

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES
6 FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - WELLBEING

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICE USERS

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Committee on the information available to adult social care service users and to citizens about access to adult social care support and advice.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 The report links to the Community Strategy themes of:
- Healthy Living
 - Strong Communities

3. Background

- 3.1 Adult Social Care is part of the Wellbeing Directorate and has a key role in protecting and supporting vulnerable people. The service is an essential part of the Council's responsibility for promoting wellbeing, social inclusion and community safety. Adult Social Care provides a range of enabling and support services, based on need, from the time an individual becomes an adult. This involves helping to prevent difficulties and providing continuing support in the community for people with the most serious and enduring needs, managing the transition from children's to adult services and supporting all members of a family.

- 3.2 The Contact Assessment and Review Team manages all contacts and referrals to Adult Social Care. The contact centre responds to an average of 400 enquiries from the public per week. Contact can be made using a variety of communication forms including, telephone, facsimile, email, SMS text messaging and minicom.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 45 % of contacts received through the Contact Assessment and Review Team result in the provision of information and advice or are signposted to other agencies. 21 % receive a social work assessment. A further 25 % of contacts are supported to resolve their enquiry. The other 9% resulted in no further action needed. (Workwise study May 2011.)

- 4.2 The *Guide to Adult Social Care* outlines the Community Care assessment process and includes an overview of the types of support available across the County Borough. A copy of the guide is sent to every individual who requests an assessment of need.

- 4.3 In addition to the overview of the types of Community Care support outlined in the guide there is a suite of more detailed publications. The following documents are a sample of the type and quality of the publications that are available:-
- A *Bridgend Carers' Forum information pack* is provided to carers on request. It contains details of the support and resources available to carers from the NHS, Local Authority and the Independent sector. This has just been updated.
 - A Home Care information leaflet
 - An Extra Care information leaflet
- 4.4 When information is produced for the public, consideration is always given to the need for language translation, font size, braille and colours in line with RNIB requirements. During the unified assessment process, care managers strive to obtain information and document the needs of equality groups. An example of this was when a service user who was a Jehovah's Witness required a residential placement, accommodation options and information, advice and support was provided to enable choice.
- 4.5 Strategic partnerships between the Council and other agencies provide another route for public access to information and advice. The Never Too Old action team (NTOAT) is a productive working example of this approach. The NTOAT has produced a 'Be Smart Be Safe Handbook', in partnership with the Community Safety Partnership and the Welsh Government.
- 4.6 The Council's Website is an important access point for information and also provides direct email links to the Customer Contact Centre and the Contact Assessment and Review Team. There were over 8000 hits to the main adult social care pages of the website during the last year.
- 4.7 At consultation events, consideration is given to the accessibility of information for equality groups. For example, presentation in braille for the visually impaired, interpretation and loop systems for the hearing impaired. Information is obtained on training applications to ensure special requirements are accommodated.
- 4.8 It is important that service users and carers are able to contribute to the development of services and provide feedback on the services they receive. A service user and carer engagement framework has been developed to ensure a more systematic approach is followed to obtain and analyse information to inform service planning. For example, 752 surveys were sent to home care users during 2010/11 and 366 (49 per cent) were returned.
- 4.9 There is work underway to develop an integrated public information strategy with our partners in the NHS as part of the implementation of the Integrating Health and Social Care Programme. There is a Communications Hub workstream leading on the development of the strategy.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessments

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment as relevant to the Authority's general and specific duties to promote equality and eliminate discrimination will be carried out on the integrated public information strategy to identify and assess the impact on the protected equality groups.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Any costs related to the work and actions identified in this report are being met from within existing resources.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report and raises any questions at the meeting.

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- 10 **Background documents:**
None.