

Budget Consultation for Carers' Services, Bexhill – 12th April 2018

Consultation: Tamsin Peart – Carers Commissioning Manager - Chair
Jennifer Twist – Care for the Carers (CftC) CEO

Introductions and General Update

Jennifer Twist introduced the meeting and welcomed everybody. A short video was shown to outline the savings proposals – the link to this can be found here: [East Sussex Adult Social Care Budget 2018/19](#)

Tamsin Peart followed this with a presentation on some of the detail, savings proposals and consultation process. This presentation is attached with these notes.

Note: all members of the public can respond to all proposals in a consultation or just the areas they are interested in. For more information and to take part, visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay the consultation closes on Wednesday 25th April 2018.

Q & A

Comment: A carer of a daughter with learning and physical disabilities spoke of her concern about LD service cuts and services of Care for the Carers being taken away, which is very short sighted. We need Care for the Carers, whose support over the years has been invaluable.

TP: Government funding has been cut across the board in ASC and ESCC. Ultimately carers save the government a significant amount of money every day. Elected members will make final decisions where the cuts will be made. There will be cuts to back office staff and staff numbers. There are tough years ahead, however, there will be a Carers Centre in East Sussex and services most important to carers will be commissioned. It is a legal requirement to tender for services.

Q: The Alzheimer's Society funding for East Sussex has already been withdrawn and offered to Dementia Support Service from 23rd April; Re-think's budget has also been withdrawn and incorporated into CftC. How can it be a consultation when services are already cut? Organisations being put under one umbrella is a concern, as information and advice needs to be targeted and correct, not general.

TP: The Dementia Support Service offers a new dementia service across Hastings & Rother and Eastbourne, Hailsham CCG areas for people living with dementia and their carers. This service was tendered and the Alzheimer's Society chose not to bid for it. The service was awarded to the Carers Breaks Team. Contact HSCC on 0345 60 80 191 to be referred into the service if you have not heard from them. Re-think stopped providing services many years ago. The ICE Project provides support to carers of people with mental health issues. It is recognised that there is a need for specialist support for carers as well as generic.

JT: On behalf of CftC we also recognise the importance of specialist services and part of our strategic plan is to access funding to offer specialist support to groups of carers where this is needed.

Comment: It took some time for me to realise I was a carer – I got in contact with STEPS who were amazing.

TP: We need to avoid carers hitting crisis point, and monitor how we do this better in a large county. GP's are extremely busy but are encouraged to identify carers. The Carers' Prescription is an online referral tool for GPs and other healthcare professionals. It goes to Care for the Carers who will then contact the carer and offer information, advice and support. The service is simple to use, but GP uptake is still quite low.

Q: Who are STEPS?

TP: 'STEPS to stay independent' provides a free and improved short term support service to help you stay living independently. A county wide service offering support to over 65's with housing issues and carer support needs. Homeworks is for people aged 18 or over who have a long term physical health condition and need advice and guidance to help them live life to the full.

Comment: The carer of a wife with Parkinson's stated that CftC do a brilliant job. Let's start with savings at the top – MP's should be cut and government funding redirected. Councillors should work together to look after the local people.

TF: Unable to comment politically. The Stand Up for East Sussex Campaign is raising awareness with local and national politicians about the needs of East Sussex residents.

JT: CftC in East Sussex is linked to two national charities – Carers Trust and Carers UK. Both organisations have a role in representing carers' voices nationally. CftC ensures they are aware of key issues facing local carers, by lobbying work and social media. Locally, CftC is contacting key decision makers about the cuts, speaking on behalf of carers about this consultation and cuts to carers' services. CftC will also support carers to contact their local MP (a template letter/email is available). After this final consultation meeting today, all the notes will be collated and built into a formal response. JT meeting with as many MP's as possible as part of this process. We have a commitment to our partners in the voluntary sector at this time, as to the impact on carers and vulnerable people. The message from charities across East Sussex is that we are working together.

Q: Do you have any detail on what you are proposing to cut?

TP: All the contracts in the voluntary sector will end at the end of March 2019. We are going to commission services with less money and a fresh start. There will be significant cuts in-house with the Carers Breaks team. Not aware yet what services will be cut until budget signed off by Cabinet. Priorities will be informed by consultations.

Q: I support the idea of a single access point as it is essential to make services easier to access, to avoid confusion. Is this the plan for the future?

TP: Hopefully we can make better use of resources in future to meet the needs and benefit everyone.

Q: Who decided the level of cuts – has Adult Social Care been hit harder than other departments?

TP: ASC takes up 50% of ESCC budget, the original request was £14 million. Grass cutting in the county has been reduced with savings going directly into ASC.

Q: Will the 3% increase in Council Tax be used by Adult Social Care?

TP: Yes the increase in Council Tax will go directly into ASC, and the money has already been taken account of.

Q: Is the East Sussex Better Together programme still progressing, as it all seems to have gone very quiet?

TP: East Sussex Better Together is still progressing, with work behind the scenes. These savings are ESCC savings and running alongside pressures on NHS locally and nationally. Due to financial crisis in NHS we are not able to ask them to make this up, as they have their own challenges. The cuts are about ESCC's budget and not the health budget.

Comment TP: These are challenging times and very difficult for everyone. We need to try to do our best to make sure we meet people's needs and protect important services, perhaps trying new ways of doing things that will cost us less.

Thank you all for your time today and apologies that the news is not very uplifting. However, despite the significant cuts and changes, the most important carer support will be retained.

JT: Thank you on behalf of CftC for your fantastic and inspiring ideas and suggestions. We are in contact with all MPs in the county and continue to highlight the significant contribution that carers make.

Please let us know if we can support you to have your say about the consultation. Care for the Carers can provide template letters for you to raise your concerns with MPs.