Wiltshire County Council   **ITEM NO.09**

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

19 July 2007

Delayed Transfers of Care

Purpose of Report

1.   To highlight the issue of delayed transfers of care in Wilthsire.

2.   To discuss the need for a scrutiny task group to look at the whole system of care for older people, which currently often results in a delay in discharging a patient after an episode of care in hospital.

Background

3.   The Wiltshire health economy (which includes health and social care) has a long history of poor performance in the area of delayed transfers from hospital beds into other systems of care. Wiltshire has the highest number of delayed transfers of care in the South West region.

4.   The Health OSC has been aware of this for some time and a review into delayed discharges at Salisbury District Hospital was carried out by the South Wiltshire Health Scrutiny Panel in 2003/04. The findings and recommendations from that review are attached for reference at Appendix 1.

5.   Delayed transfers of care happen when a patient has finished part or all of the medical care they needed in hospital and are awaiting either another health or a social care package, or a combination of the two. It tends to affect elderly patients.

6.   In Wiltshire care for older people is primarily delivered by Wiltshire County Council through social services, and through Wiltshire Primary Care Trust (PCT), but individuals may also receive care from Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership and the three acute hospitals in Salisbury, Swindon and Bath.

7.   Each of these agencies involved would benefit from an improvement in the figures for delayed transfers of care as this would enable to improve their own performance as a whole.

8.   The six agencies have recently come together to address the problems and look for solutions. However, it has been suggested that a scrutiny task group could help this process by providing an element of public accountability and by calling each of the agencies to account through the scrutiny process.

Terms of Reference for the Task Group

9.   To identify the main reasons for hold ups and blockages in the current system of care.

10.   To examine and monitor the targets in the joint working protocol against performance and, where targets are not being met, find out why.

11.   To make recommendations to each of the agencies involved about how they could contribute to improvements to the system that would benefit patients and the system itself to improve services.

12.   The task group would carry out the review over a three month period initially and would report back to the Committee at the November meeting.

Conclusions

13.   Although work is ongoing to address the problem of delayed transfers of care in Wiltshire, a scrutiny review could focus on the whole system of care for older people in order to find real and deliverable improvements.

Recommendations

14.   The Committee is recommended to form a scrutiny task group made up of no more than five members to look into the issue of delayed transfers of care in Wiltshire by reviewing statistics, evidence and process gathered from Wiltshire County Council, Wiltshire PCT, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Trust and the three acute hospitals serving Wiltshire.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to the County Council in this report

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