

Briefing Paper

Trowbridge Area Board January 2014

Background or History

In 2001 Central Government issued a White Paper called Valuing People – this paper related to the Health and Social Care approach, support and services offered to Adults with a learning disability and their family carers.

This document made clear recommendations to move away from day service buildings used only for and by people with a learning disability, the emphasis being to support people to access and be part of their local towns and communities.

Wiltshire Council undertook a Best Value Review of Learning Disability Services in 2001-2 which recommended a 9 staged approach to the modernisation of all its in house provision.

For Day Services this meant updating the approach offered by staff, providing a more flexible approach (move away from traditional Monday to Friday 9am-4pm Service) and the move out of old large institutional style buildings into those that continue to offer a base for people, for some activities to take place but the bigger emphasis was put of supporting people to access community facilities near to where they live and alongside other members of the public.

Ashton Street is the last of the original 9 day services in Wiltshire to move or be modernised in the way explained above.

The building was built in the 1950's and was originally a school, later moving to the traditional day service model which at the time would have supported around 100 people on a daily basis to take part in activities in the building.

The building now supports around 25-30 people per day (total on the books around 60). People use the building for around 20% of the activity program - crafts, music, cooking and the other 80% happens in the community – using leisure centres, library, meeting friends for social activities, drama, dance, rambling to name but a few.

Since the Learning Disability Best Value Review began in 2002 we have regularly met with customers, families and staff updating them on the changes happening around the County, sharing service designs and plans at all times making people aware that the proposals related to all the day services Wiltshire Council run.

Over the last 2 years the service with the support of the transformation team has been searching for suitable alternate properties in Trowbridge for the service to move to. When the developments within County Hall were coming to fruition with the support of Jane Scott it was suggested that the service move in to part of County Hall.

The plans were approved in late October and the service began contacting and talking to Customers, families and staff on the 13th of November.

This briefing is to provide Trowbridge Area Board with an update on the planned move of the service, it is anticipated that the service will move from its current location into a part of County Hall in the autumn of 2014.

Communication of recent events

In November the service started to talk to customers, families and stakeholders about the option of moving the Ashton Street base from its current location on the outskirts of Trowbridge town into a section of County Hall on the ground floor.

Sessions with the people who use the service, staff and families were held. We talked to people about this proposal and answered questions and concerns about the move.

The service has sent out a letter explaining the proposal to all those who currently use Ashton Street and enclosed a proposed floor plan of the space in County Hall where the base will move to.

A small number of parents have responded with questions regarding the move, these have been about:

- Parking and mini bus storage
- A concern that the public and staff at county hall may not interact well with customers in the building /atrium
- The change from a building they know well may be difficult.
- Will the staff be the same
- Will people still be able to meet their friends
- Will the range of activities be the same
- Will the number of sessions people attend change

Most parents and carers have been positive about the move and customers and staff are excited about the move.

The staff at Ashton Street continue to talk to customers about the move to County Hall in a positive way and when visiting the library and atrium have been able to talk about being able to visit more often and being based in the building, we hope this gradual approach will help to reduce any anxieties customers have about the move.

Information / Key Points

A project meeting and a definite building plan will start a pictorial timeline that will be produced by the service and sent out to all customers and families.

Regular Newsletters and Coffee Mornings will be set up to ensure people are kept informed of progress and involved in developments.

Options

The service with support from the Council's Transformation team have been looking at possible alternate buildings and locations for the last 3 years, the option of moving the service to County Hall is the most appropriate option and meets all of the main criteria and reasons for this service change:

- An accessible base where people can meet and go out into the community from
- Modern/fit for purpose building
- Shared with others – flexible use
- Local to town and community facilities
- Integrated with local communities and members of the public

Conclusion

This will be a positive move for the service and is in line with the Councils priorities to deliver quality services, promote community participation and sharing use of buildings, resources and facilities.

Current Action to be taken

A project group will be set up to oversee the refurbishment of the location in County Hall once the current occupants have moved.

Staff working in Ashton Street continue to discuss the move with Customers and their families and any issues or concerns they have about the move are responded to where answers are known, any un answered queries are being noted and will be responded to as progress is made.

Any questions or queries can be sent to:

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