

## **RESIDENTIAL CARE: UPDATE ON MODERNISATION OF OLDER PEOPLES' SERVICES (2005-2015)**

In accordance with the recommendations within the Cabinet Paper dated 14<sup>th</sup> July (Appendix 1), this report is to provide feedback to Cabinet in relation to the consultation initiative that has taken place about respite provision in the City, and the future of Whitleigh Residential Respite Home.

### **1. Background**

On 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009 Cabinet received a paper updating on the progress that has been made in relation to the modernisation of Older Peoples' Services as outlined in the strategy agreed in November 2005.

Cabinet approved the proposed direction of travel outlined in the 14<sup>th</sup> July paper:

- Changing the use of Stirling and Frank Cowl Residential Homes from long to short-stay occupancy (gradually to reduce the numbers of people who are permanent within the homes over the next 2-3 years – noting the new Extra Care Schemes coming on stream - The next Extra Care Housing Scheme to be completed will be in Devonport with handover expected January 2011
  
- Consult users/carers about alternatives to the current respite facility (Whitleigh) – noting that there has been a trend of under-occupancy within the unit as carers are already choosing alternative respite services.

### **2. Whitleigh Consultation Process**

2.1. A 12-week consultation period was initiated following Cabinet's decision.

The methodology encompassed a range of initiatives to gather feedback:

- Consultation events
- Questionnaires
- Feedback through the Council's website
- 1:1 visits
- Advocacy support

## 2.2. Consultation Events

All those people who had used Whitleigh in the last 12 months were contacted and sent a questionnaire; they were also invited to consultation events.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009 Adult Social Care ran two events inviting service users and their carers to discuss how the potential reprovision of Whitleigh may affect them should such a decision be taken. These events also explored how the Council intended to develop alternative provision to extend the range of options already available to carers.

135 people were invited – in total only 13 people attended both events.

**Event 1:** held on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September 2009 10.00 -12.00 pm at the Pavilions, Plymouth

Attended by: Four service users and six carers  
Supported by: PCC Commissioning Manager  
Independent Consultant  
Unit Manager, Whitleigh Respite Care Home  
Unit Manager, Stirling House Residential Care Home

**Event 2:** held on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2009, 4.00- 6.00 pm at Elspeth Sitters House, The Barbican

Attended by: Three carers and Carer's Champions representative  
Supported by: As above

The feedback from these events along with any written responses received by the Council has been collated.

A summary of the key questions and issues raised by service users and carers at the events is detailed below:

***What would be the refurbishment cost to raise Whitleigh to the required standard? Is this an option?***

*Rooms at Whitleigh are not large enough to build en suite facilities and the building is outdated.*

***In order to raise occupancy levels in Whitleigh, couldn't beds be used for step-down care from hospital?***

*As the occupancy rates have fallen the rooms have been used to support hospital discharge and emergency placements but there has still not been sufficient demand for the unit.*

***If Whitleigh were to close, would this reduce the access to respite beds?***

*No – the council would ensure that respite beds would be available to meet identified need.*

***Could Stirling, as a Plymouth Council home and an alternative respite provider, accommodate the current level of respite at Whitleigh?***

*There are currently 4 respite beds in Stirling and as beds become available it was confirmed that they could be used for carer respite if this is needed.*

*When discussing respite beds across the sector, the group felt that what was most important was to ensure all respite services had staff trained to the same standard and would treat people with dignity and respect.*

***Carers expressed concern about accessing other independent care homes for respite. Perceptions of the independent sector were varied and based on anecdotal evidence***

*It was confirmed by the Commissioning Manager that a small number of homes would be identified with a good rating where respite beds would be commissioned as alternatives.*

**2.3. Questionnaires**

Out of the 135 number of questionnaires distributed, 60% have been returned and the majority of the remainder of people have been contacted by telephone to ensure that their comments have been taken into account.

**2.4. Website**

The Councils website has been refreshed with a page for people to email their comments. All stakeholders have been emailed and informed. Their comments have been taken into account.

**2.5. 1:1 Visits**

All Service Users and their carers who had stayed at Whitleigh in the past year were invited to the consultation events and provided with a questionnaire to complete. People who utilised Whitleigh more than 4 times in the same period were offered additional support from the manager of Whitleigh. This resulted in a number of individual appointments to discuss with carers and service users on a personal basis and gain their views on the future of Whitleigh.

**2.6. Advocacy**

An Advocacy Service has been offered to everyone involved in the consultation through Plymouth Age Concern.

**2.7. Long Stay Resident**

There is one long-stay resident still residing at Whitleigh. A social worker and an advocate were linked with the family and the resident to ascertain her views and reassess her care needs.

The resident has viewed a new dual registered home in the independent sector and moved there recently for a trial period with a member of Whitleigh staff accompanying her for support. It was made clear to the family and resident that we would not want to put any undue pressure on them and that this decision had to be one of personal choice. We are confident that the family and the resident are happy with this outcome.

## **2.8. Summary from consultation**

All appeared to appreciate the time given to air their views and to receive confirmation of the Council's continued investment in carers' services. It was apparent from the feedback received that the concern about the future of Whitleigh was intimately connected to a lack of information around alternatives. However the consultation provided an opportunity to ensure that service users and carers were more familiar with the choices available to them and the range of services on offer, and to reiterate that this was not about an overall reduction in respite provision in the City. There was also some reassurance felt about the Council's commitment to purchase quality care from the independent sector as an alternative.

The small number of service users and carers who attended the events expressed a desire for Whitleigh to remain open.

## **3. Staff Consultation**

Managers have met with the staff employed at Whitleigh and explained the decision by Cabinet and the arrangements for consultation. Staff were encouraged to feedback their views in a number of ways as described above (Questionnaire, website etc.)

The Unions have also been informed. Clearly at this stage no decision has been taken and therefore the Council is not formally consulting with them about their future employment.

## **4. Recommendations**

Taking into account the results of the consultation events and the feedback from the questionnaires. I am recommending that:

4.1. Cabinet agrees to the reprovision of Whitleigh Residential Respite Home and the reinvestment into alternative respite services.