

Voluntary Sector Commissioning in Swindon

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 7 January 2015

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Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 In February 2013 Swindon Borough Council, NHS Swindon and Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group agreed a joint consultation in relation to the next steps for reshaping the voluntary and third sector commissioned services. The consultation informed the re-shaping of adult voluntary sector contracts and this report details the progress made. This report comments on and summarises the progress of Voluntary Sector commissioning, re-commissioning and de-commissioning.
- 1.2 The 2014/15 budget for jointly commissioned voluntary sector support for adults in Swindon is £2.6M. From 2015/16 the Voluntary Sector budget will be included in the Swindon Better Care Fund. Savings identified through the current reshaping programme will be re-invested in voluntary sector services commissioned to meet priorities and targets identified by SBC and Swindon CCG.

2. Recommendations

The Board is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the update and comment as appropriate on current and future commissioning plans for the voluntary sector.

3. Detail

- 3.1 Swindon has a diverse sector of voluntary and community groups which have not been as effectively co-ordinated as we would like. Since 2013, a number of services have been re-shaped and / or re-commissioned and a small number have been decommissioned. Overall the number of contracts held with the voluntary sector has halved but the scope of services has not reduced.
- 3.2 All services tendered in this round of commissioning are outcome based with a focus on prevention, reducing isolation, maximising independence and increasing employment opportunities, in line with Swindon Borough Council (SBC) and Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) priorities. All tender processes require satisfactory responses from organisations that demonstrate their ability to meet safeguarding, financial and equality responsibilities.

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- 3.3 Commissioners meet at least quarterly with all providers, monitoring activity and outcomes achieved.
- 3.4 **Carer Support and Development** – Carer Services were re-commissioned and a new contract was awarded for adult and young carer services in January 2013. Additional funding to increase support to carers was included. The new contract has delivered significantly higher numbers of Carers Assessment and carers report they are well supported in their caring role. Young carers also report feeling well supported (100%) and that they are helped to ask for support from their school and colleges. They also tell us they experience positive transitions at key stages of their education.
- 3.5 **Swindon Healthwatch** – Swindon Borough Council had a statutory duty to commission a local, independent Healthwatch that replaced the Swindon Link in April 2013. This contract experienced a mixed start in relation to establishing an Independent Board of Directors and in engaging with the public. However, the service was awarded a national contract to establish patient participation groups and the model will be rolled out across the country. Impressive use of digital technology has resulted in 1,500 Twitter followers and a doubling of Facebook activity. The in house complaints advocacy service has support 39 people in the last 12 months, with most reporting satisfaction with the end resolution.
- 3.6 **Voluntary Community Sector Support** – This service provides support for all community organisations in Swindon to build capacity, increase their financial envelopes, and improve networking between organisations, of which co-location in the former Sanford House is a good example. The new contract incorporated support for Swindon Equality Coalition and increased volunteering capacity. Yearly surveys engage the wider voluntary and community sector. A recent survey by a consortium of larger voluntary organisations shows an increase of 19% of organisations engaging with the service.
- 3.7 **Support Planning and Direct Payment Support** – A service to support individuals in receipt of a direct payment was reshaped to reduce levels of dependency on the service and to create capacity to offer independent support planning. The service is delivering good outcomes for people with learning disabilities as part of a joint project with two other voluntary organisations using independent support planning to raise aspirations for individuals and create opportunities to access more community and maximise personal resources. Outcomes have included access to voluntary work, learning how to use key bus routes to improve independence, accessing peer support for social activities. The cost of supporting individuals with a direct payment has reduced by 30%.
- 3.8 **Benefit Advice and Guidance** - This service was tendered and a new contract awarded to commence in April 2014. In addition to the traditional benefit advice service, the delivery of a general advice and information service was included in this tender (please see section 3.28).
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- 3.9 The Benefits service has seen more than 9,000 people in the last 12 months, and dealt with over 20,000 separate issues. 35% of these relate to Benefits advice and 23% to debt advice. Other reasons for visiting the service include employment, housing, immigration, family relationships and legal consumer issues. . The volunteer workforce has increased by 65% in the past year, and 8 individual volunteers have moved on to fulltime employment.
- 3.10 **Support for Adults with a Physical Disability** – Through the performance management of contracts and the consultation process a decision was made not to recommission this service. The service supported a relatively small number of clients to access traditional drop-in facilities that duplicated services provided by other organisations in Swindon, for example benefit advice. However, through support from commissioners and the SBC Locality team the group has been supported to continue to run a support group, meeting regularly in a local community centre.
- 3.11 **Support for Adults with Learning Disabilities** – An invitation to tender for learning disability and advocacy services was published in September 2013. A small number of tender submissions were received but, following an evaluation process, the decision was taken not to award a contract.
- 3.12 Since then commissioners have been working with three local providers and a number of service users to trial person centred planning approaches and targeted support to identify how best to meet individual aspirations and potential and reduce dependency on traditional service models. A Steering Group has been set up to oversee the changes to the service and help commissioners to scope a new specification to be tendered during 2015.
- 3.13 **Mental Health Support for Adults** - An historic complexity of contracts held by various organisations within Swindon, offering support to adults suffering poor mental health, has taken some time to understand.
- 3.14 Following the consultation process, the decision was taken to decommission three contracts which duplicated national schemes or have been replaced by new statutory services. However the Swindon User Network and the Swindon Listening Line have been successful in attracting money from other areas and are still operating within Swindon. Financial support for an employment scheme ended in 2013 but trustees have worked with commissioners and others to ensure the business is now able to function without financial support from SBC/CCG.
- 3.15 A new specification was tendered in June 2014, reshaped to offer a more joined up service, supporting individuals through a recovery model that will ensure people are as well as they can be. The new service will commence on 1st January 2015, and will use the recently trialled Wellbeing Co-ordination approach to ensure adults are enabled to access the support they need. The new provider
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- will be a key partner in developing improved interfaces between primary and secondary services offering support to adults with poor mental health. A steering group comprising of SBC and CCG commissioners and mental health providers will oversee the implementation and development of the new service.
- 3.16 The current therapeutic gardening service for adults with poor mental health will be retendered early in 2015 to complement the new mental health support contract.
- 3.17 A final mental health service supports adults recovering from poor mental health by offering work experience in gardening, recycling and garden waste services. The business element of this service relies heavily on work contracted informally to them by SBC (previously Swindon Commercial Services). Commissioners are currently working to agree new arrangements to maximise the business opportunities and offer a social value through jointly commissioning a new service, with a view to retendering during 2015/16.
- 3.18 **Reducing Isolation** – A small number of contracts tendered independently of each other have been in place for some time. These offer low levels of support to a small number of adults through a befriending and a home from hospital service. These focus mainly on older people, but the low levels of people engaging with the services makes little impact on targets to reduce isolation and promote independence.
- 3.19 Commissioners have agreed to run a pilot Home from Hospital service from January 2015 to support greater numbers of people who have no support at home when they leave hospital. The service will work in partnership with existing services providing home from hospital and befriending services that will maintain support and contact with individuals for longer.
- 3.20 Alongside this service a wider befriending service will be trialled to provide greater support to vulnerable groups to help them gain the confidence and skills to support independent living, to be safe in their homes and access networks and support through their local communities.
- 3.21 This approach will enable us to understand the impact of these types of services and to ensure this is the best way to deliver good outcomes to meet the priorities set by SBC and Swindon CCG.
- 3.22 Commissioners intend to use the learning from these pilots to inform a specification to be tendered during 2016.
- 3.23 **Advocacy** – Swindon has a successful advocacy service supporting adults with learning disabilities using a mix of paid and volunteer advocates. Statutory advocacy is provided under the Mental Health Act 2007, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The organisation providing this service has recently given notice.
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- 3.24 Local authorities have seen increased demand for statutory advocacy under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 following a recent ruling in the Supreme Court.
 - 3.25 The Care Act 2014 introduces a new statutory requirement to provide an independent advocacy service for people and their carers who would have substantial difficulty in engaging with social care in areas of assessment, and support planning, review and safeguarding and for whom there is no appropriate individual who can support them. Anticipating demand for this is difficult as it will be an entirely new service.
 - 3.26 Commissioners will work with a local provider to develop a Swindon Advocacy service that will offer advocacy for the three elements of learning disability, mental health/mental capacity and social care. Best practice guidance has only just been published by SCIE nationally.
 - 3.27 This will ensure that we continue to deliver the independent statutory mental health advocacy while we grow and test a service that can meet the new requirements of the Care Act. This approach will help us to understand what future demand is likely to be for Swindon.
 - 3.28 Commissioners will use the learning from the pilot, together with national research and learning, to develop a specification to tender an enhanced advocacy service during 2016.
 - 3.29 **Swindon Advice and Support Centre** – opened to the public in June 2014, and is a shared building with a shared reception run by the voluntary sector. It hosts a number of commissioned and non-commissioned voluntary sector agencies, who contribute to the advice and information function and it provides a hub for residents for information and advice on adult social care, wellbeing and welfare issues, as well as easy access to information and support for more vulnerable voluntary sector service users.
 - 3.30 Services based in the centre include welfare and benefit advice, mental health support services (including employment support) advocacy for mental health and learning disability, care planning and direct payment support, the local carers centre, Swindon Law Centre and local Healthwatch.
 - 3.31 As well as providing local people access to information, advice and support, work is underway to improve joint stakeholder participation, to streamline pathways and develop proportionate and timely resources to meet the community's needs. This includes single referral and assessment processes, easy transfer of information between organisations involved with individuals and joined up support that enables individuals to be as independent and engaged with their community as possible.
 - 3.32 A hot desk facility allows other, small organisations to engage with the centre.
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- 3.33 **Children's Voluntary Sector Services** - include Young Carer Services (see 3.3) and a Children Rights Service that supports children and young people to participate in Case Conferences and at their Looked after Children Review. High numbers (95%) of children and young people report the service has allowed them to have a voice. The service also supports the Children in Care Council which looks at key areas for improvements for children in care. This service was successfully re-commissioned and a new service was in place in May 2013.
- 3.34 Therapeutic Support for Children and Young People aged 10 to 18 works with children and young people in group settings to deal with issues such as behaviour management, bullying, improving social skills etc. Many of the young people are at risk of school exclusion. The service also supports the Youth Forum and the Member of Youth Parliament as well as supporting groups of children with disabilities. Commissioners are currently working with colleagues in Children and Families to scope a specification to retender this service in 2015.
- 3.35 **Other contracts** - There remains a small group of contracts, of low financial value, that address specialist areas of service delivery, Examples are support for refugees and asylum seekers, bereavement counselling and support for people with head injuries. The service contracts have been let for three years and the emphasis has been on improving co-ordination between services and encouraging service users to become involved in wider community activity.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Legally we are required to recommission services as contracts come to an end, or if we specify requirements for new services. Testing the local and national market, as well as piloting new services such as a home from hospital and advocacy services, enables commissioners to reach the best configuration for future service commissioning. Retendering existing services without reshaping or aligning to SBC and CCG priorities will not deliver the outcomes required for Swindon residents or deliver good value for money.

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 4.2 Some services described above are statutory and the Council is obliged to provide, for example, a local Healthwatch. New legislation outlined in the Care Act, and legislation in relation to mental health and mental capacity requires independent advocacy.
- 4.3 All new voluntary sector services are commissioned against outcomes that contribute to SBC and CCG priorities to reducing demand for more expensive packages of care, to reduce isolation, increase independence and encourage and support adults into employment.
- 4.4 Commissioned voluntary sector organisations offer good value for money, delivering services with lower staff overheads, good use of volunteers and

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attracting additional funding through fund raising, grants and other methods. Many locally based voluntary sector services are part of national organisations which bring the benefits of infrastructure support, policy development and who, for example the Red Cross and The Alzheimer Society fund considerably more service provision in the area than they are commissioned to provide.

4.5 Legal and Human Rights Implications

4.6 There are none specific to this report.

All other Implications

4.7 There are none specific to this report.

5. Consultees

5.1 None.

6. Background Papers

6.1 None.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – List of Organisations.