

## Mid & West Kent HIA Advisory Group Minutes

Tuesday 10 May 2011

### 1. ATTENDANCE:

#### 1.1 Present

Cllr Jean Atkinson, TMBC (Chair)  
 Cllr Barbara Brown, TMBC  
 Stuart White, MBC  
 James Cox, SDC  
 Jane Ellis  
 Claire Martin, Supporting People  
 John Miles, Service User  
 Christine Gibson, KCC  
 Linda Hibbs, TMBC  
 Janice Greenwood, TWBC  
 Marcella Lockyear, NHS Trust  
 David Eaton, in touch  
 Aric Goss, in touch  
 Caroline Lower in touch

#### 1.2 Apologies

Cllr John Balcombe, TMBC  
 Mark Hogan, KCC  
 Gill Crouch, KCC  
 Karen Williams, KCC  
 Keith Heatherington  
 John Littlemore

### 2 Introduction from Chair and Previous minutes

- 5.3.1 David explained that there is a charge to cover that particular service and it is only in the Maidstone area.
- 5.3.2 David said that other PCT's are aware of our service and this was confirmed by Marcella. Marcella is happy to pass any questions on. Claire said that discussions on going and they are due to have another meeting to plan funding for the HP service. Laura Counter PCT to meet with Claire Martin to establish intentions of PCT and they will be prioritising high need areas. Claire will update as soon as more information is available.
- 5.3.3 David said that it is difficult to give accurate information at the current time due to the cuts and budgets to be set. David will email all the LA's on the level of contributions and where they are coming from. Claire said she will send a comprehensive funding informal report.
- 5.4 David said that a lot of good ideas came from the forum and it made it clear where the service was and the problems with the speed of service. No further developments have been made as yet and with the current funding changes it is no longer a priority. This is a lot of scope for improvement and change.

ACTION

DE/CM

7.2.4 Linda needs to discuss the HIA managing the budgets for small DFG's with in touch. This would need a schedule of rates to be introduced with the contractors. We would need to look at the DFG process from the beginning and need to look at cases closer as to whether re-housing was an option rather than straight to a DFG. Aric said that with larger projects this option is always explored. Linda was asked to provide more information to Claire. We are looking for a specification that covers everything including moving, helping hand, HIA and HP services to consider.

LH

7.5 Jean said that members were complaining about the children's waiting list being so long. Christine said that child cases are so difficult and there are always many issues to consider. There is a Joint Management Group Meeting tomorrow 11 May and we will get accurate figures then. There have also been problems recruiting even temporary children's OT's in Kent.

### 3. **Service Managers Report**

ACTION

David said that in the last quarter's results there was nothing exceptional to report. It has been the busiest and most productive year end results. The agency has achieved 305 major builds, 8,000 enquiries, £1.7 million in build costs and £192,000 in fees across all four areas. This area is essential to us. 1,800 outcomes reported back to supporting people and we have made a tremendous difference to people's lives. We have improved working with the local authorities which has resulted in a much improved last quarter instead of the usual rush to get works through at the last minute.

3.1 In touch have changed our identity and branding as of the 1 April. We are now known as Hyde In touch and David gave out a leaflet explaining the re-branding. The logo was designed and commissioned not a PR company. This has come from a much more complicated economics and we need to change and identify new opportunities.

3.2 In touch will need to be much more aggressive with marketing our already Trustworthy service with all of our staff holding CRB checks. We are getting involved in the BWC scheme through the trading standards. Within this the contractors are being asked to complete CRB checks. This all serves to give the customers confidence in our service. In touch need to be diversifying as many of the grants like decent homes and repairs vanishing and a considerable amount of funding being lost.

3.3 Caroline has build an excellent relationship with Golding Homes and it is hoped that this will lead to more work in the future. Golding homes feel that this is a very beneficial service for their tenants. MOAT housing have also shown an interest in this type of service from the HIA. Linda is hoping that an agreement can be made with RSL to deal with the DFG works.

- 3.4 David said that in touch has been commissioned to do 6 Galvanised Rails. This is very encouraging and hopefully will be an excellent new way to bring in funds.
- 3.5 Caroline explained about the Rapid Ramps systems that she has been working with in the Sevenoaks District Council area. It is thought that this could be another area where in touch could become involved. These are temporary type ramps that can be easily installed.
- 3.6 Claire asked how David would assure base line service delivery in the future? David said that there are big differences in speed of service across the areas in the report, The HIA works as quickly as we can but there are 3 other agencies involved. Janice asked about the speed of service and said that the details should include why the delay has happened and who is responsible for them.
- 3.7 Stuart explained that stairlifts are done in house much more quickly and that does not show in the report. Stuart said he is not sure why MBC are slower than the other agencies with an average turn around of 8 – 9 weeks. Golding homes is not included which would show at a much quicker turn around rate.
- 3.8 Aric said that a single project, for example a child DFG can throw all these statistics out. Claire said that they need to be looked at to clarify why the areas are so different. Aric said that there are 4 surveyors and although they mainly work in one area each they try and cover when areas become particularly busy. Claire said that it may be necessary to have a strategic review to see what lies behind the figures.
- 3.9 Linda said that Lesley is retiring and wondered what will be happening to replace her. David said that due to financial constraints Lesley will not be replaced. The other caseworkers currently at in touch will be covering the T&M area. Aric and David are working to introduce a system for the best cover for all areas. Claire said that if there are 4 area's there should be 4 caseworker's. David said that he will discuss this with Karen.

DE

#### 4 Technical Report

Congratulations to Aric on becoming a dad.

Aric said that it had been a productive year and the workload had been managed more smoothly.

- 4.1 Looking forward it was hoped that the surveyors would share the workload more evenly.
- 4.2 With in touch needing to remain financially viable the surveyors will be involved in promoting the Private sector work. This is an area where the agency can bring in more funding. It will widen our market area and enable us to get involved in different types of repair, renovations and extensions. This will generate extra fee income and will be reported separately to the agencies existing fee income.

## 5 Role of the advisory Group

ACTION

- 5.1 Jean Atkinson asked the role of the advisory group. David said that this had not yet been discussed and asked for any comments. Janice said that when they first started advisory groups had more outside organisations involved. Unfortunately they no longer attend on a regular basis and it is important for the agency that they are involved. Claire said that this was the critical question and they are looking at it with commissioners. Most of the things discussed are for commissioners so may be better to do these in 2 meetings a quarter. Jane said that people need to vote with their feet and assess what we are doing at the meeting. A bi-annual meeting seems sensible. Stuart, Janice and Linda all agreed on a bi-annual meeting for commissioners. Claire suggested it may be beneficial to meet quarterly between HIA and commissioners.
- 5.2 David then said that it would be beneficial to have a marketing, promotional event where presentations could be given to service users, OT's and other agencies. This would be an excellent opportunity to share experiences, case studies and encourage other agencies to come along to promote the services they offer too.
- 5.3 John felt that the service users are the best way to promote the service and can pass the details on to other venerable people who require assistance. David said it was important to get service users engaged in the service and to have a separate email and text messaging service. It was thought that it would be good to involve service users involved in customer feedback monitoring. Jane said that service users could be involved in decision making.

DE

## 6 Community Round Up

- 6.1 Sevenoaks District Council** – James said that they are looking at re-conditioned lifts.  
Next years budget is slightly increased on DFG however there is no budget for housing repairs.
- 6.2 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council** – Our budget is the same as last year DFG's. RSL – still having problems but great potential in the future for the HIA to volunteer their services.  
£250K under spent on last year's budget. This may well be kept and put forward for renovation work. The Housing Assistance is out for consultation and there will be a meeting in June on this. Janice will meet quarterly with David.
- 6.3 Tunbridge & Malling Borough Council** – Spent all from last year and carrying forward £17k. Negotiations are happening with Russet regarding more funding available for the private sector. Housing Assistance has been reduced to £130k this year. The policy on this has been reviewed and not much of this will be allocated to HIA. There is a back log on child cases and they are now coming through to the HIA. Richard will now be covering the DFG cases with support from Linda now that Sylvia has left.

**6.4 Maidstone Borough Council** – Stuart said that he has good budgets that will continue £700k DFG and £150k Housing Repair grant. Also they have £300k for energy efficiency grant. The £150k is already committed and will be reviewed again in November. There have been staff changes and Stuart will be leaving. Nigel will become the team leader and Lorraine will become more involved in the DFG work. Handyperson funding will be reduced by £5k over the next few years.

**6.5 Supporting people** - At the recent CSG Meeting it was said that the Handyperson and HIA services will be jointly tendered. This will include Canterbury and Swale. HIA's need to be creative in identifying different sources of income. David asked, what is the scope for new initiatives encouraging social enterprise? Claire said that a foundations representative will be able to provide information on that. It is how you tender and Supporting People could not assist with that but there are many experts around to offer support.

**7 Any other Business**

7.1 Cllr Atkinson confirmed that this would be the last meeting of the advisory group in this form. It was agreed that the next meeting would move to another local authority. The next meeting would be Sept/Oct time. Thanks were given to Cllr Atkinson for chairing the group.

David to advise who will hoist the bi-annual meeting and dates.

7.2 Linda asked if there had been any progress on the VAT on HIA Fees. David said that not really as legally VAT on fees cannot be avoided. The only way to avoid this would be to allocate money to the agency up front and put it into core funding. There would not then be a need for invoicing This would save time, administration costs and 20% VAT.

DE

**ACTION LIST**

ACTION	NAME	DEADLINE
Email to all Local Authorities with clear funding stream information	DE/CM	
Provide information regarding HIA's managing small DFG budgets to Claire Martin	LH	
David to discuss caseworker requirements with Karen Lesley	DE	
David to set up involving service users in HIA customer service monitoring	DE	
David to advise of date and venue of next meeting	DE	