

The Voice of Carers in Kingston

a forum for all family and friends caring for someone in the borough
Thursday 2nd July 2015

Carers present:

Indu K, Mary M, Phil K, Catherine M, Jeya K, Elaine P

Others present:

Kate Dudley, Kingston Carers' Network (Chair); Ray Stonehill, MS Society;
Sandra Berry,

Apologies: Kirstie Cochrane

Welcome and introductions

Introductions were made. Phil hadn't been informed of the previous meeting. KCN will try to ensure that meetings are advertised widely.

Notes and matters arising from the meeting held on 4th March 2015

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed.

Hobkirk House

There were concerns raised about the closure of Hobkirk House and the impact that would have on the availability of short-term respite or 'rehab' beds. SB stated that this was the same experience when Surbiton Hospital closed.

Action:

KD to raise this issue at the Carers Board.

Agenda

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Kingston Carers' Network are consulting with 60 carers of working age to help inform Kingston's Public Health of the needs and experiences of carers in Kingston. The consultation is progressing well and an interim report will be due out in the summer. Any carer of working age who would like to get involved should contact KCN.

Care Act 2014

David Still attended the meeting to describe some of the key changes for carers associated with the Care Act and welfare benefit changes.

Royal Borough of Kingston has produced a succinct Care Act guide which is available to carers via KCN or RBK.

For a more detailed account of the implications of the Care Act, KCN recommends the following briefings:

Supporting briefings can be found at:

http://www.carers.org/sites/default/files/care_act_-_what_does_it_mean_for_carers_final.pdf

<http://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/getting-care-and-support/care-act-faq?qclid=CLDv66Wn0MYCFRTKtAod4n0N3A>

A more detailed account of the Care Act can be found here:

<http://www.lukeclements.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/0-Care-Act-notes-updated-2015-07.pdf>

David described some of the changes in welfare reform that affect carers. Further details are in the appendix of these notes.

David will provide a further update on the funding reform later in the year. This will cover the changes to funding care costs and how the Care Cap will be implemented.

Carers' Assessments

Kate updated the meeting on the progress that has been made on the pilot work that KCN are doing. KCN are now carrying out 'trusted' Carers' Assessments under the new Care Act. KCN are expected to complete 350 assessments over the 12 months to May 2016. There was a slight delay in starting the project which was due to training issues and changes in assessment template. KCN are currently unable to access the IAS system so are completing paper versions which will need to be uploaded once the local authority's IT system is updated. So far, there have been no significant issues for KCN. The pilot project steering group are meeting frequently so that other voluntary organisations are kept fully informed of progress.

Carers Board

The Carers Board met on 23rd June but the next meeting will be held on 14th September. Unfortunately, the date for this forum had been delayed as we had expected that Councillor Julie Pickering would update the forum on the changes implemented by Kingston Council.

Action: Kate will take these comments to the Carers Board

Commissioning of carers' services

The council are holding their Policy and Finance Committee meeting tonight and will be proposing to move from a grant making process to a commissioning approach for funding of voluntary organisations. This will include KCN and we will be expected to go through a competitive tendering process which may see carers' services changing in Kingston.

Information Sharing and Any Other Business

- A request was made to invite Julie Pickering back (see Agenda items for next meeting)
- Carers agreed that face-to-face specialist advice was very important and online advice is not appropriate for many carers.
- One carer commented on their experience of a very delayed response by the ambulance service. The person they care for was also refused admission by A and E despite being acutely unwell.
- One carer was concerned about the move to PIP from DLA. KCN will arrange another briefing session on PIP in the autumn.

Issues carers feel are important and will be subjects at future meetings:

- ❖ **Recognition from health & social care staff** about carers role, to be respected & treated as partners in the care provided
- ❖ **Health and well-being** – including carers own mental health
- ❖ **Appropriate and flexible ways for carers to take breaks**
- ❖ **Getting / staying in employment**
- ❖ **Financial matters**

Added December 2013

- ❖ **Clinical Commissioning Group funding for Carers' Breaks**
Mar 14

Added June 2014

- ❖ **Police to attend Voice of Carers Forum**

Added September 2014

- ❖ **Invite Councillor Julie Pickering to the December meeting. Julie is the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Voluntary services. Dec 14**

Added Dec 14

- ❖ **Recognition from health & social care staff** about carers role, to be respected & treated as partners in the care provided
Dec 14

Added March 2015

❖ **Help for carers to stay in work or to seek new employment**

Carers are welcome to add to this list as well as raise issues at each meeting.

Finding out more

For more information about this forum or to add an agenda item to one of the meetings, contact **Kate Dudley** on **020 3031 2752** or email ceo@kingstoncarers.org.uk or **Kirstie Cochrane** on **020 8547 6124** or email kirstie.cochrane@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Meeting dates 2015

Forthcoming meeting dates to be agreed. Carers requested a more central location. Kate will try to find a Kingston or Surbiton venue.

Agenda items for next meeting:

Cllr Julie Pickering to attend to give council overview of health and social care, including Q&A session. Date and time to be agreed.

(Note that since the meeting, there has been a change in the portfolios and the lead member for adult social care and health is now Councillor Cathy Roberts)

Benefit and Care Cap changes 2015

Personal Independence Payment

Since 28 October 2013 assessment for PIP has been carried out for some DLA claimants in certain areas:

- If you have a fixed-term award of DLA which is due to expire
- If you notify PDCS that there has been a change in your care or mobility needs
- If you turn 16

The reassessment areas were increased on 26 January 2015. See [GOV.UKs PIP postcode map](#) for up to date details of the reassessment areas so far.

Universal Credit

Work and Pensions Secretary, Iain Duncan Smith has announced that [Universal Credit](#) will be rolled out to job seekers in all Jobcentres and local authorities across the country from early 2015.

Update: Recent press releases suggest that UC will be rolled out to 1 in 3 jobcentres by Spring 2015 rather than all jobcentres as was previously

announced. From 26 January Universal Credit will be available to job seekers with children in 26 more areas across the country (6 jobcentre areas began taking claims from families in November 2014).

From 2nd November 2015, Universal Credit will be rolled out in Kingston for single job seekers claimants.

April 2015

Carer's Allowance

From April 2015, the earnings threshold for Carers' Allowance was raised to £110 a week. The weekly allowance is £62.10

Local Welfare Provision

Government intends to remove the Local Welfare Assistance fund. Local authorities receive money from the fund to help people in emergency and crisis situations through their own Local Welfare Provision schemes. This will have a substantial effect on the level of support a local authority is able to provide to people when they are at their most vulnerable.

Update: Government to review decision to abolish Local Welfare Provision.

June 2015

Independent Living Fund

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) - which provides money to help people with disabilities live an independent life in the community was closed on 30 June 2015 (it has been closed to new applicants since 2010).

Funding will be incorporated into local social care arrangements through local councils in England and the devolved governments in Wales and Scotland will make their own arrangements.

People who already have ILF care packages will have to transfer to new local arrangements.

Autumn 2015

Tax Free Childcare

Tax Free Childcare is to be introduced as a replacement for employer supported childcare (childcare vouchers).

The government will contribute up to 20% of the first £10000 of registered childcare costs per child, per year. This equates to a maximum of £2000 per child, per year.

The scheme will be available to people who have an annual income under £150,000 and are not receiving help with childcare via tax credits. It is expected to reach more people than the current scheme.

October 2015

Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payment

In Kingston, if the DLA award is due to end on or after 14 December 2015 you will receive a PIP claim form rather than a DLA renewal claim form.

Any DLA claimant reporting a change in circumstances which might affect their award will be assessed for PIP rather than DLA from 28 July 2015 in these postcode districts, any existing DLA claimant who turns 16 years old may also be assessed for PIP.

All DLA claimants will have been invited to claim PIP by late 2017.

Benefit changes 2016

Universal Credit (UC) - Roll out

Current plans will see new claims to existing benefits being replaced by UC closed during 2016. This will mean that all new benefit claimants across the country will claim Universal Credit instead of the benefits it replaces.

The Government also currently believes that most existing benefit claimants will be moved over to UC during 2016 and 2017.

April 2016

Universal Credit - Childcare element

An additional £200m of support will be provided within Universal Credit, which is equivalent to covering 85% of childcare costs for households qualifying for the Universal Credit childcare element where the lone parent or both earners in a couple pay income tax.

This is planned to be phased in from April 2016 as childcare support moves from tax credits into Universal Credit. Details will be set out in future spending reviews.

Benefit Changes 2017

Universal Credit The Government expected that the roll out of Universal Credit would be complete by the end of 2017. Iain Duncan Smith has since

admitted that at least 700,000 claimants will not be on UC by the end of 2017.

Lasting Powers of Attorney

From 1st July, the new LPA forms have been issued. Both the earlier versions and the new versions of the LPA forms can be used until January 2016. However, if an LPA made using the old forms has not been completed, signed and dated by Friday 1st January 2016, they won't be able to be registered. The registration is much simpler. However, KCN can provide help with the LPA applications.

Care Cap changes due in April 2016

The Government is due to introduce a care cap of £72,000 for the amount of contributions a person has to make for the cost of their care and support. This does not include the cost of an 'enhanced' provision or the cost of 'board and lodging' in a care home and is based on eligible needs only. People will be able to approach the council to register their account ready for April 2016.

(Note: The Government has recently announced that the Care Cap will be delayed until 2020)