

**Wiltshire Council**

**Council**

**13 November 2012**

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**Questions from Councillors**

**From Cllr Chris Caswill, Chippenham Monkton Division**

**To**

**Cllr John Thomson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult care,  
Communities and Housing**

**Question 1**

- a. As the trial of staff at Winterbourne View has now concluded, are you now in a position to give the Council a statement about the lessons which Wiltshire Council has learned from this shocking episode, and from the CQC and Safeguarding reports which have been produced in recent months?
- b. In particular, are you satisfied that Wiltshire Council has in place the right procedures for listening to any 'whistleblowing' reports about residential accommodation in the county, and about accommodation outside the county where Wiltshire residents have been placed by the Council?
- c. Would you anyway agree that one of the immediate needs is to look again at the level of support which is provided by this Council to any Wiltshire parents who are concerned about the treatment of their children (of all ages) in residential homes, including guidance on the extremely complicated division of responsibilities between the Council, the NHS and other organisations?

**Response**

- a) Since the scandal at Winterbourne View Hospital was brought to public attention by the BBC Panorama programme a total of five reports have been published to date.
  - Winterbourne View Hospital: A serious Case review
  - Report of the NHS Review of commissioning of care and treatment at Winterbourne View.
  - Care Quality Commission, internal Management review of regulation of Winterbourne View

- Care Quality Commission, Learning Disability Services, inspection programme, National Overview
- Out of Sight: Mencap and Challenging Behaviour Foundation.

Between them, the reports produced 115 recommendations of which 35 need to be considered by all local authorities and their partners, including the NHS. (The other recommendations are primarily in the domain of the NHS, the Care Quality Commission, the Department of Health and service providers.)

Like all Councils across the Country officers of the Council and their PCT colleagues have scrutinised all of the recommendations and are in the process of developing a formal action plan to address them where necessary. The scope of the plan will cover not only the subjects of the Winterbourne View hospital, who were NHS In-patient Assessment and Treatment Units but also residential and nursing home placements as well, as we would wish to ensure the safety of all vulnerable adults, not just the very small number who need to be admitted to specialist health settings. That is why the council is working with the PCT/CCG on a joint plan.

- b) “Whistle blowing” is taken very seriously in Wiltshire. All allegations are investigated thoroughly. Since Winterbourne View hit the headlines the number of safeguarding alerts generated by residential care staff across the county has increased. This is a positive statement in so far as it indicates that the procedures do work well and that the processes have been able to respond to the heightened awareness of staff.

We encourage and have always encouraged staff, people who use services and members of the public to raise with us any concerns they have about care in any care homes in Wiltshire.

- c) Fortunately, very few people with a learning disability in Wiltshire have needed to be admitted by the NHS to specialist assessment and treatment units. At the moment the NHS have 4 people in specialist settings.

For this small number of people and their families it is a stressful time and it is indeed complicated once the mental health act is implemented and a psychiatrist has decided that hospital admission is appropriate. The NHS have the responsibility in these circumstances but as always the council will continue to work with our partners to ensure we can help as much as possible where appropriate .

The Council and the CCG jointly fund an advocacy service for people and families who are involved with the NHS re their mental

health issues, so they can have access to independent advice and support. In addition we will be working with the CCGs and other Health agencies in the coming months as part of the improvement plan to ensure the few families who are involved in these very complicated arrangements are supported and also consulted on what more support they would need.

In due course, the Government will publish a final report in relation to Winterbourne View Hospital and should any new recommendations or statutory requirements emerge from that document they will be incorporated into the Wiltshire action plan.