

Agenda item:
Page no:

Meeting:	Best Value Advisory Panel
Date:	11 September 2003
Subject:	Mental Health Best Value – Final Report
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Acting Chief Social Services Officer
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Social Services
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	All
Enclosures:	Mental Health Best Value Report

1. Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)

- 1.1 The Mental Health Best Value Review is a wide ranging project focussed on the effectiveness of Mental Health Services in enabling people with mental health problems to live as independently as possible. It has highlighted opportunities to improve communication between key agencies and between service providers and service users, and to strengthen and develop work on crisis management and rehabilitation. It has identified the need to invest in the creation of a specialist post to match the support needs of people with mental health problems with suitable accommodation as well as to ensure existing services provide value for money. It has also shown the need to create additional capacity in supported housing provision, particularly for the Asian community.

2. Recommendations (for decision by the Executive)

Best Value Panel to approve report and improvement plan and agree to put forward to Cabinet.

REASON: To implement the recommendations from the Best Value Review

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

- 3.1 N/A

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1 This report covers a project carried out under the umbrella of a broad cross-cutting review called Caring Harrow for which the initial commissioning and scoping report was approved in February 2002. A revised programme for Caring Harrow and the scope of the Mental Health Review were presented to the Best Value Advisory Panel on 25 November 2002.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 The Mental Health review, which was called "Moving to Independent Living", was based on the corporate priorities in relation to social inclusion, maximising the independence of disabled and chronically ill people and meeting the economic, social and cultural needs of different communities.

6. **Background Information and options considered**

- 6.1 The scope of the review covered residential units, supported housing, day care and floating support services for people with mental health problems. It looked at the effectiveness of these services and their links with other key providers such as the hospital acute unit in enabling people to move from highly supported living arrangements to the maximum level of independence possible. The focus of the work carried out in the review was informed by feedback from a stakeholder conference which identified the following key themes:

Accommodation – Choice, availability, access, specialist provision

Communication – More leaflets, better flow between different service providers and providers and service users

Diversity – Specialist housing provision, particularly women-only facility, change in day care activities

Employment – More opportunities

7. **Consultation**

- 7.1 The project team included 3 service users and carer's representative and extensive consultation was carried out through:

Launch and concluding stakeholder conferences

Interviews with residents of hostels and supported housing facilities

Focus groups with staff from all main service providers

Interviews with managers from Community Mental Health Teams, residential and day care units

8. **Finance Observations**

- 8.1 The move to forms of lower dependency accommodation are desirable from a client viewpoint and enable the more effective use of scarce resources.

9. **Legal Observations**

- 9.1 None.

10. **Conclusion**

- 10.1 Significant potential for improvement in the effectiveness of links between the Acute Unit at Northwick Park, Housing, Community Mental Health Teams has been identified and changes in procedures and systems are already being implemented. Evidence of best practice identified in the “comparison” work has underlined the importance of investing in rehabilitation for which funding has already been obtained from Supporting People. The learning from visits to other local authorities is now being used to inform the development of the new Rehabilitation Team.
- 10.2 Further work is being undertaken as a matter of high priority to identify the potential for reducing the costs of residential units.
- 10.3 The recommendations from the review which involve significant investment are as follow:
- Creation of an Accommodation Officer post to prevent delayed discharges from hospital and enable move-on from high dependency units (including those which are out of the Borough) to more independent living. Funding of approximately £40000 is needed. Part of this (£20000) can be achieved through a bid for Supporting People funding. It will also require a budget growth item of £20000 for 2004/5. However this will be on an invest-to-save bid as savings in excess of £20000 are anticipated from the independent sector purchasing budget.
 - Creation of increased supported housing capacity, particularly a specialist Asian women-only unit. A PFI bid is currently being worked on and the viability of other schemes explored.

11. **Background Papers**

- 11.1 Best Value Report

12. **Author**

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