

By: Oliver Mills: Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services

To: Adult Social Services Policy Overview Committee –
18 November 2008

Subject: **KENT ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT
REPORT**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The purpose of this report is to provide information to Members on current and future developments in Public Involvement across the Directorate and to inform Members of the consultations undertaken during 2007/08 as well as those planned for 2008/09.

Background and Context

1. (1) The purpose of this report is to provide information on the main aspects of public involvement within Adult Social Services over the last 12 months. It also informs Members of key developments on both existing and future work and highlights how the Directorate intends to further embed and extend engagement processes within our services.

(2) Our vision for adult social services in Kent, Active Lives, is central to our commitment to actively involve service users and carers in the delivery and design of our services and is one of the main drivers for developing public involvement. The Directorate continues to promote this philosophy at every opportunity with the aim of achieving better outcomes for all individuals.

(3) The government's White Paper, "Our health, our care, our say" and Putting People First are key drivers. The vision is centred on not only providing people with more choice, but ensuring that they have a greater say in future service design and delivery. It extends this further with the aim to empower service users and carers by giving them the opportunity to self assess their needs and, more importantly, to exercise their personal preference in how their identified needs are met.

(4) The key thread running through the "Stronger and Prosperous Communities" White Paper is the need to ensure that local citizens and communities should be empowered and at the centre of reshaping public services and take an active role in working in partnership with health and social care organisations. In short, this means that the public should be consulted, involved and encouraged to express their views on the types of services they would like.

(5) It is very apparent that the government is focussed on ensuring the public make a difference to public services by providing them with real opportunities to influence and change current and future services. This is being achieved throughout the Directorate in a number of ways and can be illustrated in the following examples:

- County wide OT user groups
- Establishing two Deaf Forums in Kent
- Several Senior Citizens Forums (more being developed)
- Learning Disability Partnership Groups
- Carers Forums
- Domiciliary Care Provider Forums
- County wide Mental Health Forums
- Ad hoc meetings with service users, carers and the public
- Areas and individual teams are also proactive in engaging with current service users and potential future users of services.

(6) The corporate assessment highlighted the importance of ensuring the public are involved with service developments and recognised that KASS have made good strides in this arena.

Consultations

2. (1) Consultation is one element of public involvement and attached to this report as Appendix 1, is a schedule detailing the consultations undertaken during 2007/08, together with some of those proposed for 2008/09. With effect from 2006, all Kent Adult Social Services consultations, evaluations and research projects are reviewed through Research Governance prior to commencement.

(2) The consultation aimed at developing a strategy for older people commenced in July 2007 and consultation events were undertaken during the year. Following feedback from the early consultation events, the name has been changed to Later Life strategy. Although this is a cross directorate strategy, the initial work was led by Adult Social Services. KCC have embraced this project and, with effect from October 2008, this work will now be co-ordinated by the Chief Executive's department although Adult Social Services will continue to take an active role in its development. A draft strategy has been developed and feedback has been sought from service users, carers, public and staff. This work is ongoing.

(3) A series of specific service development consultations aimed at modernising services and ensuring that services are fit for the future have taken place and are ongoing. Examples include; The Ashford Good Day Project. This consultation has been designed with the involvement of people who use the Day Opportunities Services; Towards Equity and Access Project for Deaf service users across Kent; Culturally Appropriate Services.

(4) A key piece of work for the Directorate includes the modernisation of day services for physically disabled people in North West Kent. The day centre in Dartford, which was run by the Queen Elizabeth Foundation, closed on 17th October 2008. The modernisation programme, which is in line with Active Lives, commenced in February 2007 and had representation from service users on the Project Board throughout the duration of the project. Events were also held throughout to update service users on initiatives such as the Expert Patient Programme, Direct Payments and the Kent Card and Pathways to Work. Service users were involved throughout and briefings were issued after each Project Board along with the minutes.

(5) There has been a strong campaign in the media from users protesting about the closure of the centre. Users have shaped the new services through one to one meetings, group sessions and feedback through the Project Board. Where services will not be delivered all under one roof, users will be offered a Direct Payment in order to access day opportunities through mainstream services.

(6) The new services are established and are continuing to be developed based on user feedback. Users are voting for representatives for a forum to ensure communications continue with KASS as the service develops further.

Current Involvement Activity within Kent Adult Social Services

3. (1) Involving both the general public and existing service users and carers throughout the Directorate's business remains a priority. It is only by listening and acting upon peoples' experiences of social services that the Directorate can improve those services for current and future users. Of further critical importance, particularly in the current climate, is the need to obtain the public's view on the type of services they anticipate for the future and how these should be provided. Engaging with the public at an early stage is key for planning, commissioning and delivering those services of the future.

(2) The Directorate Involvement Group (DIG) exists as a sub group of SMT and has Directorate wide membership together with health representation from the two PCTs in Kent. The group exists to ensure best practice is shared consistently across the Directorate and also has a key function in driving forward and facilitating improved involvement performance in all Kent Adult Social Services activities. The group's workplan is reflected in this report.

Service user and carer involvement in recruitment and selection

(3) This policy was introduced in 2005 and has subsequently been adopted county wide. All teams are encouraged to involve users and carers in their recruitment processes. These include, shortlisting candidates for interview, involvement on formal interview panels, preparing questions for candidates or taking part in supplementary workshops.

(4) To assist staff with implementation of this policy, during the past year protocols and frequently asked questions (FAQs) have been provided. In addition, questionnaires have been developed for all individuals involved in the process (service user; recruiting manager; appointed candidate) to ensure that the Directorate continually reviews and improves this key area of policy. Work is currently being undertaken to make the questionnaires available for completion on-line.

(5) An information pack has also been developed for service users and carers involved in the recruitment process providing information on issues including, the recruitment process itself, equal opportunities and equality and diversity issues. Although, users and carers involved in the recruitment process do not undergo formal training, these information packs provide them with essential information. It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to ensure that those involved in the process have read and understood the contents of the information pack. The Personnel Department will provide additional support to users and carers as required.

(6) A group of service users with learning disabilities has produced a DVD describing their involvement within the Directorate. Its aim is to help and encourage others to become involved.

Database

(7) The database aims to log all involvement activity across the Directorate, with the advantage of having a single source to register activity. In addition, it will provide the Directorate with an evidence base on involvement, together with the impact that activity has highlighted. Since 2006, in excess of 440 events have been logged by staff. Several staff within the county have been identified as having access to input data, although this will be reviewed once the amendments (detailed below) have been made to ensure that all districts are adequately supported to input their data. All staff have access to view the database, which enables staff to share good practice. The database is also accessible to the public via the public involvement website with the aim of increasing public interest in the Directorate's activities.

(8) The database is currently undergoing improvement to the data input screens and a reporting wizard has also been commissioned. This work is due to be completed by the end of 2008 and it is envisaged that it will be easier for staff to not only input data, but also to readily produce reports. Quarterly reports will be produced and presented to the Directorate Involvement Group. As a result the Group will be able to monitor activity and identify gaps which require further action.

Strategy

(9) The public involvement strategy has not been updated for several years, although its core objectives remain relevant. The Directorate Involvement Group made the decision to hold the strategy update in abeyance pending the development of an overarching strategy from KCC, with each directorate developing its own framework/implementation plan which would link into the overall strategy. A substantive appointment has recently been made within the Chief Executive's department and Robert Hardy was appointed as Director of Improvement and Engagement. This will provide KCC with the impetus to drive forward the involvement agenda. Once the corporate position is clear, the Directorate will review its own strategy to ensure there is coherence.

Core standards

(10) These build on the 'Active Lives' commitments and are the minimum standards that people can reasonably expect when using our services. The standards were originally developed by a group of service users, carers and staff and were launched in 2004. These standards have been reviewed during the past year with users, carers and staff involved in the process. A revised leaflet has been produced and will be circulated to service users via the Bluebell information pack which is distributed to all new clients. The leaflets will also be available in public places, such as local offices, libraries, GP surgeries and as an insert via the public involvement newsletter. A desktop style calendar is currently being developed to promote the standards. The calendar will provide a good opportunity to inform a wide audience about the agenda for increased personalisation of services through self directed support. A DVD is also being produced to promote and raise awareness of the standards.

(11) During the review process discussions took place on how best the Directorate can monitor these standards and further work will be undertaken to implement this.

Newsletter

(12) The newsletter is produced quarterly and circulated both internally (electronically for staff) and externally (hard copy for the public). It aims to raise awareness of public involvement in the Directorate and encourage people to participate in whichever way they can. It also provides current news and forthcoming events and other directorates have utilised the newsletter as a means of raising awareness of specific projects. Since inauguration, there has been a significant increase in the numbers distributed, with libraries and GP surgeries now included in its circulation. The newsletter has received much positive acclaim and has an increasing number of articles written by members of the public.

Internal Audit

(13) During July/August 2008, public involvement was subject to internal audit. The conclusion made by the auditors was: "KASS has set up many channels of communication to ensure service users have the opportunity to be engaged in a dialogue about their services. Giving service users the power to make decisions about the services they receive is central to the work carried out in the Directorate and the future direction. It was evident in interviews conducted by audit that staff feel passionately about involving people, and some staff have gone to great lengths to successfully facilitate this participation.

However KASS is also aware more can still be done to involve service users and to support staff towards this objective. Broadening participation structures (to try to ensure involvement on more decision making groups) is still possible. Data on what public involvement events have occurred could be further used to identify if gaps exist. This may help ensure the ability to have a say is equitable across districts and client groups. Prioritising these actions might strengthen and help maintain the current culture of involvement in the Directorate."

(14) The report made the following recommendation:

"The Directorate should:

1) Increase the visibility and scope of public involvement training within the current workforce development programme. Use this training to emphasise the guidance and frameworks that currently exist and the importance of staff posting their own activity on the public involvement database; and/or:

2) Have regular workshops/seminars, such as those conducted in September 2007, to develop capacity within the Directorate."

(15) The audit report also commented; "The awareness of the public involvement agenda therefore appears well embedded in a Directorate culture." Whilst it is pleasing to receive such positive feedback, the Directorate is not complacent in its approach to public involvement. The results of the audit reiterate the work currently being undertaken to improve the database content and reporting functions and also emphasise the need to offer continued training and support to staff.

Staff training

(16) Two workshops aimed specifically at staff were held East and West Kent in September 2007. The focus of the workshops was to raise awareness of current initiatives with staff and service users showcasing good practice within each area. The presentations from service users captivated the audience and delivered a powerful message on the importance and impact of involvement. The workshops were also aimed at encouraging teams to identify areas for development within their team action plans. This is currently a work in progress and further work is required to ensure that teams develop their plans and report back on their achievements. It was agreed that AMT's would be responsible for monitoring progress of the plans and would report the outcomes to DIG.

(17) Mental health service users have been successfully involved in the design and delivery of mental health training for staff. Following on from this success, the training department are currently seeking to develop constructive and purposeful partnerships with service users in designing, developing and quality assuring a wide range of in-house courses.

The training team are actively recruiting a wide range of service -users, including:

- learning disabled men and women
- physically disabled men and women
- men and women with a long term condition
- older men and women

After interviews, selected candidates will be offered a training programme focussing on a number of topics, such as, confidence building, presentation skills, teaching materials etc. Ongoing support will be provided to all trainers.

(18) The policy team have been successful is securing a slot on the KASS induction programme that is attended by all new staff. This will be effective from early 2009. This will provide an excellent opportunity to emphasise and promote the importance and effectiveness of good public involvement.

(19) The audit, mentioned in the section above, emphasised the need for continual development of staff and DIG will need to consider the report and reflect the findings in its revised workplan.

Supporting People

(20) The Kent Supporting People Team is employing a service user involvement and consultation officer. The Programme has already acquired a service user panel, and has involved service users in recruitment, tendering, strategic planning, a service user conference, and public information provision e.g. Website and leaflets. Ex service users have been employed by a provider to assist in monitoring and reviewing services. Service users are also enabled to access qualifications via the open college network. The programme funds an innovation and good practice grant to two providers to enhance service user involvement and consultation. The programme is known as, "Experts Through Experience".

Working with health

(21) As mentioned above, health representatives attend the quarterly DIG meetings. It is anticipated that health and social care colleagues will be in a position to integrate their work more efficiently resulting in a more joined up approach to public involvement. The group have already started sharing policies with the aim of promoting consistency and good practice on public involvement issues. Areas continue to promote partnership working with their PCT colleagues and this will influence current and future working practices.

Future Developments

Local Involvement Networks (LINKs)

4. (1) The Department of Health issued “A stronger local voice: A framework for creating a stronger local voice in the development of health and social care services”, acknowledging the need to strengthen and improve the existing mechanisms for involving and engaging with patients and citizens.

(2) As advised previously, the role of a LINK is:-

- promoting and supporting the involvement of people in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of local care services;
- obtaining the views of people about their needs for and their experiences of local care services;
- enabling people to monitor and review the commissioning and provision of local care services;
- conveying peoples’ views to organisations responsible for commissioning, providing, managing and scrutinising local care services; and
- recommending how care services can be improved.

(3) A LINK will comprise of an inclusive membership of user groups, local voluntary and community sector organisations and interested individuals, but involvement does not require membership. It will need to be diverse and be representative of all sections of the local populations. LINKs will need to have clear governance structures, which are accountable to its membership and the wider community.

(4) LINKs will have specific powers to enable them to influence the improvement of local services by:-

- entering specified types of premises and viewing the services provided;
- requesting information and receiving a response within a specified timescale;
- preparing reports and recommendations and receiving a response within the specified timescale; and
- referring matters to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and receiving a response.

(5) The Host Organisation appointed to support the Kent LINK is Kent and Medway Networks (KMN). KMN has previously been a Forum Support Organisation for the former Patient and Public Involvement Forums. The organisation therefore has a wealth of knowledge and experience to bring to the role of Host Organisation. KMN took over the support of the LINK Working Group from Kent County Council in August 2008.

The Directorate has shared information via the public involvement newsletter on the forthcoming LINK and has written to service users and carers inviting them to participate in the work of the Kent LINK. Although there is no direct relationship between the recently launched Kent Health Watch, LINKs and other feedback mechanisms, they all exist as means of receiving peoples' views and comments on services. Once the two former initiatives are fully operational, it would be useful to identify whether the intelligence gathered can be analysed/monitored against existing mechanisms, including complaints, compliments and public involvement feedback directly harvested by the Directorate.

(6) The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill 2007 received Royal Assent in November 2007 and introduced several measures to update and improve the system for involvement in health and social care. In addition to LINKs, it introduced a new duty on local authorities to inform, involve and consult local people in service design and delivery. The information gathered from complaints plays a key role in this process. (see separate report)

Payment policy and implications

(7) The Directorate is considering its position on reimbursement to service users and carers for their time where they are involved in specific areas of work, such as drafting policies and recruitment of staff. The Directorate policy at present specifies that out of pocket expenses, including replacement carer costs should be reimbursed.

(8) A draft policy for additional payments in recognition of time spent on specific areas of work has been considered by DIG. It was recognised that such a policy has the potential to have significant budgetary implications not only for the Directorate, but also on the individuals themselves for taxation and benefit purposes. Alternative means of recognising and rewarding service user and carer contribution to the Directorate's business are being considered.

Information – Out and About project

(9) The Public Involvement Team have been reviewing information provision to the public and as a result have created the "Out and About" project. This involves team members visiting local shopping centres, day centres, Adult Education centres and libraries to talk to the public about the services that Kent Adult Social Services provides. However, it is recognised that KASS does not have unlimited resources therefore there is a balance between raising public awareness while at the same time not generating unmanageable new service requests.

(10) Initially the project will focus on giving people basic information about services and gathering feedback on information in general. (e.g. Different formats people prefer; where they would access information when they need it etc) As a result, the team will be able to review current information provision and, based on the feedback received, will inform the directorate of any improvements that are needed. In particular, the findings will inform the Information, Advice & Guidance work stream, part of the Self Directed Support project.

(11) Various locations across Kent have been identified and plans are in place to roll the project out by visiting a public location twice a month. Initially, four events have been scheduled for October.

(12) In addition to the information aspect of the project, it will also give the team an opportunity to promote public consultations, such as the current consultation on the future of social care, The Case for Change - why England needs a new care and support system.

Public Involvement events

(13) In early 2009, the Directorate will hold an event in both East and West Kent to update service users, carers and the public on current initiatives and receiving their views and comments on these. The programme will include updates on the future of social care (National Consultation), the modernisation agenda – ALfA, including Self Directed Support, Making Experiences Count – proposed single complaints process across health and social care and the Kent Local Involvement Network. Planning for these events will commence in the coming weeks.

(14) The intention will be for KASS to link in with health colleagues to ensure the events provide the public with the opportunity to find out the latest local news within health and social care. The events will take the form of drop in workshops rather than formal presentations. This enables people to have a choice on what they wish to find out about and also allows people to attend at a time that suits them rather than whole day attendance, which does prevent some people from participating.

Conclusion

5. (1) Consultation with service users and the public has enabled the Directorate to:
- Develop strategies/leaflets: Later Life Strategy; Core Standards.
 - Gain feedback on services and identify areas for service improvement: Deaf Forums; Telehealth user group; OT user groups.
 - Involve people in the planning and delivery of services: Senior Citizens Forums; Learning Disability Partnership Groups.
 - Identify satisfaction levels, needs and preferences for services: Community Equipment, Home Care, Community Meals and Mental Health surveys.

(2) Involving both the general public and existing service users and carers throughout the business remains a priority for Kent Adult Social Services. It is only by listening and acting upon peoples' experiences of services and, in turn, using this feedback to improve services for current and future users that the Directorate shows its continuing commitment to the involvement agenda.

(3) In 2007/08 there has been a broad range of involvement activity with further consultations planned for 2008/09.

(4) Involvement of service users and the public is an integral part of the Directorate's business and remains a key feature in planning, commissioning and monitoring of services.

Recommendations

6. Members are asked to NOTE and COMMENT on the contents of this report.

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Background documents: None