

Meeting:	Community Consultative Forum
Date:	April 2 2003
Subject:	Review of Social Services for Older People from Black and Other Minority Communities
Responsible Chief Officer:	Acting Chief Social Services Officer
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	All
Enclosures:	None

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to brief members of the Community Consultative Forum (CCF) that work has now started in the Social Services Department to undertake a review of services provided to older people from the black and other minority communities.
- 1.2 It reports on progress and action to date and identifies future work which will be progressively reported to the CCF

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 **The CCF is asked to note the commencement of the review and to decide whether it wishes to nominate members of the CCF to form a group to act as a consultative group for the review of services for older people from the black and other minority communities.
REASON: Consultation with the representatives of the black and minority communities is an integral part of this review.**

3. **Relevant Previous Decisions**

- 3.1 There are no previous policy decisions relevant to this exercise or report

4. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The activity is consistent with the Council's commitment to "improve the quality of health and social care in Harrow ...by promoting and maximising the independence of disabled, frail, and chronically ill people..."

5. **Background Information**

- 5.1 Recent census information has identified that the proportion of older people (usually regarded as 65 plus) from black and other minority communities in Harrow will increase over the next decade. This has implications for the provision of community care services to this group.
- 5.2 The Race Relations Amendment Act also requires councils to review their services to minority communities and establish whether any form of discrimination is occurring in the planning and provision of those services. The Social Services Department has identified that in the first year of the programme we will review the services to older people from the black and minority communities.
- 5.3 Additionally through the complaints procedure and other informal avenues, the Department has become aware of some concern within the communities about the level and appropriateness of the Departments provision for older members of these communities, particularly the Asian community. These factors have led to the initiation of a small officer working group to explore what action the Department needs to be taking to review the present level of provision and act upon it. The methodology of the exercise is not finalised at present although a key component must be consultation with the communities concerned and other stakeholders.
- 5.4 The exercise will fall into 5 phases, each phase considering the group of services we are providing. The phases are
- Meals on Wheels Service
 - Day care
 - Residential care
 - Care management and assessment (fieldwork)
 - Support to the voluntary sector and the prevention strategy

Meals Service

- 5.5 Work has already commenced on the meals service. This was to have been reported to the CCF in detail in January but the meeting was cancelled due to the snowfall. Currently there is a long waiting list for the Asian Meals Service, which is a vegetarian Gujarati style meal cooked from fresh at the Council's "Milap" kitchen.
- 5.6 The waiting list, compared with the waiting list for the standard meals service, is considered to be disproportionately disadvantaging older Asian people who require the vegetarian meal. No funding had been available to the Department to improve the position.
- 5.7 A review of the existing transport arrangements identified some spare marginal capacity, which could be used to reduce the waiting list by about 24 from an average of about 75 to 80 people waiting.
- 5.8 The cost of the freshly cooked vegetarian meal (excluding transport) is £4 .91 compared with the cost of a standard meal at £1. 81. The Department does not have the budget provision to meet the cost of 24 additional freshly cooked meals at the present price. An alternative is to use a pre cooked (frozen meal) which can be purchased from a bulk supplier at around £2.70 (the exact unit cost has yet to be confirmed). The Department can contain this additional expenditure within the existing budget provision.

- 5.9 It has been decided to proceed to offer to around 24 people on the current waiting list the opportunity to use a pre cooked vegetarian meal for a trial period following which a decision will be made about the future provision of this service.
- 5.10 The trial will run for about 2 to 3 months during which period the meals of two suppliers will be tested. The two suppliers were selected following a tasting session to which some current waiting list clients and other stakeholders were invited. Their views determined which suppliers would be used. People on the waiting list asked to participate in the trial will continue to receive a meal when it ends.
- 5.11 During the trial clients will be asked for their views about the meal and prior to commencing the service they will be fully informed about the trial and its purpose.

Next Steps

- 5.12 At the next meeting of the CCF a full report on the outcome of the trial will be reported and a consultation will take place on what steps the Council might take to improve the service and reduce the waiting list. Obviously, the main constraint to change will be the funding available within this year to make improvements to the service.
- 5.13 By the next meeting of the CCF it is anticipated that the review of day care will be due to commence. Proposals for this review will be brought to the CCF for consideration as part of the ongoing reporting process.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 As has already been mentioned it is essential that the review activity is shared with community representatives. The CCF is the appropriate place to undertake this consultation. However, it is not always effective to do this in large open meetings, therefore the CCF may consider if it wishes to nominate a smaller number of its members to act as a consultative group for this work.

7. Finance Observations

- 7.1 This can be contained within existing budget provision

8. Legal Observations

- 8.1 no comments

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 This report can only briefly sketch out the work that the Department is undertaking to review it's services to older people from black and other minority communities. (The author is very happy to answer queries prior to and after the meeting, as he is unable to be present at the meeting.)
- 9.2 The outcome of the present review of the meals service will be reported at the next meeting of the CCF and there will be a discussion on the review of our day care services.
- 9.3 The process will be assisted by the creation of a smaller consultation group which is drawn from the membership of the CCF if that is agreed to be the best way forward.

10. **Background Papers**

10.1 None

11. **Author**

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