E15; The Morley Centre at Essex Hall E17) which have been successfully modernised.

Consultation process – progress report

The original briefing outlined the consultation process, which has proceeded to plan:

January 27th – Meeting with staff and TUs, letter to users, carers and relatives.
February 4th – Meeting with HR and TUs, letter to staff.
February 8th – Meeting with Users and Carers
February 10th – Meeting with Users and Carers
February 18th – OPSPG (inc Vol Sector providers, PCT, NELMHT, in house etc)
February 21st – OP Stakeholder Group (As above, 18.2.05) but members also.

The day service was discussed at a meeting of the Highams Park and South Chingford Community Council on February 23rd. Other key stakeholders were to be consulted either through the above, or similar, meetings or through these briefings:

Ward Councillors
WF Primary Care Trust – Chief Executive, PEC and Board
North east London Mental Health Trust (NELMHT)
Human Resources colleagues
Contracts Section; Community Services
Age Concern (WF)
WF Carers Association
Other Voluntary Sector Providers

Changes to community care charges for day services

Separately to Walton House, you will be interested to hear that in 2005/06 the maximum daily charge for day services for older people is to be reduced from £61.50 to £32. We are glad to be able to respond to many requests from stakeholders to reduce this charge, which was thought to deter some older people.

Special Council meeting

A special meeting of the Council has been arranged to discuss the closure of Walton House following representations by users, carers and trade union representatives at the recent budget setting Council meeting. This meeting will give elected members the opportunity to fully explore the issues raised by the proposed closure of the service. We understand that this meeting will be on April 4th, but will let you know of any change.

Re-assessments (previously known as “reviews”)

We are now commencing assessments for all users of the service and their carers and have sent a detailed letter to them all explaining the process involved.

Should those assessed users be found to require day care we will provide this, although – subject to final decisions - not at Walton House. It is possible that some current users will not be assessed as needing their current level of provision or meeting current eligibility criteria. Where this is the case we will refer these users to voluntary sector partner organisations for advice and information about alternatives, for example, social and drop in clubs.

An opportunity for change - Baytree House E4

It is important to remember that this Policy Review proposal is about modernising services for older people, albeit it in a difficult resource environment.

Baytree House is a sheltered housing scheme in North Chingford, managed by Quadrant Supported Living and providing 30+ living units for older people. A successful joint capital bid to the Department of Health (DOH) (by QSL, the Housing Department and the Directorate of Health and Social Care) has resulted in an award of £507,000 capital funding to develop the scheme, to include day care provision. We are positively considering plans to provide a service for those users no longer able to use Walton House (because of closure) but still assessed as requiring day care.

We are currently working on details with Quadrant Supported Living. The tenants' agreement to these proposals will be vital, but initial indications are positive. The model we would use would be based on the highly successful day club model pioneered by the dementia support team in Leytonstone. The basic components of this include flexible transport arrangements and a wide range of activities for users, which would be managed within current resources and thus linked in to more modern ways of working.

Issues for staff

There have been a number of meetings between staff, their representatives, Human Resource colleagues and management. An established consultation process is ongoing. There are redeployment opportunities for all staff although these do not offer like for like alternatives as most of the vacancies are within the residential units.

The day centre staff current work office hours. However, three staff would be able to consider retirement. Others may be offered posts with different hours and conditions (e.g. in residential care), and where this is a possibility it would be viewed as a potential career opportunity with good training being provided for new key roles. Lastly, we may still be able to offer staff places within the remaining day centres when vacancies arise in the future and Walton House day service staff could be fast-tracked to these if that is their preference.

***Please note that written responses were to be returned by
Thursday 24th March.***