

Cabinet – 13 March 2014
Written Responses sent to the Questioners

1.

Questioner: Manisha Ahya

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: “There have been concerns raised by service users about theft of personal property and equipment at the Bridge Day Centre. What is being done by Rethink to address these concerns and improve security at the Bridge Day Centre?”

Written Response: It was of real concern that there had been a small number of thefts of items owned by the service and belongings of people using the building last autumn.

Rethink, rightly, reported the incidents to the police, who attended the centre and took statements. They also undertook prompt action to put measures in place including: rooms are now locked when they are not in use, other than canteen and activity rooms, which remain open for people to use and meet in. The activity room has now got lockable cupboards, so that groups can store their belongings safely; and the service has a higher number of staff, volunteers and other organisations around the building now, giving a greater presence.

These measures appear to have had the desired effect and we have not had any thefts or other criminal incidents at the service since October.

The police and Rethink are in regular contact and a Community Support Officer is visiting shortly and will develop ongoing working relationships.

2.

Questioner: Sheliza Alidina

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: “Mental health service users who attend the Bridge Day Centre have gone weeks without provision for meals or food there. Many service users are unable to afford to buy food at the Harrow Leisure Centre as instructed by Rethink, or are too unwell or have no-one to help them prepare a meal to take to the

Bridge. There has been no satisfactory answer from Rethink as to how long this situation will go on for. Do you find this acceptable?"

**Written
Response:**

I understand that Rethink see their clients everyday at the service, and have been answering queries and notifying people as best as they can. The kitchen had to be closed suddenly in the first instance so advance notification was not possible.

I further understand that the timescale for works being completed depends on securing parts and completing the work. Rather than give estimated dates which people become wedded to, but which may change, Rethink have chosen to wait until they are sure before giving people a date. The Council has also been over the issues with the Day Service Steering Group, the Harrow Mental Health User Forum (with Harrow User Group) and Harrow Mental Health Carers Forum (with Harrow Rethink Support Group) – and we will notify clients and colleagues as soon as we have that date. Rethink will also ensure service users are informed of the re-opening date as the works near completion.

The Council and Rethink have been working steadfastly to complete the upgrade to the on-site Café, so it can reopen fully to the public. They are now able to offer hot drinks and snacks and are confident all the facilities will be available soon.

In preparation for the re-opening a Catering Supervisor is now in post and menus have been prepared. Cooking skills courses are coming soon and there will be volunteer roles in the kitchen.

For anyone physically unable to do so, the Rethink team have liaised with the person's care workers to arrange for food to be brought with them and some clients have additional support from their care workers at the Centre.