

By: Graham Gibbens - Cabinet Member, Adult Social Services
Oliver Mills – Managing Director, Kent Adult Social Services

To: Adult Social Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
17 November 2009

Subject: **NEW HORIZONS**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper informs Members of the Government's consultation on proposals for mental health services in the future.

1. The public consultation on New Horizons: Towards a Shared Vision for Mental Health was launched on 23 July 2009 with a closing date of the 16 October 2009. It builds on the National Service Framework for Mental Health which was published 10 years ago and which provided the platform for the reform of Mental Health services in England.

2. The key changes in this programme have included the reform of NHS Community Care services including the development of crisis resolution and home treatment services, early intervention teams particularly for adults suffering severe mental illness and reduced hospital admissions. In line with increased public expenditure in the NHS there have been additional resources for several staff groups including psychiatrists, mental health nurses and clinical psychologists. Treatments have improved with the use of modern psychiatric medication and mental health services are included in the ongoing building and refurbishment programme for inpatient units. Adult Social Services Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee have previously received presentations from the Chief Executive of the Kent and Medway Mental Health Trust on how the reform programme has been developed in Kent and the new services which have been introduced as a result of the National Service Framework (NSF).

3. The New Horizons consultation builds on the NSF by supporting the local development of higher quality, more personalised services but also provides a new direction to move the agenda on by trying to tackle the root causes of mental health. It focuses much more on prevention, early intervention and multi agency commissioning and collaboration. It recognises the need to positively promote mental health and well being and to strengthen focus across all agencies on tackling stigma and discrimination and breaking down barriers where people suffering from mental illness find themselves much more likely to be socially excluded.

4. New Horizons set out an ambitious vision for mental health services in the future with a much more explicit focus on the inequalities in mental health, links with greater physical problems and the need to address issues of access and discrimination. The response for KCC is set out in Annexe 1. The lead Primary Care Trust (PCT) for Kent and Medway has also responded to the consultation and there is broad agreement and support between the local authority and the PCT for the strategic direction set out in New Horizons. There is a clear connection between New Horizons and the programme of work to transform Adult Social Care in Kent currently underway in KASS, previously presented to this Committee.

5. The Department of Health will be considering all responses to the consultation over the next few months. It is likely that the Department of Health will then produce some form of framework policy document. In the current financial climate it seems unlikely that there would be any additional resources and the implications of this will have to be considered when the financial position and the outcome of consultation is clearer.

6. KASS and the PCTs in Kent and Medway are currently developing a new 5 year vision for Mental Health services with service users and carers. The main messages are very similar to New Horizons. KASS does have a strong collaboration with the voluntary sector and an increasing connection with PCT health promotion services. This has led to newly commissioned services in employment, supported housing, early intervention in primary care and raising mental health awareness. These are exactly the services which will be needed to underpin the change in focus envisaged under New Horizons.

Recommendations

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

Steve Leidecker
Director of Operations
01622 694592 (VPN: 7000 4592)
steve.leidecker@kent.gov.uk

Background documents:

New Horizons: towards a shared vision for mental health – Department of Health Consultation