

The Commission of Enquiry into co-operation between Housing, Health and Adult Social Care

Background

Briefing Note 2 describes the preparatory work for the Commission and what is planned for the first Commission Hearing.

To receive a copy of Briefing Note 1, please see contact details at the end.

The Commission first Hearing

The South Essex Commission of Enquiry comprising - Essex, Basildon, Rochford, Castle Point, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Councils, and NHS South West Essex and NHS South East Essex will be holding their first Commission Hearing on 17th September 2010 in Basildon.

Joining them will be independent Commission members:

- Helen Bowers, Director, National Development Team for Inclusion
- Stephen Burke, Chief Executive, Counsel and Care
- Christian Woodhead, Assistant Director Care and Support, East Thames Housing
- Professor Andrew Kerslake, Institute for Public Care, Oxford Brookes University
- Sarah Webb, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Housing

The focus for the first Hearing will be on two main areas:

1. What can communities and neighbourhood organisations do to help promote health and well-being, avoiding the need for lengthy episodes of social care or unnecessary or repeat stays in hospital.
2. How can the statutory health, housing and adult social care organisations work more closely together to make public resources more efficient and improve the effectiveness of services by offering service users greater choice and control.

Stakeholders including carers, service users, the voluntary and private sectors are being invited to the Hearings to contribute their ideas and experiences to help find the answers to these challenges.

Why a Commission of Enquiry?

The challenges facing Britain's ageing society have recently received a lot of attention in the media. At the same time public resources are being cut back and the expectations of service users are growing.

'These are extremely challenging times that will require a significant change in the way all involved in delivering front line services operate. It has never been more necessary work together to find solutions to these challenges and in implementing the solutions. We would urge anyone who feels they can contribute to the work of the Commission of Enquiry to attend or send us their proposals for change'.
Lorna Payne, Chair of the Commission of Enquiry.

Preparatory work

During the summer a series of service user and staff focus groups have been held across the region. These sessions have highlighted important messages to be considered by the Commission.

Common frustrations expressed by service users and staff include:

- services are fragmented and seem poorly co-ordinated;
- the lack of information and the difficulties of getting information or knowing who to talk to;
- the lack of clarity about what is available and for whom.

Another common issue is the importance of good neighbourhoods in combating fear and isolation.

These findings, together with the demographic and financial pressures point to a radical re-think of the way services are currently run. Doing more of the same, is not an option.

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Current work streams

In the lead up to the Hearings in the autumn, a number of work streams have been identified including:

- ***Civil Leadership and Empowerment***

Looking at how citizens and neighbourhoods can be enabled to take more control of, and responsibility for, their communities, encouraging civil and voluntary effort to make residents feel safe, secure and valued in their homes and communities. This covers the provision of information, befriending services, community activities, prevention services as well as the role of the police and residents in promoting community safety.

- ***Housing options for older people***

Looking at the range of housing being provided for older residents across the sub region, including sheltered housing, and seeking to ensure a better coordinated and more suitable range of provision to meet the needs of older people in the years to come. This work stream will look at the potential to improve the use of housing assets across the sub region, develop the role of the private sector in the provision of both mainstream and retirement housing and to explore the potential for new models of older people's communities.

- ***Planning***

Exploring the links between planning, health, social care and housing and in particular seeking to ensure that the planning policies are enablers of community health and well being. This will influence infrastructure requirements including health facilities, design and policy guidance, life-time homes, specific needs for supported housing and how these are reflected within S106 agreements and the local development framework.

- ***Adaptations***

Looking to streamline the process for providing aids and adaptations in the home, ensuring a more comprehensive service. The restrictions on the availability of Disabled Facilities Grants requires a different approach to the provision of services including exploring alternative means of funding.

This work will also consider the role that social and private tenants and owner-occupiers themselves have in ensuring their homes are capable of meeting their future needs.

- ***Procurement***

This strand of the Commission's work is seeking efficiencies across the sub region in the purchasing of social care and housing support services. This will include the use of common contracts as well as looking at the purchase arrangements for Home Improvement Agencies and major adaptations. This work has the potential to deliver significant savings across the sub region through use of collective purchasing as well as streamlined procurement.

Further information

The Commission will be holding Hearings on 17 September – in Basildon; 22 October – in Castle Point; 15 November – in Southend and 17 December – Thurrock.

Any queries can be sent to Sue Williams at Thurrock Council: suwilliams@thurrock.gov.uk

Sponsorship

This work is funded by Improvement East. Improvement East is the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) for the East of England. They support local authorities and Fire and Rescue Services in their drive to improve services and increase efficiency.

