



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 2009 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Allen- Chair
Councillor Dawood – Vice Chair

Councillor Bhavsar

Councillor Gill

Councillor Glover

Councillor Hall

Councillor Manish Sood

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2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Allen declared a non-prejudicial personal interest in item 11, 'Leicester Carers Strategy 2009 – 2013', as he was a home carer.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Committee agreed to consider the report 'Leicester Carers Strategy 2009 – 2013' as urgent business on the grounds that the report needed to be scrutinised prior to Cabinet consideration on 20 April 2009, to comply with the corporate timescale.

It was agreed that Councillor Dawood would chair the meeting and that Councillor Allen would participate but not vote, due to his personal interest.

Leicester Carers Strategy 2009 – 2013

The Corporate Director, Adults and Housing submitted a report which presented a revised draft of the Leicester Carers Strategy following the consultation period. Paul Mansfield, Planning and Service Development Officer, presented the report and explained that the work carried out by carers kept patients out of NHS provision and saved a large amount of money. The importance of supporting family care had become nationally recognised and

the partnership strategy would be used to ensure a coordinated approach between health and social care. Paul Mansfield noted that support for carers was dependant on the voluntary sector who had contributed to the report, as well as the NHS.

Paul Mansfield reported that as part of the consultation a survey was carried out to assess carers needs. Around six hundred people signed up to the service and from those two hundred completed the survey. Deb Watson, Director of Public Health and Health Improvement for Leicester City Primary Care Trust and Leicester City Council, stated there had been significant discussions to identify the reasons behind any issues that carers had and she felt that exploring this strengthened the strategy.

With the agreement of the Committee Councillor Allen made the following comments, from his experience as a carer.

- That the strategy should be adopted and welcomed, as it was very involved and would hopefully provide carers with additional support.
- That it should be included in the strategy that many carers do not seek help early in an illness, as they hope the situation would improve.
- That carers were made aware of assessment needs as early as possible, which also relied on GP referrals.

The carer services were monitored in relation to national indicators and there had been a struggle to meet the targets. If work on patient assessments was delayed it was found there was a knock on effect to other areas of the service. This also depended on if the assessment was offered to the family carer and subsequently accepted. Toby Sanders, Director of Primary Care, commented that there was room from improvement when ensuring GPs made referrals.

Members discussed that some carers were not aware of the support and benefits that were available. In response Paul Mansfield noted that it was a key delivery target to get information to carers, such as through GPs and provide information at libraries.

A Member suggested that information could be made visible on the Council's Internet homepage. This would then signpost the viewer to the services that were available. In response Paul Mansfield reported that this information was available on the Council website and would be advertised on the homepage periodically.

A Member of the Committee reported that at a recent Fire Authority meeting he was informed that around two thirds of people who died in accidental fires were in need of care. He suggested that there could be a jointly funded post with the Fire Service, as accidental fires were likely to increase.

The Chair discussed that carers always needed to make the decision of whether to work or not. Paul Mansfield stated that there was already a requirement to ask carers if they wanted to work and that carers had a legal right to flexible working. Job Centre plus also had a national initiative for carers who would like to work.

RESOLVED:

1. that the Committee support the Leicester Carers Strategy 2009 – 2013.
2. that it be suggested that the strategy notes that many carers do not seek help early in an illness, as they hope the situation will improve.
3. that it be suggested that carers be made aware of assessment needs as early as possible.

