



## OPEN FORUM

### ARMC

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| <b>DATE/TIME OF MEETING:</b> | 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2016  |
| <b>VENUE:</b>                | Marsham Arms, Hevingham  |
| <b>ATTENDEES:</b>            | Tim Armitage, FPCFPC/Woodspring House, Caroline Baines, New Bouncaries, Julian Brown, Independence Matters, Sarah Cropley, Point House, Carolyn Graham, Independence Matters, Hayley Howes, Andrew Frederick Adult Support, Lyn James, Daybreak Support Service, Michael Millage*, Mark Talbot* (Chairman), Aaron Wardell, New Boundaries, Tracy Wharvell (NCL), Lisa White, The Aylsham Manor |
| <b>APOLOGIES:</b>            | John Bacon, Robina Clarke*, Emma Cliffe*   |
| <b>MINUTE TAKER:</b>         | Caroline Payne   |

| ITEM NO. | KEY POINTS DISCUSSED / ACTION TO BE TAKEN   | NAME | ACTION COMPLETION DATE |
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| 1        | Mark Talbot welcomed everyone to the open forum.<br><br><b><u>Notes from previous Open Forum</u></b><br>Agreed as a correct record.   |      |                        |
| 2        | <b><u>Letter sent to Harold Bodmer, NCC on behalf of ARMC</u></b><br>MT had written to Harold Bodmer on 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2015 and to date had not received any response. MT will contact HB again.<br><br>LJ had received an acknowledgement from HB regarding her recent correspondence.  |      |                        |
| 3        | <b><u>Letter sent to MPs</u></b><br>MT read out a letter that had been sent to all Norfolk MPs on behalf of ARMC and NIC. Content of letter follows:-<br><br><i>"We are writing to express our members' grave concern at proposed cuts to funding for people with mental health needs and learning difficulties in Norfolk. A survey of our members in the last week demonstrated the strength of anxiety as 80 mental health and learning difficulties service</i> |      |                        |

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|  | <p><i>providers give their support to this letter. (Appendix one contains a list of supporters).</i></p> <p><i>In recent weeks we have become aware of what can only be described as execution of a highly concerning cost reduction strategy on the part of Norfolk County Council and two of the county's Clinical Commission Group's. Independent and voluntary sector providers whose services support working age adults with learning difficulties and mental health needs, have been approached by NCC/NHS practitioners as well as two external organizations ('Skylakes' and 'VCFM – Valuing Care FM') on the pretext of instructions from the commissioning bodies to carry out 'reviews. The following provides a summary of the key themes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>1. Pressure being placed on providers to move service users to a lower fee payment band, which has had the effect of reducing weekly fees by as much as one third. It should be noted that these 'bands' are specifically designed to set a payment for essential support needs and risk assessments relevant to each placement.</i></li><li><i>2. Asserting that certain service users are no longer eligible for continuing healthcare payments despite there being no improvement in the condition/ support needs of the individual.</i></li><li><i>3. Care Managers taking placements to 'panel' with a warning to providers that if no agreement can be reached on a reduction in fees (banding), removal from the residential placement is likely to occur.</i></li><li><i>4. Care Managers citing the Care Act and a duty on commissioners to undertake such actions (we have written evidence of this as well as verbal confirmation from several parties).</i></li><li><i>5. Evidence that 'notice' has been served on continuing health care placements before a review has even taken place thus underlining the predetermined nature of this exercise.</i></li><li><i>6. Providers being given an ultimatum to drop fees or lose placements.</i></li><li><i>7. Contract clauses being revisited and reinterpreted by NCC in a manner that leads to lower fee payments - without proper consultation or agreement.</i></li><li><i>8. Payments to providers for established and ongoing placements ceasing whilst new fees are negotiated.</i></li></ol> |  |  |
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|   | <p><i>Whilst fully aware of the enormous pressure on Norfolk's social care budget, the use of what appear to be unfair and concerning tactics to reduce funding for vulnerable individuals is deeply concerning. The Multi-Disciplinary Team approach, which provides safeguards to the most vulnerable people is not being properly used presumably because it would only serve to impede progress towards significant cost reduction. We are also aware that reviews are taking place without appropriate input from the supervising clinician and without necessary advocacy support. Providers are fearful about complaining in case services users are removed and placements suspended.</i></p> <p><i>We are aware that Norfolk County Council is in the process of working out a settlement to replace the 1% fee increase in April 2015 for older people's services, as this was deemed unlawful. Working Age Adult service providers will not see any increase in fee payments, quite the opposite as increased payments to older peoples services are highly likely to be funded from cuts to learning difficulties and mental health services.</i></p> <p><i>What is described above affects a wide range of services and is not restricted to what are often described as 'high cost' residential placements. If such interventions are allowed to go unchallenged the effects will be very damaging both to services already under pressure and to individual service users. Mental Health services already suffer from significant underfunding, a situation that has become very much worse in recent times.</i></p> <p><i>Residential, supported living and day care are all under huge pressure, we know that people in your constituencies will be affected, many have no voice and few options for advocacy support. We ask that you intervene as a matter of the utmost urgency."</i></p> <p>TA said the same problems were happening in older people's services and those present felt that some care services will go out of business due to the financial pressures.</p> <p>A meeting with MPs is in the process of being arranged and MT will give an update at the next meeting.</p> |    |  |
| 4 | <p><b><u>Cost of Care</u></b></p> <p>TA reported on the FPCFPC campaign and said that the group in conjunction with Providers had responded to the NCC consultation.</p> <p>A letter had been sent to providers asking them to complete a questionnaire and all the responses had been collated and evidence submitted to NCC.</p>  | MT |  |

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|   | <p>NCC have responded indicating that they are discussing/consulting on the matter but the FPCFPC group felt this was not happening.</p> <p>The FPCFPC group have a Solicitor engaged and the group will wait for a response from NCC before proceeding further. TA said that other organisations had been consulted for example Laing Buisson who had undertaken a study on relevant care hours per resident per week.</p> <p>TW said that at the recent Health and Social Care Consultative Forum meeting, Living wage was an agenda item. A decision had not been reached by NCC as to how this would be dealt with and was going to cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> March.</p>   |  |  |
| 5 | <p><b>Market Resilience</b></p> <p>Tw reported that she was working with MM on how the market could provide a resilience model. Organisations that provide all services, from residential, homecare, respite etc. are able to give a good service to service users. The model being worked on could include a group of Providers, Nursing Homes, Residential etc. who could all work together to provide the service needed by an individual. The Provider who holds the initial contract would contract the services out for what was required.</p> <p>A paper outlining proposals was circulated to those in attendance and TW asked for feedback and opinions on whether Providers felt this could work.</p> <p>TW said there would be opportunities to share resources and also training opportunities. TW said this would need to be discussed with commissioners and look at how each locality is set up currently.</p> <p>TW said that NCC are supportive of the concept.</p> <p>MM said that the sector needs to look at fluid care pathways and create an environment where people can work together, which will save money in the long term.</p> <p>CG said that Independence Matters are a large organisation offering all types of care and that service users move around the organisation depending on their care requirements and this works extremely well and is less disruptive to the service user.</p> |  |  |
|   | <p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>HH said that at the last meeting she had raised an issue and was going to send details to MT. A service user's budget had been cut which meant that they could no longer use the services required. The service user's wife then suffered a</p>   |  |  |

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|  | <p>heart attack. However, HH had involved her local MP and the funding had been re-instated. HH said that she was having to fight for a number of service users whose budgets had been cut.</p> <p>HH also raised the issue of attendance allowance and new rules pertaining to this allowance. TW said she would make enquiries and send information to Providers.</p> | <p><b>TW</b></p> |  |
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| <b>NEXT MEETING</b>   |
| DATE: 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2016                           |
| TIME: 1.15 pm   |
| VENUE: The Marsham Arms, 40 Holt Road, Hevingham, NR10 5NP. |

Signed.....

Date.....