



Report of the Director of Adult Social Services

Executive Board

Date: 25th August 2010

Subject: Response to the Deputation to Council – The Access Committee for Leeds.

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

This report provides the Executive Board with information regarding the deputation to Council by the Access Committee for Leeds presented to the Council on the 14th July 2010 "Please help us to save Woodlands Respite Care Centre York". The Deputation describes the Multiple Sclerosis Society facility, Woodlands, at York as 'unique in our region' offering 'specialist support therapies and care'. The deputation goes on to note the 'potential closure of Woodlands next year'. This report highlights that in the last year, 32 Leeds residents assessed as having eligible social care needs, were provided with respite care at Woodlands and funded by Adult Services

The report highlights the extensive consultation process undertaken by the Multiple Sclerosis Society in relation to their revised strategy for respite care and for the future role of their organisation.

The report concludes by committing Adult Social Services commissioners and care managers to work closely with the Society and those people currently using the Woodlands care facility (and their carers) to attempt to minimise any potential future disruption of care arrangements.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Executive Board with a response to the Deputation to Council made on the 14th July this year by members of the Access Committee for Leeds. The deputation highlighted concerns regarding proposals made by the Multiple Sclerosis Society to transfer ownership or to close their Woodlands respite care centre near York. This report sets out the background to the development of the proposals highlighted by the deputation and sets out how adult social services officers propose to work with the MS Society and any individuals affected.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 9 June 2010 the MS Society's Board of Trustees decided on a new direction for the Society's respite care strategy, following the respite care review conducted by the MS Society over the previous year. The Society assert that their new approach will help the organisation to reach more people affected by MS, wherever they live in the UK, and support them to access the short breaks and respite care they want. The Society's new approach is to develop services that provide a more personalised system of support.

- 2.2 The new strategy of the Society, as set out on their website, is designed to focus on five key areas:

- **Providing information** – to signpost people to existing services and guide people through the process of accessing respite care.
- **Accreditation** – The Society indicate that there is a role for them to play in accrediting services, formally or informally.
- **Giving grants** – the Society are concerned that they don't provide equitable grants for respite or short breaks, they commit to look at how they can financially support more people with MS through their grants programme.
- **Campaigning for better services** – the MS Society recognises that it has a powerful role to play in campaigning to improve care and services for people with MS and carers, including campaigning for access to properly undertaken carers' assessments
- **Influencing other providers** – The Society commit to work with other organisations "to make sure people with MS have access to respite care and short breaks, how they want it and wherever they live. These might be other care providers, other organisations working with people with long term neurological conditions or travel companies."

2.3 Implications for the MS Society's respite centres

- 2.31 As a result of this new approach, the MS Society will no longer directly provide residential respite care.

- 2.32 The decision to take a new approach to respite and short breaks is the result of the year-long respite care review. The Society currently runs four respite care centres, three in England and one in Scotland, which will now be transferred to another provider where possible, or closed if no alternative owner is forthcoming. The Society contend that this action will allow them to invest more of their resources in

helping more people with MS access the respite and short breaks they need and want.

- 2.33 The Society advise that guests who have stayed at one of the centres over the last year have received a letter with information about the review and what to expect. They commit themselves to working individually with their guests, their families and carers to find alternatives.
- 2.34 The Society describe their year-long respite care review as comprehensive, the consultation part of the review included a survey, as well as sixteen focus groups across the UK where they report that they held in-depth talks with 85 people. The Society did not seek the views of Leeds care commissioners during this process, however, it is clear from the description of their consultation that their primary audience were the members of the Society and the people using their facilities and their carers. Health and Social Care Professionals are reported to have responded to the invitation to submit their views as part of the more general consultative process.
- 2.35 The Society report that, in total 1,637 people responded to the survey: 1,030 people with MS and 607 carers.
- 2.36 The Society report that they were keen to hear the views of those people who use their services and their centres and they wrote to guests inviting them to take the survey. They report that 32% of people who responded to the survey used the care centres, and they report themselves to be confident the views of their guests have been represented through the consultation process.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The MS Society describe their current priority now as being to find another organisation to take over the running of the centres, and to support their guests and staff during this time of change. Although it is still early in this process, the Society describe that they are in discussions with other organisations and indicate that they should have a clearer picture of the future over the coming months.
- 3.2 However, they contend that if another organisation cannot be found to take over a centre, closure would be the next step. At the moment however, their centres in England are open for business and no bookings are being cancelled.
- 3.3 As the Society seeks an appropriate alternative organisation to take over all the centres, they indicate that they will not be able to give firm dates when arrangements might change. However, they indicate that it is unlikely that there will be any change in the near future and they expect their three centres in England to operate as normal for the rest of this financial year.
- 3.4 Within Leeds, in the last year, 32 people were funded by the Authority to attend the Woodlands centre at York, the nearest such MS Society facility. Adult Social Care Managers involved with the people using the Centre and their carers have been advised of the Societies plans and will be working closely with their clients and the MS Society to ensure alternative venues of care can be identified in the event that the facility cannot be transferred into alternative ownership .
- 3.5 No 'block' or long term contractual commitment exists between this Authority and the Multiple Sclerosis Society for the purchase of respite breaks at the centre, each of these having been individually ('spot') purchased as required for those people assessed as having eligible social care needs.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 There are no immediate implications for Council Policy and Governance. The decision to attempt to transfer ownership of the Woodlands Centre, or to close if no alternative owner is forthcoming, is a decision which has been made by the Board and Trustees of the Multiple Sclerosis Society following a year long consultation process.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 There are no resource implications as the costs of placements at the Woodland centre are met from within the Adult Social Care Community Care base budget, this will continue to be the case regardless of the future venue of care.

5.2 Legally, the future of the four care centres operated by the MS Society is a matter for the Society and it's members whom, it is apparent, have been provided with appropriate opportunities to participate directly in a lengthy consultation process.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 It is apparent that the Multiple Sclerosis Society have developed their new strategy, set out at para 2.2, after a period of consultation with their members and a wider constituent audience. This has indicated a wish to concentrate the focus of the Society away from the direct provision of care. This approach mirrors the wider national Adult Social Care agenda, supported by Adult Social Care in Leeds, designed to support much greater autonomy and choice through the availability of more flexible resources.

6.2 The deputation to Council urge the assistance of the Council in 'saving the exemplar resources available at Woodlands'. Information presented in this report clearly indicates that the Multiple Sclerosis Society are themselves seeking to transfer ownership of the care facility and its resources as their preferred first option.

6.3 However, Commissioning Officers will continue to monitor developments in relation to the ownership of the centre and will ensure that care managers working with those 32 Leeds residents funded to use the Centre and their carers are kept fully apprised of developments and advised of appropriate alternative venues of care in the region.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members are requested to note response to the deputation and the proposed actions of Adult Social Services officers as outlined in this report.

Background Papers -

- The Access Committee for Leeds – Deputation to Council Speech transcript – 14th July 2010

The Multiple Sclerosis Society – Board reports (all June 2010 & available at <http://www.mssociety.org.uk>)

- Respite Care Review Board paper - This report provides the Board of the MS Society with details of the outcome of the year long review of respite care services operated by the organization.
- Respite Care Review – This report sets out the recommendations for the future involvement of the Society in the support of respite care arrangements
- Respite Care Review, Appendix 1 – Consultation Summary – This report summarises the approach taken to consulting with members of the Society with regard to respite provision
- Respite Care Review, Appendix 2 – Summary of other services – This report summarises other services that the Society feels it should become a greater focus for its work to compliment and facilitate respite opportunities
- Respite Care Review, Appendix 3 – This report summarises papers submitted to the Board of the Society in 2009 at the start of the consultation process
- Respite Care Review – Survey Report – This report summarises the views of respondents to the consultation process
- Respite Care Review – Thematic summary of focus groups – This reports sets out the results of the thematic focus groups which formed an important part of the consultation process.