

# **ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 13 JUNE 2011**

## **OXFORDSHIRE RESIDENTIAL & NURSING HOMES REPORT**

### **Response from the Director for Social & Community Services**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly can I say that I welcome the report from the Local Involvement Network (LINK). The addition of an independent view about the care home sector will help to complement information that is already available across Oxfordshire.

However I would like to take this opportunity to comment on some of the points raised and in particular on the following:

#### **OCCUPANCY**

The factors affecting occupancy are several. I have made comment on a number below:

Overall Market Share - In terms of overall market share I estimate that the council purchases just over a third of all care home places in Oxfordshire. A further 9% of places are purchased by the PCT or other local authorities with just over a half of all places being purchased by people placing themselves in care homes.

Length of Stay - For older people in Oxfordshire a greater proportion of the people the council supports live in care homes than the rest of the country. Oxfordshire took part in a local benchmarking study on length of stays in care homes with 6 other authorities. This work has indicated that people live in care homes in Oxfordshire for longer than the rest of the country; people in Oxfordshire had the highest length of stay in care homes. On average this is 5 months longer than the average authority in the study (an extra 20%).

Last year the Council funded about 450 new permanent placements, with over 20% of these being people who had originally funded their own care. Further analysis is suggesting that when their needs have been compared against this council's eligibility criteria a number of these people may not have needed care home services when they first went into a care home. Everyone is entitled to a social care assessment irrespective of their means. Therefore the council is concerned that some people may be entering a care home setting too early in their life. With this in mind we are actively looking to encourage people who fund their own care to look at alternatives to care home placements at the time of potential admission.

Occupancy Levels - The Oxfordshire Care Homes Association has regularly reported on occupancy levels within a selective sample of care homes and their statistics have indicated occupancy levels at between 94%-96%. Vacancies are therefore a natural part of the care homes market dynamics. However the indication is that if expansion continues to outstrip demand then there will be an increase in the number of vacant beds available unless these are taken up through demographic demand.

New capacity within the care home market – Despite the above there is still a healthy interest in building new care home services and extra-care housing in Oxfordshire and a number of developments are currently taking place. Furthermore information from this year's Laing & Buisson Annual Long Term Care Conference is suggesting that (nationally) available beds are increasing faster than occupied beds, but the number of occupied beds is increasing also. This trend may be being fuelled by the demographic changes that are being reported on a regular basis.

In response to this and on a number of occasions over recent years I have spoken to representatives from the care homes sector about my commissioning intentions. I have been clear that I do not envisage buying residential care home services in the future but will instead purchase alternatives such as extra-care housing and community based services. I envisage that this trend will continue for the foreseeable future although I do expect to continue to buy nursing beds in a care home setting to respond to assessed needs.

## **RESPIRE BEDS**

I agree with the LINK when they say that respite beds provide an important element of this Directorate's support arrangements for people with long-term conditions and their carers. It is for this very reason that I purchase these beds on a block arrangement in order to secure the necessary access and support for people in Oxfordshire.

In 2010-11 Social & Community Services purchased 11,373 bed days worth of respite care. Usage of these beds during the year can be reported as

Total Booked beds	97%
Of which	
• Occupied beds	86%
• Cancelled beds	<u>11%</u>
Beds Not Booked/Vacant	3%

There are various reasons given for cancellation but the top three which account for over half of the 11% cancellations mentioned above are recorded as -

Change to carer plans/opt out	23%
Client moved to permanent care	22%
Client deceased	10%

Often the cancellation is notified very close to the actual date of placement. In such circumstances my placement staff make these vacancies known to hospital based staff in order to support hospital discharge activity. We are also intending to carry out further work to examine the reasons for 'Change to Carerplans/Opt out' in order to improve the total uptake of beds in any year.

## **SATISFACTION SURVEY**

One of the indicators the council has looked at to demonstrate good quality care services has been the star rating system which was operated by the Care Quality Commission up to June 2010. The last reports by the Care Quality Commission on the old star rating system showed 86% of care home places in Oxfordshire were good or excellent compared to 82% nationally.

A Social Care User Questionnaire was undertaken in February this year. The results for those questionnaire's returned in respect of care home services indicated that overall

- 93% were satisfied with services;
- 76% of them being extremely or very satisfied;
- only 3% are dissatisfied

The survey went on to record that 79% of service users rated their quality of life as 'Good' while 18% scored their satisfaction as 'OK'.

98% reported that they felt 'adequately clean and presentable' whilst 96% stated that they received 'adequate food and drink at ok times'.

98% recorded that their home is 'adequately clean and comfortable'.

On the issues of socialising 85% said they had adequate social contact, 11% said that they had some social contact but not enough, while 4% said they had little social contact and felt socially isolated.

The full survey results will be considered by the Adult Social Care Leadership Team and an action plan drawn up. A number of service users have indicated their willingness to discuss their response with us and we will be taking this forward in December to identify the progress that has been made.

## **FUNDING**

The LINK has reported on the level of funding associated with the placement of residents.

The topic is a complex one and the range of fees quoted in the report will reflect the different levels of dependency, the funding source behind each spot placement together with the availability of a bed and the fee levels that the home is willing to accept.

I have noted the suggestion that Oxfordshire pays less than some other authorities. However the last full expenditure dataset for 2009-10<sup>1</sup> indicated that the weekly costs of a care home in Oxfordshire was above both the national average and the average for the south east.

Fee levels are negotiated individually with the provider at the time of any spot placement of service. Our published banding levels for 2010-11 ranged from £350 to £612 per week.

The LINK have also commented on the constancy of future provision and in this respect I would like to assure Members that my staff undertake regular checks on the financial health of the sector. This is a part of our response to managing Risk and Business Continuity in the current financial climate. In my view the financial health of the sector in Oxfordshire generally remains stable.

Furthermore it is usual for potential operators to check our target payment rates for such services at the time of planning. Clearly the target banding levels we are operating at are not dissuading providers from investing further in the care homes sector.

## **FINDING A CARE HOME**

I have noted the comments made by the LINK in respect of information about Care Homes. There is a wealth of information available to prospective residents. The council has a contract with Caresearch for the provision of a Vacancy Information Website with information available through the Council's website. In addition to this there is information available on the Care Quality Commission's website whilst other sources include the likes of AgeUK and Citizens Advice Bureau.

However I should like to reiterate that this council's strategy is to dissuade people from entering care home services too early and to explore maintaining people in their own homes. Having said that I will review our information provision to ensure that good quality information is available to those who need to make decisions at such a key stage in their life.

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<sup>1</sup> (Source: Department of Health Adult Social Care Intelligence Service <http://nascis.ic.nhs.uk/>)

## **CONCLUSION**

I welcome this report from the Local Involvement Network (LINK). It provides additional information and useful feedback about the services that are delivered in Oxfordshire and in particular about the quality of service that residents experience in a care home setting.

I will ensure that the LINK's findings are considered by the Directorate's Adult Social Care Leadership Team at a future meeting.

**JOHN JACKSON**

Director for Social & Community Services