



# Buckinghamshire County Council

## Minutes

### *SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP*

AGENDA ITEM: 3b

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON PARTNERSHIP HELD ON THURSDAY, 1 MARCH 2001 IN MEZZANINE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.30 PM**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr T J Fowler (in the Chair)  
Mr J W Cartwright (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs P M Bacon, Mr C Jones and Mrs C S Willetts

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Mr P Cochrane, Mr D C T Graves and Mrs E M Lay

#### **DECLARTIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared.

#### **1 DISCUSSION ON WINTER PRESSURE REPORT**

The Committee discussed the issues to be included in the final report to Council on Winter Pressures. They considered a number of points circulated at the meeting which included:

- Issues relating to Nursing and Residential Care purchasing – including the independent sector pricing policy.
- Research monitoring the effectiveness of services.
- Recruitment within the Health Service and Social Services.
- Intermediate care.
- Delayed Discharge from hospital.

The Committee agreed the items and the timetable to prepare the report for County Council on 26 April 2001 –

- Draft report to be circulated to Members by 15 March. Any comments on the draft report to be submitted to the Policy Support Officer by 21 March for the final report to be drawn up.
- It was also agreed that the report would be presented to Cabinet together with an invitation to the Cabinet Member for Care Services for Adults, to discuss the recommendations and findings of the Select Committee.

In order for the recommendations from the report to be periodically updated, a paragraph was included on reporting back any progress on a six monthly basis. It was suggested this could also be included as an item for the forward work programme.

## **2 DWINA WHEATLEY, DIRECT SERVICES MANAGER, TEAM FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Dwina Wheatley, Direct Services Manager, Team for Older People attended to present her view on winter pressures. The following points were raised:-

### **Partnerships**

- In relation to a question on partnerships with the Health Authority, Dwina Wheatley reported that the County as a whole was slow to begin discussing Winter Pressures and how funding would be spent to the best effect. A monitoring process has been adopted to address this and any related issues. Regular meetings with David Beckett and John Schaler of the Health Authority are used to discuss topical issues including bed-blocking and spending priorities. Primary Care Trusts and Primary Care Groups also link in with these discussions. It was noted by the Committee, as of the 31 March 2001, financial responsibility was transferred to the County Council. Although joint working between the County Council and Health has improved and more clients have moved through the system, the figures available indicate that the pressures on beds remains unchanged.

### **Assessments**

- In relation to assessments made by Social Services, it was reported that since December 2000, anyone eligible to a placement is offered an assessment. Those already in hospital were referred to Social Services and placed accordingly. It was noted that with effect from 9 April 2001, a new ruling under the NHS Plan allows anyone with capital or savings of over £18,000 will not be financially assessed for a three month period. The implications for Social Services have yet to be fully assessed.
- A Member highlighted and commented on the rigid working hours of Social Workers and asked what effect this was having on bed-blocking. In reply Dwina Wheatley acknowledged the comment and reported that the aim is to move clients into Nursing Homes as soon as is practically possible. The difficulty was the shortage of residential and nursing home placements. With some of the additional funding, recently appointed Acute Home Finders co-ordinate the discharge of clients.

- Dwina Wheatley explained that one of the aims was to have less people in Residential Homes for more to return home with the support of home carers and intermediate care. It is recognised that most can return home following full rehabilitation. In South Buckinghamshire, Community Hospitals are widely used by GPs. Other areas have not yet fully recognised the important role Community Hospitals can play as part of the future.

#### **4 HOME CARE**

In relation to a comment on the role of Home Carers, it was noted that clients discharged back to their own homes are linked up with Home Carers. Those needing intermediate care are assessed prior to discharge to ascertain the level of care they require. With closer joint working with Health, there are moves to re-train Home Carers to become 'Health Carers' who would be qualified to provide basic medical care ie change dressings.

At present, with the problem of recruiting Home Carers this again can cause delays in discharges. A member asked if village parish magazines and notice boards were used to advertise. In reply it was noted that shops, libraries and other local methods had been used.

#### **Charges**

In relation to patients paying for Home Care Services, it was noted that during intermediate care, patients are not required to pay. By having a flexible approach, patients can dip in and out of the system as required.

#### **Day Centres**

Following the Root and Branch Review of Day Centres, the findings revealed that attendance levels had been reducing. The Review made recommendations including looking at Day Centre provision and how the service can be improved to provide more adequate facilities including, working in partnership with Health, to provide rehabilitation facilities. The report also highlighted the need for improved provision for the frail and less mobile.

In relation to funding, it was recommended this year that inflationary increases were awarded. Centres have, over the past 3 years received no increased funding. However the commitment of people working in the Day Centres has enabled a good level of service to continue.

#### **Block Purchasing**

In relation to a question on block purchasing of beds and its effectiveness, Dwina Wheatley reported that to provide quality care, booking beds on block was the preferred choice. This was evident when South Bucks opted to block purchase beds in many geographical areas and in doing so, ensured better quality care for its clients. Mid-Bucks however, opted to spot purchase.

**5 ACTION PLAN**

No information was discussed under this item.

**6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged.

**MR T J FOWLER  
CHAIRMAN**

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