

**BRIEFING NOTE****Agenda Item no. 11**

**TO: Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel**  
**DATE: 7 November 2013**

**Proposed Changes to Day and Respite Care Services (Housing 21)****Purpose**

This is to report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposal to de-commission day services and reduce respite care in the Housing21 extra care schemes as reported to Cabinet in September 2013.

**Background**

The Council has a contract with Housing21 that is for the provision of 5 extra care schemes (Mattersley Court, Deighton Court, Alrewych Court, Winhaela Court and Knaves Court) and one dementia care residential home (Watermill). This contract also includes the provision of day centre services and a small number of respite care units.

With the development of personal budgets and the introduction of benefits based charging there has been a significant drop in occupancy levels of day care at all but one of the extra care scheme day centers. A large number of people who were using day care one or two days a week were not willing to pay the benefits based charge of over £90 per week and no longer use the service. Day services have therefore closed on some days and some staff have been redeployed elsewhere.

There are two respite care units at each of the five extra care schemes and usage has been consistently lower than expected since the contract commenced.

At the same time there is a need for higher staffing levels at night-time in the dementia care residential home. It is proposed that if the outcome of the consultations to proceed with proposed changes, then some of the savings from the changes in day services and respite care should be used to fund additional night-time staffing levels in the residential home.

**Outcome of Consultation**

A communication and consultation plan was developed to ensure clear and consistent messages are delivered for all those affected by the changes in a timely manner enabling them to understand the proposals and share their views. This included all those who are currently attending the day services, their carers, and the staff.

Those affected by the changes were able to share their views on the proposals through a variety of mediums, including by phone, letter, email, the councils website and face to face consultation meetings.

The key consultation messages included:

- De-commissioning day care due to low utilisation. The Council pays for 105 places per week across the five extra care schemes with attendance on average at less than 50%.
- There are a number of alternative day centres that offer day care services and they currently have vacancies.
- Reduce respite care due to low utilization from two flats to one at each of the extra care schemes. The occupancy levels in the respite care units are lower than anticipated at between 42% and 47%.
- Low attendance at the day centres and low occupancy of the respite flats does not provide good value for money
- The Water Mill requires an additional hours per unit per week at a cost of £161,000 per year and if proposals are implemented some of the savings should be used to offset
- All service users affected by these proposals (if implemented) will be offered support to make alternative arrangements.

Consultation sessions were held in the day centres of each of the five Extra Care Courts. In total, the meetings were attended by over 50 service users (out of a current total of 68); carers or family members of around half the service users also attended; and the majority of the day services staff from H21. Representations have also been received via other mediums as listed above.

To date key feedback from consultation on the day services and respite include;

- Several people highlighted the importance of the day services in providing an opportunity to be with other people and have a meal. Current activities include dominos, cards, pub lunch. The day care rooms in some of the Courts are not being used due to low numbers of people attending. Activities are taken to the communal lounge so that everyone else can join in.
- The Council confirmed if the decision was to end day care at the courts service users/families would be supported to make appropriate alternative arrangements. There are other day centres e.g. Stan Ball Centre, Ace Day Care Services, Apna Ghar, St Gabriels which include the provision to accommodate those with complex needs. Housing21 advised that the restaurant facilities are open to the public and would be available even if day care was not provided.
- The question was asked as to whether day care has to end at all the Courts. Can it not continue at one or two? Closing some and not others would be a much more complicated process and so the Council and Housing21's preference is to close them all.
- The issue of transport costs was discussed. There were concerns that day care costs were already high and with added costs of meals and transport that people were struggling to manage this financially. If the alternative service is further away from here will the Council fund the transport?
- It was confirmed that the Council has just completed a consultation on assistance for transport which concluded that transport will only be funded by the Council as

part of a Personal Budget following an assessment of the persons' needs and an agreement as to how these needs will be met.

- There were concerns that not enough is being done to promote the service. Housing 21 and the social work teams/partners have spent considerable time and resources promoting the take-up of day care over a prolonged period of time without success.
- Concerns were raised about the future for staff and service users wanted it noted that the staff provide a first class service, they are excellent and it would be a shame for them to have to go. The Council's proposal is based on value for money not quality of the service or outcomes achieved and is not a reflection of the staff.
- There were concerns that the Council is putting money before people. The proposal is to save £480,000 per year for the remaining 25 years of the contract amounting to a total saving of £12.5 million. There are alternative services available for people to choose to go to instead.
- There were various comments about the Council's poor billing systems to recover charges and a query on how much the council gets back if the service user receives a benefits based charge and pays for their own home care bill. Council agreed that the financial administration systems need improving, and added that this would add further expenditure for the Council.

There has been limited feedback on the respite care provision proposals. The majority of people who currently use respite units in Housing21 will be able to continue to use the remaining units and there is alternative provision in the market.

The process of consultation has been sufficiently thorough to have obtained a comprehensive range of views and responses. The representations from service users are understood, but do not detract from the need to recognise that the low level of occupancy means this is poor value for money for the Council and so savings can be made that will contribute to the Council's projected revenue deficit.

## **Conclusion**

The outcome from the consultation will be reported to the Council Cabinet in December 2013.

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