

SELECT COMMITTEE ON GOOD HEALTH

Tuesday 16th December 2003 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT:-

Councillor Cody (Chair)
Councillor Hanson (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Ali, Mrs Ameson, Mrs Aston, Banks, Johnson and Mrs White together with the Head of Personnel and Support Services (Lead Officer), Director of Social Services and Mr B Morris (Directorate of Law and Property).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Barry Findlay - Chair of Chiropody Scrutiny Working Group and Ms Fiona O'Sullivan – Lead Officer to the Working Group, both of Wolverhampton City Council
Councillor Miller (Lead Member for Social Services), Dudley MBC

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That, subject to the addition of Councillor Banks' name to the list of apologies for absence, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th November 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of personal interest, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, were made by the following Members for the reasons indicated:

Councillor Johnson, as a user of the chiropody service.

Councillor Cody, in relation to his employment by the West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Councillor Hanson, in relation to his wife's employment in the National Health Service.

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Craigie and Mrs Turner.

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WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL - CHIROPODY HEALTH SCRUTINY REPORT, JULY 2003

Councillor Barry Findlay, (assisted by Ms Fiona O'Sullivan), both of Wolverhampton City Council, gave a presentation on the City Council's Chiropody Health Scrutiny Report. The presentation covered the background to the Review and the methodology applied and also outlined the Review's findings and recommendations.

A copy of the Panel's full report had been circulated to Members of this Committee.

Arising from the presentation, the following matters were raised:-

- Whether the review had revealed any lack of operating theatre time for the chiropody service. The response was that the review had focused on services provided from within the Care Services Directorate of the PCT rather than on the acute hospital service for chiropody.
- Whether the review had looked at how people find information about the service. The response was that access to information about the service in Wolverhampton appeared to be patchy. In addition, it appeared that although additional resources for the service had kept pace with NHS approved inflation rates, they had not matched the general rate of inflation in the UK economy (this was, in effect, a cut in resourcing of the chiropody service).
- That the limited publicity/information about the service was, in effect, a way of controlling demand.
- The preventative health role of the chiropody service, if the service was delivered and used effectively.
- With regard to the need for a clear service specification in Wolverhampton, a comment that it was not clear from the presentation made to this Committee at the previous meeting whether a clear specification existed in Dudley either.

- Wolverhampton accepted referrals to the chiropody service from Social Services professionals. This was not the case in Dudley and this was deserving of further consideration.
- There was a need in Dudley for a measure of the number of people accessing private chiropody services.
- With regard to resource levels, now was the time to feed into the NHS Delivery Plan resourcing proposals.
- Although the service in Wolverhampton appeared to be cost effective in terms of staffing levels, further benchmarking information was necessary to enable a clearer view to be formed about this. In response it was indicated that it had been difficult to make a true comparison between the Wolverhampton service and the service in other areas because of variations in the service actually provided.
- The Committee was impressed by the number of different people/groups that had contributed to the Wolverhampton review.
- Why had Wolverhampton decided to review the chiropody service in the first place and had membership of the Review Panel had been affected by changes in membership of the Council following the local elections in May - given that the review had run from January to July? The response was that the review had been triggered partly by views within the Community Health Council and partly from within the City Council itself.
- With regard to the apparent ease in involving General Practitioners in the review in Wolverhampton, it was indicated that this had been made easier because of the Research Officer's post had been jointly funded by the Council and PCT.

With regard to the time commitment involved in the Review, the response was that the Review Officer had dealt with much of the research work whereas the Elected Members' and other Panel members had attended the meetings with the various parties engaged in the Review. That had been quite a commitment, but it had also been an opportunity to empower people, including the non-elected members involved in the Review.

- The reason for recommending the PCT to undertake their own comprehensive review of the chiropody service was questioned as it appeared to be a duplication of the scrutiny panel's own review. The response was that the panel were not seeking to make the PCT's decisions for it, but more to work alongside the PCT. At present the PCT were being very co-operative in this, but the panel would await and consider closely the PCT's response to their recommendations before deciding what to do next.
- To what extent had the evaluation framework for this review complemented the National Health Scrutiny tool kit? The response was that the reviewers were aware of the national guidance.

The Chair thanked Councillor Findlay and Ms O'Sullivan for their presentation.

After some further reflection by the Committee, it was

RESOLVED

That a Working Group of two or three members be established to consider chiropody services in Dudley in more detail, including comparing the information from the presentations made to this Committee at this and at the previous meeting.

The Chair indicated that he would approach potential members of the Working Group and report back to the next meeting.

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ACCESS TO MATERNITY SERVICES REVIEW

Further to Minute 22, the Lead Officer reported that CHART had agreed to do an initial review, based on a Brief which was now outlined to the Committee, and to produce a preliminary report in time for the January 2004 meeting of this Committee. The cost of this work would be approximately £2,500.00

RESOLVED

That the engagement of CHART on the above basis be approved.

RESIDENTIAL CARE OF OLD AND DISABLED PEOPLE IN DUDLEY AND THE PROPOSED RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER "EVERY CHILD MATTERS"

A report of the Director of Social Services, seeking the Committee's consideration of reports on these matters which had been submitted to the Executive at their meeting on 19th November 2003, was submitted.

Mrs Warren outlined the main points of both reports.

With regard to the report on the residential care of older and disabled people, some concern was expressed about the limited extent of current consultation with key members, representatives of opposition groups and with this Committee itself about the proposals in the report. The Chair indicated his wish to see periodic reports back to this Committee over the next twelve months on progress rather than for the Committee to receive a single report in nine or twelve months time when decisions had already been taken.

In response, Mrs Warren agreed to keep key members informed, but drew attention to confidentiality issues that might arise if and when proposals for the future of specific care homes were under consideration.

With regard to the response to the Green Paper "Every Child Matters", concern was also expressed that there had been insufficient consultation about the terms of the Council's response. Mrs Warren pointed out that this was simply the response to a Green Paper and that there would be further opportunities for consideration of the issues once the Government's proposals emerged into a White Paper or Bill.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report to the Executive on the residential care of older and disabled people in Dudley be received subject to the views of this Committee with regard to their role in future consultation on the matter.
- (2) That the report on the response to the Green Paper "Every Child Matters" as submitted to the Executive be received but that it be placed on record that a number of members of this Committee feel that the consultation process on the Council's response has not been as all encompassing as it might have been. In those circumstances, the Committee expects to have a further discussion on this matter in March 2004 when the Government proposals are further advanced.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.

CHAIR

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