

Devo Manc Consultation

Open Forum – 29th October 2015

Communication is key. Different organisations and different departments in the same organisation do not communicate well – Different sections of health care need to be communicating better with each other. There needs to be information sharing. Do not use data protection as a way of stopping the information sharing because service users want different departments and organisations to share the information they have – this would stop them having to repeat themselves and tell their stories over and over again which can be distressing and frustrating as well as slowing up the process of access to support.

GPs have a lack of knowledge on mental health and it often takes too long for GPs to recognise the mental health issue and progress access to services. There needs to be training of GPs and other routes into services for people who cannot get their GP to recognise the issues.

There was a discussion about self medication and it was felt by some that GPs and health professionals needed more understanding of why people self medicate. One service user explained that he was often left without the injections he needed for pain management which left him with little alternative than to self medicate with substances until the injection became available. Increased GP openings may lead to medication being available more often which could reduce the need to self medicate. However, it was felt there needed to be an understanding and awareness by professionals that in some cases self medication can be helpful to service users.

There needs to be more signposting and easier ways to find out what services – both statutory and voluntary sector – are available. There are different needs for different people which require different services so there needs to be choices. One stop shops or similar in the localities would be very useful – a way to find out all the things that will help all at once. This could lead to people being able to access some services, particularly voluntary sector, straight away to help them manage their mental health before the statutory services are available.

There is a transport issue across the borough. Some areas have a very limited bus service and there are many people who struggle with transport who do not meet the criteria for community transport. There needs to be local services available in different localities so that people can easily access services.

There is a link between physical and mental health in some cases, so treatment should not be in silos. Again, communication between specialists and services would help. However, it was noted in some cases there are people with mental health and physical health needs which are not connected.

There is a need for more social housing, particularly adapted social housing. People need better housing and opportunities to be in a comfortable environment and get out into garden space – 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

There was a feeling that the Locality Plan and the suggested changes through the Devo Manc funding could make a difference – but only if there is consultation and communication with service users throughout the process. There was agreement that early intervention and prevention services were needed, that these would be better for service users and would see a long term cut in the costs of services at the severe level.

There is a need to recognise the Third Sector organisations and groups as these are already able to provide early intervention and prevention services and opportunities. There will be a need for those involved in Devo Manc to see what activities and opportunities are already provided by the Third Sector – mapping is needed so that there can be signposting. The Third Sector is the best place for services that keep people well and help them to manage their mental health to prevent crisis and increased severity of issues. However, funding is important and this is required as part of Devo Manc to fund the Third Sector to do what they do well already and to increase the offer. The Third Sector are cost effective and can do more if the funding is in place. However, there was some concern that Third Sector are taking a lot of extra pressure at present due to the funding cuts and that funding is not in place to cover this.

There was a concern regarding older people accessing services. There should not be an assumption that older people will only want to access support from services specific to older people. A lot of older people enjoy the opportunity of mixing with all age ranges. Some older people feel younger than they are and would like to be treated in this way. Some older people feel that their needs are not being recognised.

There was a concern raised about the ambition of the Locality Plan and a question about whether the Borough will be able to achieve what is being planned. There were questions about how this will be achieved. There were queries about the timeline for delivery and service users would like more information about the deadlines for each part of the Locality Plan.

There needs to be realistic expectations and providers and members of the public need to get the right messages about the expectations.

It was noted that the problem with the Hub model is the accessibility. A Wellbeing bus was suggested – a mobile unit where all hub related information, access and support can be brought to all areas of the Borough – This would mean that there was less reliance on finding building space in each locality and more localities could be covered. The bus could have a rota for visits to each small locality, eg Langley estate, Hollins, etc.

There was a concern that the consultation was taking place at the very end of a process to develop the Locality Plan for the Borough. Consultation needs to be accessible to all members of the community and needs to be meaningful. It was hoped that there would be further consultation events in a timely manner for the development and implementation of action plans to meet the aims of the Locality Plan.

The key issue to keeping the Locality Plan and Devo Manc implementation successful is regular and good communication between all parties involved. There needs to be up to date records and information available at all times for all people.

There needs to be a push into the right areas and services. Information needs to be presented in a simplified way. There were comments about the complexity of the slides in the presentation and it was felt this information could have been presented in a clearer way.

There needs to be an understanding of all the cultures and conditions involved and a knowledge of local areas. Services and especially those involved in the Hubs need the knowledge and information to be able to signpost service users – All services providers, Third sector and people need to work together in order to develop this knowledge.

There should be a recognition of effective projects, activities and organisations and there should be investment in them so funding should be made available to develop these projects, activities and organisations in priority areas.

There should be guidelines and there should be a clear way of providing information and understanding the needs of people – there needs to be this understanding not just for people with a language barrier, but also other barriers – with sign language and visual aids to help people with sight and hearing issues.

There needs to be better access to welfare rights advice.

Early advisement and information is the best prevention.

In signposting service users, there needs to be an up to date knowledge of where to signpost people to.

There was a discussion about what needed to be included in the development of Hubs and in taking prevention forwards. It was felt that prevention activities should be holistic and tackle all aspects of people's needs with 5 Ways to Wellbeing included. There is a need to tackle obesity, diet issues, the aging population, the lack of aspirations for many in the borough, 39% of central Rochdale with no formal qualifications, unemployment increasing, people on the autistic spectrum, the refugee arrivals, and better links between all the services to better offer support to more of the population. Service User involvement should be part of the process.

There was a discussion about the boundaries of wards and townships and how we can meet the needs of people locally in all areas of the borough.