

The Voice of Carers in Kingston

a forum for all family and friends caring for someone in the borough

Notes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd December 2015

Welcome and introductions

Carers present:

Indu K, Phil K, Catherine M, Elaine P (minutes)

Others present:

Kate Dudley, Kingston Carers' Network (Chair); Stephen Hardisty, Manager Healthwatch Kingston upon Thames

Apologies: Kirstie Cochrane

Notes and matters arising from the meeting held on 2nd July 2015

The notes from the previous meeting were agreed.

Hobkirk House and Noble Centre

Hobkirk closed in July 2015 and KCN have been given notice to leave the Noble Centre as the buildings are being decommissioned. KCN have been liaising with Royal Borough of Kingston to explore other local authority premises. It doesn't look as though suitable premises are available and discussions have been put on hold until after the tendering process. KCN will need to move out by August 2016.

JSNA

The carers' Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is complete and the findings have been reported to Kingston Public Health. Over 60 carers were interviewed about their experiences of health and social care services. There was no focus on voluntary organisations to avoid any interview bias. KCN will carry out its own evaluation in the coming months to ensure that its services are meeting the needs of local carers.

Care Act

The second phase of the Care Act that introduces a 'care cap' of £72,000 has been delayed until 2020.

Agenda

Healthwatch, Stephen Hardisty

Stephen gave an overview of the role of Health Kingston upon Thames:

Local Healthwatch services were set up by act of parliament. Healthwatch has clout and act as an independent consumer champion. It is important that people get involved in Healthwatch to influence local services.

Stephen hopes that Healthwatch can engage with the community including carers. Carers have experience and knowledge about services and these views need to be championed. Carers are vital to the health economy and this needs to be recognised.

Healthwatch are offering to run focus groups for carers and has a good track record of developing the skills and confidence of its existing 36 affiliates to ensure they are equipped to carry out the functions of Healthwatch members. Healthwatch hold open forums such as the 'working lunch' where members can share views and influence change. Healthwatch can offer the Voice of Carers Forum the independent voice that carers deserve. Healthwatch also sit on key strategic boards and can share views as an independent body. Healthwatch can help give carers a voice and it was agreed that KCN and Healthwatch will work with carers, including the forum to strengthen carers' influence over local services.

The forum agreed that this should be explored.

Action:

Kate Dudley and Stephen Hardisty will work together to develop a better opportunity for carers to be more involved in influencing services.

Councillor Cathy Roberts, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health

Councillor Cathy Roberts did not turn up so this item will be carried over to a future meeting.

Carers' Assessments

Kate updated the Forum on the Carers' Assessment pilot. KCN has a contract with the local authority to provide carers' assessments to carers who are caring for an adult living in the borough. There is a target of 350 assessments over the year. The pilot is progressing well although KCN is still not able to access the IT system within Adult Social Care.

Carers Board

Action: Kate will take the following comments to the Carers Board

- **Carers commented on communication issues between GPs and CMHTs and a lack of mental health expertise. Some GPs have now been trained as mental health specialists.**
- **There is also a shortage of mental health beds and people have at times been discharged to the Travelodge and the care of the Home Treatment Team.**
- **One carer said that their GP at Claremont Surgery was knowledgeable and registered them as a carer. Another carer reported that Central Surgery also provided a good service.**

Commissioning of carers' services

The Royal Borough of Kingston and Kingston Clinical Commissioning Group have advertised the carers' services tender and the deadline is 15th January 2016. The specification is an outcome based approach which will enable potential service providers to propose a range of services to meet these particular outcomes. The key outcomes specified include those described within the National Carers Strategy and the Care Act. Decisions are expected in February 2016.

Information Sharing and Any Other Business

There was no other business

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

- ❖ **Mental wellbeing of carers**
- ❖ **Update from Councillor Cathy Roberts**
- ❖ **Help for carers to stay in work or to seek new employment**
- ❖ **The Police Service and mental health issues**
- ❖ **Information about carers and pensions**
- ❖ **Guidance on conditions that may affect fitness to drive**

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** email kirstie.cochrane@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Meeting dates 2016

Forthcoming meeting dates and format to be discussed in the New Year.