

**Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's  
Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board  
Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

Item	Notes
<b>Board Members in attendance</b>	Jan Rothwell (Chairman), Keith Hester, Sue Hinks, John Carr, Mick Hutchins, Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), Norma Weaver.
<b>Others</b>	Councillor Pamela Bale, Graham Hunt (Newbury Town Council), Verity Murrucane (Eight Bells), Tandra Forster (Contracts and Commissioning Manager), Nigel Owen (Project Manager Community Services), Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer).
<b>1. Introduction, apologies, minutes and matters arising</b>	<p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting,</p> <p>Apologies: There were apologies received from Kate Green, Paul Kirwan (WEBCAS Executive Director, West Berkshire Advocacy), Jan Evans (Head of Adult Social Care), and Valerie Witton (Access Officer).</p> <p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2011 were approved as a true and correct record.</p> <p>A request was received to ensure that abbreviations and acronyms are explained on first use, or removed.</p> <p>A report had been circulated to provide responses to Actions 1 and 2 relating to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This report had not been received by all, and it was decided to carry these to the next meeting to allow time to read the paper.</p> <p><b>Action 1:</b> EW to invite Elaine Cox to the next meeting to discuss comments on this paper.</p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> All to send comments regarding this paper to Elaine Walker as they arise.</p>

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	<p>The Board were reminded that any initial issues regarding rights of way should be taken to the Access Panel and that the Board would pick up issues that could not be resolved.</p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> EW to take forward to the next agenda Mel Brain's action to provide a break down report of the number of housing registered clients by type.</p> <p><b>Answer phone messages</b></p> <p>JC informed the board that the two messages that had been left on the dedicated answer phone service had been deleted before he had been able to note each person's details, so the individuals had not been contacted.</p> <p>[Note: New Voicemail messages are stored infinitely; messages that have been accessed are stored for 30 days, and then deleted.]</p> <p><b>Parkway</b></p> <p>The Board were advised that should individuals wish to arrange to be shown around Parkway, they should contact the centre direct. The Board were made aware that one individual had been known to have done this, but they had not been impressed by the service as the 'trained' meet and greet person did not appear to be experienced enough.</p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> EW to feed this information back to Valerie Witton.</p>
<p><b>2.- The Commissioning Process for Care Service Providers</b></p>	<p>Tandra Forster provided an introduction to this item. Commissioning in Adult Social Care is done through the tendering process. Users are invited to provide information to use in the specification where possible; otherwise these are developed by a team.</p> <p>The Care Quality Commission is the regulator for all care service providers, and all providers must be registered with them. Checks may be carried out through asking the provider what they are doing, and through physical inspection and audit trails. Where issues are discovered, Care Quality officers will work with the provider to create improvements. If this is not successful, disciplinary action may be required.</p> <p>The Council develops an overall picture of each provider through complaints, reported deficiencies and other information that is known whilst being considerate of individual's views of each provider. The Council has a</p>

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	<p>generally positive relationship with all providers and will work with them to ensure a good service is provided.</p> <p>TF clarified a specific issue that where the care provider, or client become aware that they will be late, and then they should telephone to inform the other party. If the provider is late and the client believes the delay to be unreasonable, they should raise a complaint or a deficiency through the Council. Deficiency reports are valuable to the Council helping to build a full picture of providers and are to be encouraged. It is recognised that some people may not want to make a report as they are worried that they may lose their care provision, or because they don't feel the issue is big enough (they are willing to live with a minor inconvenience), however TF assured the Board that services can only improve if this information is brought forward, and said that the reporting process was simple to use. The Board requested that the Council provide more reassurance to people that reporting deficiencies will not disrupt their care provision.</p> <p>MH offered information about the West Berkshire Independent Living Network (WBILN) which has set up a user group which may help by providing a safe voice for those in receipt of care to report issues. TF said that this was an excellent idea and that the Council would like to engage with this process in order to receive further information and has asked to be kept informed of developments. TF also stressed that the Council does receive many compliments and letters of gratitude about excellent care provision, so she is particularly disappointed to hear of bad experiences from the Board.</p> <p>MH offered to create a flyer to raise awareness amongst care service users and requested that this be distributed by the Council in order to comply with data protection. TF agreed to distribute this flyer if MH sent it to her direct.</p> <p>MH asked whether information on deficiencies is made available to personal budget holders so that they are able to make informed decisions. TF responded that the Council are developing ways to make this information available.</p> <p>MH raised a concern about the use of two people for certain care requirements when it is not felt to be needed. This would mean a double charge to the Council even when not always required. TF responded that an individuals care requirements are determined by their care manager, not by an agency.</p> <p>Nigel Owen informed the Board of a home care survey that has been sent to 1000 randomly selected home care users and requested that members of the Board use their contacts to encourage these to be completed and returned.</p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> All to encourage the completion of home care user surveys when they are received.</p>

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	<p>AF requested that clauses be put into agency contracts to require compliance with the Equalities Act and the European Convention on Human Rights. TF responded that whilst in principal this would not be a problem, further work would be needed before making very specific requirements of agencies.</p>
<p><b>3. – Mental Health Progress Report</b></p> <p><b>Eight Bells project</b></p>	<p><b>Mental Health Progress Report</b></p> <p>Nigel Owen provided an update regarding mental health day services. Back in 2009, Lynn Stevens led a consultation process, discussing service provision with users. There was concern that Hillcroft was not delivering the required services and that alternatives were not fully suitable. Discussions included people from Eight Bells as services provided by this organisation were felt to be partially successful.</p> <p>An invitation was sent out to make proposals to run a service to support people with mental health problems. These were, however, considered too costly to implement. At the same time a review was undertaken of Hillcroft which highlighted that it was underused, and it was not possible to use Hillcroft for short term support as the people who attended did so for a long time with little in the way of long term goals.</p> <p>When it was announced that Hillcroft would cease operating, all current users had their needs reassessed, some individuals continued to be supported by officers from Hillcroft, including a horticultural scheme started by one officer. Voluntary organisations were asked to come forward with ideas for further support that they could offer with some funding available to help these to begin.</p> <p>Two grants were made as a result of this process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £6,000 to Eight Bells to enable them to establish themselves more strongly;</li> <li>• £12,000 to Pulling Together for a new day service offering employment support and structured programmes.</li> </ul> <p>The Mental Health Forum has been reinvigorated with its first meeting earlier in January with representatives from a number of organisations coming together to help improve local services. It will also be a key contributor to the new HealthWatch.</p> <p><b>Eight Bells Project</b></p> <p>Verity Murracane spoke to the Board about Eight Bells for Mental Health. This is a member run organisation that is</p>

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	<p>currently three years old. External support and guidance was sought to avoid issues that can arise from member run groups. The organisation is now officially a charity with 9 trustees.</p> <p>Eight Bells provides somewhere for people to come and feel supported and get involved in taking responsibility for how the organisation runs. Users are able to learn and share skills, and are helped to achieve their goals. Users benefit from retaking responsibility. It is not run as a day centre and does not provide therapy in the traditional sense. Most users are at the lower end of need, but levels do vary.</p> <p>Eight Bells complements Pulling Together which is a more structured service. Both are open to all West Berkshire residents, although they are aware that some potential users may have transport difficulties.</p> <p>Eight Bells costs £15,000 annually to keep running, and this money is harder to find in the current economic climate. Verity thanked the Council for the £6,000 grant, but was concerned about where further funding may come from.</p> <p>MH asked whether the PCT could be approached to support this organisation, and also mentioned funding that could be applied for from the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).</p> <p><b>Action 6:</b> Nigel Owen to provide Verity Murrricane with information about possible funding from ODI.</p>
<p><b>4. – Changes to Social Care progress report</b></p> <p><b>Update on Personal Budgets</b></p>	<p>MH informed the Board that information was awaited on the implication of funding cuts before decisions could be made.</p> <p>NO informed the Board that the consultation process had just closed. 276 written responses to the adult social care proposals had been received. Most responses related to the proposal to increase charges for care services. Responses had been received to all 10 proposals. Results from the consultation will be published on the internet once finalised.</p> <p><b>Action 7:</b> NO to send hard copies of the consultation results to Alan Fleming and Keith Hester.</p> <p>The final decision for next year's budget would be made on March 1<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p><b>Personal Budgets</b></p> <p>There are no updates in relation to personal budgets. The process is looking to be simplified. NO responded to a</p>

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	question that there had been very little take up of personal budgets by people with mental health problems.	
5 – AOB	<p><b>Transport Forum</b></p> <p>MH confirmed that there was nothing to report from the Transport Forum as there had been no meeting since the last report.</p> <p><b>Home Care</b></p> <p>The Home Care User Group is not being maintained due to the introduction of the West Berkshire Independent Living Network (WBILN) user group.</p> <p>Item will remain on the agenda for future use.</p> <p><b>Access Panel</b></p> <p>JC informed the Board that the previous Access Panel had been held in a different format by making use of a computer and projector to display the plans, instead of paper copies. It was not felt to have been useful as the screen was difficult to see.</p> <p>There is still good membership of the Panel.</p> <p>There is some concern that not all the comments being made are being taken into account by planners. On some occasions, comments are shown on the website but are not written into the report.</p>	
6 Next meeting	All	<p>Meeting closed at 1.00pm.</p> <p>Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012</p> <p>Main Agenda Items:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Update on the welfare benefit changes – Jo England</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Discussion regarding guided walks in the area – Elaine Cox</p>

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		<p>Implications of the 2012 budget</p> <p>Revisit the new Equality Duty and receive an update – Elaine Walker</p>
<p><b>7 Meeting dates for 2012/13</b></p>	<p><b>Dates agreed for future meetings:</b></p> <p>Thursday 26th April 2012 in Committee Room 2 Market St, 10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday 26th July 2012 in Committee Room 2 Market St, 10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday 25th October 2012 in Committee Room 2 Market St, 10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday 31st January 2013 in Committee Room 2 Market St, 10.30 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.</p>	