

## Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

### Thursday, 26 June 2014 5:30 pm

#### Introduction

Item 11 of the Agenda asks the Scrutiny Commission to note and comment on a recommendation to the Council's Executive concerning the development by the Council of a registered intermediate care and residential bed facility (an 'IC Unit'). Appendix B sets out the staffing costs of a 30 bed and a 60 bed unit.

The Council is near the end of a process of determining the fees it proposes to pay to registered residential care homes for older people beds commissioned by the Council. This determination is based on detailed assessment by the Council of what they consider to be the costs of providing residential care.

In my view the differences between these two cost assessments are so stark that the Council may not be acting reasonably.

#### Specific examples

Cost area	Cost of proposed Council Intermediate Care unit	Council assessment of cost to residential care providers	Comments
Registered Manager's Salary	£47,400 including on costs	£29,500 including on costs (£23,900 salary)	Registered managers adverts for jobs in the East Midlands start at £28-30,000 for a small residential home without dementia care
Senior care assistants' salary	£34,200 including on costs	£15,900 including on costs (£12,900 salary)	The Council assumes that residential care homes in Leicester will pay their senior carers £0.94 per hour less than the living wage
Care assistants' salary	£23,000 including on costs	£15,000 including on costs (£12,100 salary)	The Council assumes that residential care homes in Leicester will pay their carer assistants the minimum wage
Cook's salary	£26,600 including on costs	£17,200 including on costs (£13,900 salary)	The Council assumes that residential care homes in Leicester will pay their cooks £0.40 per hour less than the living wage
Kitchen staffing levels	140 hours a week (30 bed unit) 210 hours a week (60 bed unit)	69 hours a week for a 30 bed residential care home 138 hours a week for a 60 bed unit	
Overall staff costs	£560 per bed per week (30 bed unit) £412 per bed per week (60 bed unit)	£260 per bed per week (30 and 60 bed unit)	

## **Management cover**

The Council's proposals for a 60-bed IC unit allow for a registered manager, 2.5 assistant managers, and 7 senior care assistants. Between them these posts will work about 380 hours a week (there are 168 hours in a week).

The Council's proposals in respect of fees for a 60-bed residential care home allow for managers to be present for 75 hours per week. When managers are not on duty (i.e. for 93 hours a week) the Council's fee proposal envisages that the most senior person on duty will be a senior care assistant paid £6.70 per hour. This is less than the living wage and therefore less than the Council pays any member of their own staff in any job role – let alone a role that involves leadership and responsibility for the day to day safety and care of 60 highly vulnerable older people.

In my opinion, it is not possible to run a 60-bed care home with the level of management / leadership cover that can be obtained by paying staff £6.70 an hour. To do so puts at risk the consistency of the quality of care, and the safety of residents. I challenge the Council to demonstrate that resident safety and good care can be guaranteed on this basis. Would the Council's professional care service managers be prepared to run a residential care service on this basis?

## **Delays in revising residential care home fees**

The Scrutiny Commission should be aware that the Council has not yet determined the level of fees that it will pay residential care homes for 2012/13, for 2013/14, or for 2014/15.

The Council have made proposals in this respect which we and other care providers consider to be unreasonably low. However even at these inadequate fee levels this delay is now costing us approximately £700 - £800 per week. This is more than enough to pay for two full time care assistants. I estimate that the total income shortfall to date for Leicester Quaker Housing Association, as a result of the delay in settling fee levels, is in the order of £50,000 - £60,000. This is more than our entire surplus for our last financial year.

## **Conclusions**

- It is not my purpose to argue that the Intermediate Care Unit is not required.
- The disparity between the level of staffing and the level of pay envisaged for the Council's IC Unit, and what is envisaged for registered care homes into which the Council places residents, is so great that in my view the Council may not be acting reasonably.
- I therefore ask for an explanation from the Council as to why it considers that residential care providers can provide an adequate service at their proposed fee levels, when the similar in-house service requires them to pay much higher salaries for similar job functions.
- Specifically, in my view it is not possible consistently to provide safe and good quality care to vulnerable adults in a residential care setting if the most senior person on duty for prolonged periods of time is paid £6.70. The Council's proposals for the IC Unit lend support to this view.
- I am not aware if the Council has undertaken market testing or explored whether external providers would be interested in developing and/or managing this Unit in partnership with the Council.

Alastair Jackson  
Chief Executive, Leicester Quaker Housing Association

26<sup>th</sup> June 2014