

Questions and Answers

Health and Wellbeing Board

Thursday, 20th May, 2021

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20 May 2021

Questions and Answers



Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

(a) Question submitted to the Berkshire West CCG by Paula Saunderson:

“Following the last meeting and my discussions with Niki Cartwright of BW CCG and Cllr Woollaston, I have been advised work is underway to assess why BW CCG has a low rate of awarding normal CHC (Continuous Health Care) for Long-term Dementia patients, so how is the work progressing please and when and how will the findings be available?”

The Interim Director of Joint Commissioning from Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group answered:

“The three local authorities and the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group have agreed to undertake a review of Continuing Health Care and its local application with a view to harmonising this across the Berkshire West footprint and to understand the reasons for the awarding of eligibility. We anticipate that to be completed within six months.”

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question?”*

Paula Saunderson did not have a supplementary question.

(b) Question submitted to the Chairman of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Paula Saunderson:

“The new Health Scrutiny Committee reporting to OSMC will not have Older Adults Social Care within its remit and the Forward Plan for OSCM [sic] does not include ASC for review within the next year, so how will the lessons to be learnt from the Pandemic during the 2020 period be scrutinised please?”

The Chairman answered:

“This Board does not undertake scrutiny, so the question is one for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission. But, they do not take public questions, so I fully understand why the question has been asked here. I have been in touch with both the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee. The OSMC has asked for a report to come to a future meeting, which will seek to highlight lessons learned from the pandemic and changes that have been put in place as a consequence. I am told that this will address matters relating to health and adult social care, as well as the wider impacts. Subject to the content of this initial report, OSMC may then seek to undertake more detailed and in-depth reviews on key aspects of the pandemic response.

OSMC is responsible for setting its own work programme across all council services and, whilst members of the public may not ask questions, they are able to suggest topics for future reviews via the Council's website, so I would encourage anyone to do that if they think there is a topic that OSMC should be looking at, and Paula, I will ensure that you are sent the relevant link, so that if you wanted to raise it there, knowing what I've just said about it going to be doing some work anyway, you can.”

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question?”*

Paula Saunderson did not have a supplementary question.

(c) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care by Paula Saunderson:

“The recent closure of Willows Edge means there are less AFFORDABLE Nursing places available for Dementia Patients in their later Stages, and it is difficult for self-funders of modest means to find such places, so how will this Board assure Family Dementia Carers of modest means that sufficient AFFORDABLE accommodation will be available over the next 5 years when they can no longer cope?”

The Executive Director - People answered on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:

“Just to clarify before I answer the question in more detail, Willows Edge actually has not been closed - Willows Edge remains open – it’s Walnut Close Care Home that has recently been closed. Walnut Close didn’t have any nursing care beds within its offer and so the number of nursing places available in the market has not changed as a result of the closure.

It is also important to note that because of the pandemic and impact of that pandemic on the local market and the population, very sadly the pressure on the care market has changed, and the number of beds available has change. So there is more supply than demand in the market currently, and there are more beds available than spaces we would need to fill at this point in time.

It is fair to say that if you looked to the west of where we are, you will find that the prices are less expensive, but if you move towards London, prices become more expensive, so the prices within West Berkshire are generally reflective of market forces, the general prices of property in the local area and therefore people’s ability, in theory, to pay for the places they may wish to purchase in the market, or that we would purchase for them in the market.

We do monitor provision of beds in the market place very closely. We have responsibility to seek to manage that market, which is something that we do as part of our work with the market place to try and make sure there is the right spread of beds available and that the prices of those beds are affordable across the market.”

The Chairman asked: *“Do you have a supplementary question?”*

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

“Well I’ve never managed to find any market information for the whole market. Self-finders, self-funders – there’s quite a few of us out there that aren’t actually under the radar of Adult Social Care - so could I just ask you to look at where we might find that information if we’re not coming through Adult Social Care, please?”

The Executive Director – People answered:

“There is information available on our website and we have published a market position statement, which talks about the shape of the current market and the availability of bed space

in the market, so I can certainly make sure that you get a copy of the links for that. I am happy to speak to you outside of this forum if that's helpful."

(d) Question submitted to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care by Paula Saunderson:

"After an extensive trawl there appears to be no AFFORDABLE Residential Respite Care available for worn-out self-funding Family Full-time Unpaid Dementia Carers, so how will this position be rectified going forward, please?"

The Executive Director - People answered on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care:

"We would agree that there is a challenge with access to respite beds and places that's been exacerbated to some extent by the pandemic. It's a long-term issue. We do work with our colleagues in the Commissioning Team within the Council to work with the market to identify available beds and activity that can support people through respite.

The location of permanent beds is an important factor and we need to make sure that's available in a way that supports family members to provide access to those people who have respite requirements. We do need to make sure we work with the market. We accept that, and there are ongoing pieces of work across the Council with our Adult Social Care Services and our Commissioning Team to try and grow the respite offer. We do recognise that is a challenge at the moment, but it is something that we are working on to try and improve the position."

The Chairman asked: *"Do you have a supplementary question?"*

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

"Again I would ask that you try and make that available in a forum where self-finders self-funders can find the information – maybe via the new dementia awareness website. It's under-utilised for dementia carers – there's key information that could be included on that website that's missing."

The Executive Director – People answered:

"We do provide information on our website, but we can make sure that we take on board your comments and I will make sure that the service is aware of the feedback you have provided. Thank you for your question."

(e) Question submitted to the Chairman of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board by Paul Morgan:

"What is the total budget allocated for Health & Wellbeing board over the next 24 months and what are the specific projects that this money will be spent on and when?"

The Chairman answered:

"Strictly speaking, apart from some elements of the meetings budget and the administration budget in order to run the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board does not have direct control over budgets. Instead, what happens is that Board Members will

undertake to make use of funds that are available to their organisations to deliver agreed priorities set out in the Joint Strategy, and we'll be coming onto that later in the meeting.

There is an exception to that general position, which is a thing that is called the Health and Wellbeing Priority Fund, and that had an initial sum of £96,000 put into it in 2018 to support projects that are managed by the Health and Wellbeing Board sub-groups. Now, that money has been used to support projects that support our priorities and address health inequalities. Projects must have a demonstrable impact and we encourage match-funding where we can achieve it.

Projects that have recently been funded, or which are ongoing include:

- *Thinking Together Events*
- *Suicide Prevention Outreach*
- *Life Skills Workshops*
- *Health and Wellbeing Engagement*

There is just under £33,000 left in the pot and that is intended to be used for additional projects over the next two years."

The Chairman asked: *"Do you have a supplementary question?"*

Paul Morgan did not have a supplementary question.

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