

Overview & Scrutiny Team

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Helen Brown
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Your ref:

Date: 10 September 2008

Our ref: SR/ POC

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Dear Helen

Changing Services and Improving Outcomes for Adults with Learning Disabilities who also have Mental Health Issues or Behaviour that Challenges Services

I am writing to formally respond, on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to the proposals by the Haringey Learning Disabilities Partnership, to reconfigure its services for adults who also have mental health issues or behaviour that challenges services and, in particular, to close Mulberry House.

You will no doubt recall that the Committee designated the proposed change as being a "substantial variation" to local health services at its meeting on 28 July 2008. I am aware that this view was not shared by the TPCT. The decision on whether or not proposals fulfil the relevant criteria for this will always be, to some extent, subjective as such guidance that exists is open to interpretation. In the majority of cases, I am sure that it will be possible to reach a consensus with the TPCT but there may be situations from time to time where the Committee's interpretation differs from that of the TPCT and this is probably unavoidable. We can nevertheless strive to minimise these occurrences by maintaining good communication and ensuring that any relevant information is provided to Members in good time.

The views of the Committee on the scale of the changes proposed are, in any case, of secondary importance to the Committee's views on their merit. Having considered the evidence carefully, including the additional information that was provided subsequent to the Committee meeting on 28 July, the Committee is happy to take a pragmatic approach in feeding back their comments. It acknowledges that consultation has been undertaken by the Learning Disabilities Partnership with all relevant stakeholders on the proposal. It notes that a period of consultation with stakeholders was undertaken in June and July and that it is still happy to receive any further comments. Formal consultation on "substantial variations" would normally need to be for a minimum of 12 weeks but this period can be varied by mutual agreement between Committee and the NHS body concerned. The Committee is willing to do so in this particular case as it is now satisfied that appropriate consultation has already taken place and is therefore of the view that no additional benefit would be gained from extending the period further.



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The Committee notes that there is general support for the change amongst relevant user groups and that no major concerns have been raised by those carers directly affected. In particular, MENCAP and Haringey Association for Independent Living (HAIL) were directly involved in discussions on the proposed service changes and have no objection to them.

The Committee also notes that there are currently only 4 residents left in Mulberry House and they will all be leaving in the next couple of months irrespective of the whether or not the changes are agreed as it is a short term service and residents move on as a matter of course. In addition, only 2 patients have been admitted within the last year and the building is considered to be unsafe and unsuitable for people in crisis. Alternative provision for patients who may still require a facility of this nature will be provided in a new and modern ward at Chase Farm. The Committee is disappointed that this accommodation will be outside of the borough which will entail longer journeys for carers and relatives when visiting. However, due to the comparatively small number of patients involved and the specialised nature of the accommodation required, it reluctantly accepts that it would not be cost effective to develop a dedicated in borough facility.

The Committee hopes that the implementation of the changes are undertaken successfully and to the satisfaction of patients and carers. We would be happy to be informed of progress in due course.

Yours sincerely



Gideon Bull

Chair – Overview and Scrutiny Committee