

One Voice Suffolk

**Suffolk's Voluntary & Community
Sector Infrastructure promoting**

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OVS Representatives Report

Name of Meeting: Adult & Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 18th March 2009

Attending for VCS: Jacqui Martin

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Notes:

The main agenda for this meeting was a report of information and ideas for Scrutiny, regarding services for Adults with learning disabilities.

The purpose of this report was to give a complete overview of scrutiny and what is happening with regards to learning disability services.

The key topics covered were;

- The key drivers from the National Strategy
- What data exists to demonstrate trends in the demands for an availability of services?
- How does the county councils performance and spend compare regionally and nationally?
- Which organisations does the county council work with to provide services?
- How are people engaged by the county council on services?
- What are the key issues affecting people wishing to access these services and how they are being addressed?
- How does the council commission and provide services and how is it changing?
- What arrangements are in place with partners to promote a holistic approach in the provision of services?
- How does the council monitor whether services are achieving good outcomes and value for money in taking forward personalisation services?
- What is the council's ambition for people with learning disabilities and how this is achieved?
- What are the arrangements for accommodation or support for people with learning disabilities and how are these arrangements changing?
- What day time arrangements are available?
- How have provision of day time opportunities changed?

A variety of models of services were also discussed including training, social enterprise and employment.

It was considered at the meeting that a working party may be set-up to look at some of the issues discussed during this paper, however because of the local elections, the meeting from the 4th June has been cancelled and replaced by the 15th July 10-1pm. The forward working program is also going to include looking at the National Dementia Strategy and how Suffolk is responding to that with their local strategy, action learning and skills.

Suffolk record office, supporting peoples services and a review of where we have got with regards to Family Carer Support Services. Later on, on the Agenda there will be individualised budgets, and administration of medication, care services, safeguarding and the results of the safeguarding inspection. However the scrutiny committee's membership will obviously change due to the elections and the priorities may well change depending on the member's presence.

The discussion was very wide and varied, covering a variety of topics and I would suggest that people do access this paper from the Suffolk County Council website as it is extremely full, with regards to statistics and information.

However, some of the key discussion points were as follows;

A variety of consultation has taken place over the last couple of years with regards to services for people with learning disabilities, people's aspirations and also the barriers that may get in the way of those aspirations.

It is known through those consultations that people with learning disabilities want the opportunity to lead an ordinary life, and to access the sort of community services and entertainment that everybody else does. They want to live as independently as possible with the support they need to access those services, we know locally that peoples top priorities are good health, a good home of their own, being in control, and being part of local communities, while building day services such as community resource centre's are highly valued, people realise their ambitions in a way that were not previously possible by accessing new and different services. However the scrutiny committee acknowledged that there will be certain people that couldn't access general services and employment training for a variety of reasons, whether it be morality, complex care needs or family issues, as often family carers take a more cautious and protective view about the risks that can be taken with individuals in order for them to have new experiences.

Moving on and re-provision projects are underway at the present time which is about people with learning disabilities moving into the community and not staying in NHS long stay hospital accommodation, many have also expressed their wish to move from residential care. So a great deal of work is being undertaken at the moment, to work with individuals and their families to move on in their lives, with regards to different types of accommodation and support. The first stage of the project has enabled 39 people moved from NHS long stay hospital care into their own supported tenancy, also 15 new supported housing schemes have been established, providing shared and individual tenancy, which has met the needs of a total of 51 people. This re-provision phase one has been concluded and it has been acknowledged that there are a variety of individuals who are living with older family carers, who will be needing to move on into a different type of accommodation, however it was confirmed that if emergencies arrive and organisations change, these people will be assisted as part of the support structures in place.

There has been great movement in the County with regard to changing social enterprise and employment opportunity and a large proportion of the discussion was

around information gathering on the type of work placements, job introduction schemes and employment opportunities that are around for individuals. I was really impressed with the work going on at Growing Places in Claydon, which pulls in partners from other businesses to supply organic vegetables and a variety of other services to the community. This was quite an animated discussion and if people were interested in seeing a social enterprise of this type, I am sure that they would be willing to accommodate visitors, obviously with some notice.

At the moment the Learning Disability Partnership Board and policy system is under review but members of the board were present at Scrutiny to answer any questions.

Recommendations are being made for a working party to look at some of the issues that were raised during this discussion; however this again will be dependant on the new scrutiny panel, following the local elections. When I have more details I will let you know.

One point that came out of the discussion is the opportunities for the voluntary sector to assist in employment, education and training opportunities for people with learning disabilities and I would certainly be interested to know how many people within the voluntary sector are involved in any such projects so that this could be put as information back in the system.

Questions

Is the credit crunch affecting placements within business?

It was concluded that in some cases it may do and that although some people under placement have been made redundant it was felt that it was done in a way that was not discriminatory and often redundancies were part of block redundancies from the companies.

Some of the issues raised about the barriers for people with learning disabilities were discussed in full, i.e. discrimination in the community, and lack of accessible facilities, lack of accessible transport, potential high costs, resistance from family carers to risk taking, and also letting go and taking risks.

As a point of interest 375 people, adults with learning disabilities still live at home and some of those individuals living with older families may also have some caring responsibilities.

I also raised the issue with regards to transition and ensured that there were links from children's services into adults services so that there was smooth transition for young people with learning disabilities as they come into adult services, the current system was explained in full.