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Resources Directorate
Democratic Services
Redcar & Cleveland Leisure and Community Heart
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Amanda Hume – Chief Officer, NHS South Tees CCG
Ali Wilson – Chief Officer, NHS Hartlepool and Stockton CCG
By email

Our Ref
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4 April 2018

Dear Ms Hume and Ms Wilson,

The Council's Adult and Communities Scrutiny & Improvement Committee is the body responsible for Redcar and Cleveland's statutory health scrutiny function. At its meeting on 13 March 2018, Members received an update on the work of Respite Opportunities and Short Breaks Consultation Joint Health Scrutiny Committee from the Governance Manager and the Council's representatives on the joint committee.

Members were informed of the CCG's decision to progress to implementation of option 2 as identified in the Learning Disability Respite Opportunities and Short Breaks consultation. Members noted that this decision did not accord with the Joint Scrutiny Committee's recommendation that the current level of service provision at both Bankfields and Aysgarth should be retained since they did not support either of the two options being put forward by the CCG.

You will be aware that in establishing the Joint Committee, the power of referral was not delegated and was retained with each individual constituent Council. As such, each local authority has been required to determine its own position with regard to exercising the power.

In line with the requirements set out in the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, Members of Redcar and Cleveland's Scrutiny & Improvement Committee were requested to consider whether they had any outstanding areas of concern and if so, whether they were minded to make a referral to the Secretary of State if those concerns could not be resolved.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that it felt there were sufficient grounds to refer the CCG's decision to the Secretary of State, the grounds being that it believed the proposals were not in the interests of the health services in the area for the following reasons:

- The impact of the proposal on current services and the access service users would have to Aysgarth and Bankfields in the future in comparison to now had not been quantified and was unclear to both elected Members and service users.

- Clarification was still required on the impact of current services and the access they would have to Aysgarth and Bankfields in the future compared to now.
- There was a lack of clarity regarding who the providers of alternative community based respite provision might be. This was a major concern, with some of the examples cited, such as caravans and home support being considered unsuitable.
- Currently, all medication at the existing facilities is administered by trained and qualified nursing staff. The Committee was concerned that this same level and quality of staffing could not be guaranteed in alternative settings, posing a potentially serious risk to service users.
- During the consultation, the bed based element of respite services was considered to be the most valuable. However, the proposal being progressed by the CCG appeared to substantially reduce this aspect of the service and it is Members' view that the comments expressed by consultees have not been fully taken into account.
- There was concern also that not all service users, or their carers, had been consulted. There was a strong view that the client base was small enough to warrant individual consultation and although this had been suggested, it had not taken place. Consequently, the consultation process was flawed.
- Members noted that there was a commitment to maintain funding for the service at £1.5m, however, they were concerned that if the number of clients requiring respite services increased as young people in receipt of support transitioned into adult services, the share of the funding for each client would be reduced. This would inevitably lead to a reduction in service.
- New assessment criteria was still to be developed and agreed. It had been indicated that this was likely to reduce eligibility for health based respite. There was concern that this would have the effect of transferring that demand, and associated cost pressures, to local authorities.

The Committee recognised the financial challenges facing the CCGs, however, Members remained sufficiently concerned about the proposals to exercise their power of referral if their concerns cannot be resolved satisfactorily.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Graham Jeffery
Chair of Adult and Communities Scrutiny & Improvement Committee