

Notes from a Meeting with Bucks Association of Care Homes – 30 January 2001

The following notes represent the main points made by the BACH representatives. They have not yet been discussed with anybody in Social Services who deals with winter pressures.

- (i) BACH represents organisations that provide approximately 92 % of the beds available in Bucks. They negotiate bed prices on behalf of their members.
- (ii) Funding is a major issue at present. Partly because the Health Trusts pay more for beds during the winter period than Social Services are willing to pay for the remainder of the year. There is in fact a third level of fees and that is what customers on the "open market" are willing to pay.
- (iii) BCC pays £311 a week for residential beds and £390 for nursing care. The average market rates were said to be £410 and £500 respectively. Rates tend to be higher in the south of the county than further north.
- (iv) BACH claims to find it difficult to negotiate with Social Services as there is no one person at the centre with whom they can negotiate. In the past this would have been undertaken with the Head of Service Development (a post that no longer exists). They would appreciate a meeting with the Cabinet Member, Director of Social Services and General Manager to discuss funding issues.
- (v) BACH stated that there are now fewer beds available county-wide as homes are being closed due to the difficult economic circumstances existing for some private nursing home owners. This is at the same time as the number of older people living in the county is increasing. BACH indicated that beds for mental health care are much more difficult to find than other beds.
- (vi) It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit staff, particularly in the south.
- (vii) BACH considers that Social Services and the NHS react to events rather than plan.
- (viii) South Bucks NHS Trust block purchases beds while mid Bucks spot purchases. BACH prefers the certainty of block purchase but considers it would be better to purchase a set number of beds throughout the year. These would be purchased at an agreed rate. They feel this would be better than spot purchase that can cause problems when homes are running at near as possible to full capacity.
- (ix) Planning a strategy for the whole year would be better than just for winter. BACH considers it would be helpful if they were to be involved at the early planning stage.
- (x) BACH used to run a "bed-line" that acted as a clearing-house identifying where beds were available. Social Services took this over and it has since disappeared.

- (xi) Intermediate Care is seen as somewhat "woolly" by BACH – this is in contrast to the views of the Bucks Partnership Forum.