

## **Appendix 3**

### **Adult Voluntary Sector Contracts**

20 voluntary and community sector organisations are commissioned to deliver services, on behalf of Swindon Borough Council, to support adults in the community. Most contracts have been reshaped and re-tendered, resulting in outcome focused, targeted contracts that require an emphasis on promoting greater independence and reducing isolation for the people organisations work with. The new contracts require greater engagement with local communities, community based activities and a focus on encouraging adults into employment. Over the last year around 4200 local residents have benefited from the contracted, targeted services.

### **What we are doing well**

Swindon Advice and Support Centre (SASC) has been open for twelve months (June 2015) and all tenants were moved into the centre by January this year. In the first year 1800 visits were made to the shared reception, where Swindon residents receive general advice, support, signposting and access to the My Care, My Support Website. There is also a shared reception service for the agencies based in the centre. Swindon Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) are responsible for the reception area at SASC and they are working with tenants to develop joint working and partnership processes to make service users experience as smooth as possible and to ensure they receive the correct service as quickly as possible. This approach is already demonstrating the added value of co-locating key voluntary sector providers.

CAB continued to support people seeking advice on a variety of different issues. In 2014/15, as in previous years, the biggest area of work was supporting residents with debt and finance issues. Over 8,500 people used the service which resulted in individuals claiming over £350,000 of additional benefits. CAB advice helped 180 clients and their families avoid homelessness.

Healthwatch Swindon, like many other newly created local Healthwatch organisations, experienced a shaky start. However, they have continued to raise their profile through the previous year and were commissioned by NHS England to develop a national framework to develop and maintain an effective Patient Participation Group (PPG) in acknowledgement of its work facilitating the PPG forum. The Swindon Healthwatch Board of Directors now has seven active members with a diverse range of skills and background.

The Harbour project has dealt with an increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees over the past year and has, at the same time, engaged more women and children in their support plans.

Swindon Carers Centre continues to raise the profile of Adult Carers, and registered 2,349 new carers during 2014/15. The Centre is working in partnership with SBC to

ensure it is Care Act compliant and are part of an on-going working group supporting the on line assessment tool for Carers Assessments in My Care My Support.

In January 2015 Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM), who previously provided advocacy for adults with learning disabilities, absorbed into their service the IMCA/IMHA statutory mental health advocacy responsibilities and the new advocacy requirements of the Care Act, which became a statutory responsibility in April 2015. SAM is working with commissioners to pilot this new service, while coping with the additional demand for mental health advocacy following recent rulings in the Supreme Court. SAM is developing new processes and approaches to ensure people receive timely advocacy when they need it.

### **What could be done differently?**

Commissioning officers need to find more creative ways to engage with, and understand the experience of, adults using our commissioned voluntary and community services. While we do take advantage of the opportunities provided by our providers to engage with service users, we need a more independent mechanism for ensuring we gain robust outcome experiences.

Discharging patients from hospital as soon as they are medically fit is an important priority for SBC and their partners. The traditional Home from Hospital service commissioned over previous years has not been effective due to low funding and a very traditional approach to supporting adults with a shopping and weekly visiting model. A pilot Home from Hospital partnership between The Red Cross, Age UK and Aster Living began in early 2015, designed to give a much more holistic and responsive service to individuals needing support to return home. The pilot is designed to engage early with patients during their stay in hospital, to provide practical support such as moving or replacing furniture, installing key fobs and adaptations to ensure the home is safe for patients to return to and emotional support to avoid hospital re-admission and ensure reintegration into their community.

### **What are the challenges facing the portfolio**

Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS) has seen a number of key senior staff and Trustees leave the organisation in recent months and their combined experience will take some time to replace. Officers at SBC are working closely with VAS to assist with recruitment. The National Association of Voluntary Action Councils is actively supporting the existing trustees to recruit a new body of trustees and provide a six month induction and support programme.

The Care Act has had a significant impact on a number of voluntary sector commissioned agencies. Anticipating the demand for new services such as Carers Assessments and advocacy for adults accessing social care assessment and care planning is a challenge for SBC and the organisations involved in the delivery of these new requirements.

Two contracts, supporting adults with poor mental health, have been significantly re-shaped and re-tendered recently, with new contracts commencing in January and April of this year. The Mental Health Support contract required significant changes to the way the service supports its users. The new contract requires targeted, one to one support and the coordination of interventions through a recovery plan agreed with the individual. The organisational changes needed to achieve the outcomes outlined in the new contract are challenging for the provider and change has so far been minimal. Commissioners are working closely with the provider to ensure the required changes are achieved.

Helping organisations, particularly those who hold smaller contracts, to produce evidence of the impact of their service continues to be a challenge. Commissioners continue to work with the voluntary sector organisations to ensure impact and value for money is transparent.