

Feedback from LD Public Consultation Meeting at Addison Day Centre, 29th July 2014

Investment into community LD services

- Will the investment continue given the number of NHS cuts that are highlighted in the press?

The CCG confirmed that the investment is on a recurrent basis, with the money being released into community LD health services

Impact of proposed changes being discussed by RMBC

- Carers are worried about the impact of the potential cuts that RMBC are planning to make

The CCG are aware that RMBC has recently been speaking to service users and carers about their financial saving requirements. However, this consultation is not part of RMBC's consultation process.

- Carers raised that they found it difficult to understand who was responsible for what services, and that it was confusing for them to navigate.

The CCG and RDaSH acknowledged that it is difficult for carers and service users to navigate the services and appreciate who is responsible for what services. It was appreciated that services should work together to provide the right care for individuals. RDaSH do work closely with RMBC wherever possible to offer a seamless approach to care.

Some of the issues highlighted by carers were reflective of RMBC's issues, but it was acknowledged that this impacted on the individual and their families and carers.

- Carers stated that organisations and staff teams must communicate and work together.

The CCG and RDaSH both agreed with this statement.

RMBC had been invited to be part of the public consultation events, but this invitation was declined by RMBC.

- Respite care is an issue due to a lack of reliability in booking being honoured and the bed being used for "emergencies"

Carers stated that this is also seen as a safety net for them

RMBC have stated recently that they may reduce this service by 10-15% and this is a big issue for carers.

The CCG will report the concerns back to RMBC

Some respite care can be provided via health, but this is usually as part of a Continuing Healthcare

(CHC) package of care, but needs to be link to clearly identified health needs.

Rhymer's Court

- Why is this option no longer being considered?

The CCG have made a decision that continuing the Rhymer's court service would not be part of the consultation, between the first discussions and publishing the consultation materials. The reasons for this are set out on page 7 of the booklet.

Carers are concerned that CCG have removed the Rhymer's Court option and that this should not have happened, legal advice stated as having been taken about this

Carers expressed that they may need to "report the CCG" for removing this option

Sapphire Lodge

As part of the engagement and involvement of carers and the LD Partnership Board, a number of members visited Rhymer's Court and Sapphire Lodge. RDaSH have already started to respond to a number of issues identified at Sapphire Lodge during the visit. A number of carers have requested a return visit to Sapphire Lodge to see the impact of these changes for themselves.

RDaSH will look to support and facilitate this.

The proposed new service model

- Does Sapphire Lodge have the same staff working there, or do they bring in staff as needed?

RDaSH confirmed that Sapphire Lodge has a core staff team, and that these staff work consistently on the unit with the exception of annual leave and staff absence.

Carers stated that this was not what they had been told.

- How long will it take to set up the new service?

The beds are in place in Sapphire Lodge and Swallownest Court, but we would want to get the enhanced community services in place alongside the transition from Rhymer's Court to Sapphire Lodge.

RDaSH staff will be supported to seek suitable alternative employment with all the new posts being advertised internally first, and considering any other suitable vacancies in RDaSH.

- When will it be implemented?

There is not actual timescale or date agreed yet.

The funding for the community service enhancements is available within this financial year.

A clear plan will be developed that ensures the change of ATU location and the enhancement of the community LD health service are coordinated together.

The CCG will make their decision on the proposed new service in September, and then an implementation plan will be drawn up after that.

- What if people do not fit the criteria for Sapphire Lodge or Swallownest Court?

The criteria for admission to an ATU or Swallownest Court will remain the same as is now

The examples given by carers were reflective of when a respite bed funded by RMBC was not available, but the individual did not fulfil the criteria to be admitted to Rhymer's Court.

It was clarified that the ATU service is not a respite service and as such would not be considered for an admission.

- What about when medication is being reviewed?

Additional support would be available from the community team in Rotherham with the new service model. This would offer an increase in support to the individual and their carer, but would not be an offer of respite care.

- What if all the allocated Rotherham ATU beds are being used and someone else needs to be admitted?

The CCG confirmed that the arrangements would be no differed to now, in that if a bed was needed, RDaSH would be approached to see if they had an additional bed that could be used. If not, another ATU bed would be found and the individual appropriately admitted.

Enhancing the community service

- Carers stated that the community service is "needed" and not "wanted"

Carers want service available 7 days/week, 24 hours/day, and not staffed with agency staff in the evenings or at weekends. Continuity of the staff team is vital

Carers want services that are reliable, with longevity of service being assured. They want staff to have knowledge of the individual being cared for, and not to be cared for by a total stranger.

- Impact of RMBC's changes should be considered before deciding on how to enhance the community LD health service

Carers stated that they were aware that RMBC are consulting on changes/reductions to respite services, day centres and transport services, with a need for everyone to be reassessed for services.

The availability of social workers has an impact on the service users and their carers.

Transport

- Travelling to Sapphire Lodge will take 3-4 buses, and the time taken to travel has an impact on other responsibilities of carers

The CCG and RDaSH acknowledged that travelling to Sapphire Lodge may be more of a challenge for some carers. However, RDaSH will look to support carers to attend key meetings and visit at the same time. The travel requirements for carers will be reviewed on an individual basis, and creative approaches have been used in the past to support people with travelling to visit their loved one on the ATU.

- Carers stated that visiting was not just about attending meetings

Family contact is very important, and RDaSH take a “triangle of care” approach in their services, which reflects the impact of the individual, the care team and the individual’s carer or support network. This is reviewed for each individual admitted to the ATU, and means of ensuring regular contact will be considered.

Visiting requirements will vary from one family to another, and these will be considered by the team when considering an admission to the ATU. An example was given where the parent of an individual admitted to the ATU lived in London, and a daily phone call was arranged so that they could be informed of the progress of their loved one, and to offer a daily communication between the mother and the individual.

Reviewing the new service model

The new service model will be reviewed at 6 and 12 months after it has been implemented.

This will involve carers as part of the review process.

The review will consider the impact of the new service model, but will also need to ensure that it can also distinguish between the impact of the changes to the ATU service and community LD health service, and the impact of any changes implemented in RMBC’s services

Bed use at Rhymer’s Court

- Carers asked whether the low bed use last year was due to the beds being full, and people being in those beds for longer than they needed to be

The CCG confirmed that the low numbers of people admitted was reflective of the needs of individuals and not bed availability.

No-one has been refused an admission to Rhymer’s Court due to their not being sufficient beds, and there have been a number of vacancies across the year as well.

Cost of public consultation

- Carers expressed concern about the cost of the public consultation in terms of printing and the use of venues

The CCG confirmed that costs had been kept to a minimum. Venues have charged for tea and coffee, apart from the hire of the Town Hall for the meeting on 30th July.

The printing costs were lower than if the CCG had printed the document and then photocopied it. A cost for printing will be shared with carers.

Carers' wishes

During the event a number of clear messages were received from the carers in attendance. These are summarised below

- A desire for local beds in Rotherham
- The move to Sapphire Lodge is a "done deal"
- An understanding of the costs of the printing of the public consultation is requested by the carers
- Continuity of staff team is vital
- A return visit to Sapphire Lodge to see the changes for themselves