

Health, Community and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Agenda Item 4: Petition - Gloucestershire County Councils Homelessness Services for Adults with Complex Needs and Chaotic Lifestyles.

Date: Meeting to be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 at 10.15am.

Questions that can be asked by the chair of the committee on behalf of the petition organisers.

Please note, we recognise that time is limited. The first two questions are our priority but could be extended to question 3 if time allows and would therefore be happy to limit our questions to the first three especially as Question 3 is a bit long, could just ask the first part. If there is any spare time but wanting the committee to then any of the further questions could be asked but we leave it at the chairs discretion.

1. What safeguards are in place to ensure that any concerns on the service or perceived problems can be reported and investigated in an open and transparent way with the aim of continued improvement and effective working?
  
2. The Assessment process is a very important part of the Reconnection Policy, especially when people's lives may be a risk. In the spirit of continued working together and open dialogue, can the churches and faith groups please be led through the necessary thorough assessment process leading to the required full support plan and be shown a typical example of how the process works?
  
3. Imagine the following scenario where you have just received say a Case Study. A young vulnerable homeless couple have just gone through the assessment process. They were told that one would be going to a hostel in Gloucester and the other to a hostel in Cheltenham; the young lady was to be re connected back to Cheltenham because it was her home town. She became very distressed because she knew her violent ex boyfriend was coming out of prison, back to Cheltenham. However, there were no beds available in Gloucester. The young lady became very agitated because of the risk to her safety, they didn't want to be split up, so they both left to go back on the streets to sleep rough. Would this be considered an acceptable outcome? If not, what could have been done better? Could the couple try again? What would be the learning points?

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4. Who is responsible for undertaking the in depth and thorough investigation for the assessments and for putting together the full support plans, P3 or GEAR Projects Outreach Workers? Following the assessments who is then responsible for carrying out the actual re connection of homeless individuals, in accordance with their support plan, back to their home town in our County or other County Councils in the UK?
  
5. The new service for Drug & Alcohol treatment and presumably including the existing Addiction Treatment Units (ATU's), doesn't come fully on stream until the 1st April, where Turning Point are taking over from the Independence Trust. There will be treatment centre hubs for Gloucester, Cheltenham & Stroud. However, Cinderford, Cirencester, Moreton in Marsh and Tewkesbury will be a second latter phase. We would ask how drug and alcohol treatment for those homeless

individuals moved back home, in accordance with the councils reconnection policy, to areas or towns without Treatment Centres hubs or Addiction Treatment Units, etc., will be met? We understand that these specialist health services are not available through GP's surgeries.

6. We are pleased to learn that P3 can share with us information on the review of progress (records/ user numbers), successful outcomes, abstinence, etc., unfortunately not on a regular basis but on a sporadic basis, through the Project Steering Group. First, what is the Steering Group? And second, we feel that disclosure and transparency are essential to the effective running of an organisation and would ask if reviews could also include Case Studies, not only those successful outcomes but also where lessons can be learnt? Would it be possible to receive monthly bulletins?

7. There are many changes across the Supporting People services. While we are aware of the present process for drug & alcohol treatment where individuals come off say heroin and onto opiate substitutes starting from the Independence Trust (IT), Addiction Treatment centre (ATU) to supervised consumption at a chemist, we would be grateful if its possible to have information on the changes to come into place and new processes.

8. GEAR Projects provided a 'wet area' for the hardened street drinkers on the request of the Crime & Disorder Partnership (being the City Council, Police, Probation, etc). We understand that Street drinkers, while often having particularly intractable alcohol problems, are not usually homeless and generally have their own accommodation, therefore we see the Councils Homeless Strategy unfortunately, as being limited in tackling this 'hardened' group as possibly hoped for by the business community, particularly in the city centre. Can anything be done to help these hardened street drinkers?