



## St. Helens Council

Judith Holbrey  
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust  
Hollins Park Hospital  
Hollins Lane  
Winwick  
Warrington  
WA2 8WA

### Chief Executive

Town Hall  
Victoria Square  
St. Helens  
Merseyside  
WA10 1HP

Contact: Mrs. C. Hudson  
Tel: (01744) 456101  
Fax: (01744) 4556889  
CaroleHudson@sthelens.gov.uk  
Our ref:  
Your ref: CH/KMA

8 September 2006

Dear Judith

### **5 Boroughs Partnership Mental Health Trust Consultation - 'Change for the Better'**

The Council has welcomed the opportunity to take part in the consultation process for 'Change for the Better' and fully recognises the challenges that face the 5 Borough Trust in terms of modernising services and dealing with a significant budget deficit.

The Council has considered the 5 Borough Trust proposals for a new Model of Care for Adults with Mental Health problems, as fully as it has been able to, given the amount of detail that has been made available to us.

An impact assessment has been undertaken to assess the key issues and the proposals for St Helens services. This impact assessment compared the proposed model in "Change for the Better" against the recently agreed Commissioning Strategy, and has adopted a whole systems approach to ensure that the needs of the local population in the relation to Mental Health services can be demonstrated to be met as effectively as possible.

As a result of our examination of your proposals, and whilst supporting the principles of the Model of Care, there remain a significant number of unresolved or uncertainty around key issues.

The Council's Executive and Overview and Scrutiny have both considered and discussed these issues and the Executive has approved the following response to the proposed Model of Care.

- 1) The timescales for implementation of the proposals are unrealistic.
- 2) There is no clear plan to cover the transition process between current services and the services proposed in order to achieve smooth, safe and effective transition. This plan is vital to give reassurance to individuals, commissioners and service providers.
- 3) There is a lack of clarity about the capital and revenue funding to support the transition and to fully implement the proposals.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



- 4) In particular the Council is concerned about the significant reduction in the proposed number of service users able to access the Community Mental Health Teams contained in the model. There is no clarity about how all current service users will be dealt with under the new model and by whom, and especially as this needs to relate to the Council's Fair Access to Care criteria. In addition, the role of CMHT's will fundamentally change as a result of the proposals yet there have been no discussions with Commissioners regarding their new role
- 5) The model of care makes assumptions about the level of primary care services that should be in place to support mental health service users for prevention at tiers 1 & 2. This primary care infrastructure is currently significantly underdeveloped and clarity is required about the level of investment to be made by the PCTs in order to deliver the proposed model of care. At the present time there is no available investment plan to support the model of care.
- 6) The Council is concerned that it is impossible to assess the impact of any reduction of service from the 5 Borough Trust and to identify the knock on impact on Social Care and GP services. The Council remains particularly concerned about the lack of clarity of how the changes in services will impact on Adult Social Care services and budgets.
- 7) The model of care explicitly states that it does not cover services for Older People, Drug and Alcohol services, or CAMHS. However, there are obvious implications where adult mental health services overlap with these specialist services. Reassurance is required that dual diagnosis services will be improved for older people, and that they will still have access to specialist expertise within old age service.
- 8) There is extremely limited reference to supporting carers throughout the model of care. Given the high number of carers in St Helens, the 5 Borough Trust and the PCT should recognise and support the work of carers in line with the Commissioning Strategy.
- 9) The Council's Scrutiny Panel felt that most of the information that they received was of a very general nature and did not address specific St. Helens issues.
- 10) The Council is concerned that adults of working age older people will continue to be treated on the same inpatient wards. This is contrary to good practice as identified by the Health Care Commission.
- 11) The Council is concerned that intensive psychiatric beds are being dealt with separately and are not included in the proposals. The Council understands that proposals for these services are being reviewed and funded separately.
- 12) The Council notes the 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust proposal that the number of beds in St Helens will be reduced from the present amount of 34 to 33 beds. However, the Council is disappointed that the closure of Peasley Cross Court does not appear to have been properly factored in to these proposals as this has clearly had an impact on services in St Helens. It is also clear that the 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust is looking for an overall bed reduction in excess of the national target of 30% without evidence to support this proposal.
- 13) In patient bed reductions can only be delivered in a safe, sound and supportive manner, if a comprehensive, complementary and integrated community infrastructure exists across the whole spectrum of services and service providers. This requires the balancing of resources to provide assurance that unintended impacts do not occur elsewhere. We do not believe this is



evidenced in the proposals and information received to date. We are extremely concerned that insufficient attention has been given to assess the impact of the reduction in patient beds on other services.

- 14) The Council remains dissatisfied with the quality of the financial information provided during the consultation process. The Adult Social Care & Health Scrutiny Panel also felt that there was a lack of clear, timely information to support some of the proposals.
- 15) The Council is pleased to note the commitment given by officers of the 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust, that capital investment for improvements at Peasley Cross has now been identified from the 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust existing budgets. The Council would welcome confirmation that the PCT supports these proposals, together with written confirmation from the 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust. The Council is also concerned to ensure that the commitment given by the 5 Borough Trust, that the revenue savings from the closure of Peasley Cross will be reinvested in St Helens services, is reinforced.
- 16) The Council is concerned that the allocation of transitional resources to implement the model may not be adequate or satisfactory. Again we would request written confirmation of the availability of any transitional resource being made available and how it will be allocated.
- 17) The Council is concerned about the issue of indirect costs and how these will be apportioned across the 5 Boroughs.
- 18) The Council remains concerned about the workforce implications of the proposals. The officers of the 5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust indicated there would be a 10% reduction in overall staff. However there would be more staff in inpatient units at the Resource and Recovery Centres (RRCs). Whilst the Council are pleased that the additional staff in the Resource and Recovery Centres will offer the opportunity for more therapeutic work, it is concerned that all the staff savings, including those to finance the additional staff in RRCs, will need to be found from community based services. This would seem to be contrary to the expressed intention of the document, to increase services in the community. The Council remains unclear about the deployment and practice implications for Council staff seconded to the 5 Boroughs Partnership Trust.
- 19) Finally, there are residents in St Helens who receive their mental health care in Wigan and Leigh and the Council cannot assess whether or not all residents will receive equitable services, in the absence of a clear commissioning strategy for the Wigan and Leigh area.

In summary, while the Council believes that the principles behind the proposed Model of Care are consistent with the Commissioning Strategies for Adults and Older People, which were agreed by the Council in March 2006, there are substantial risks both in the transition from the current model to the new model, and in the sustainability of the proposals, once implemented, in terms of dealing with the associated risks.

In terms of ensuring there are safe local services for people in St Helens the potential risks are outlined above.

In putting forward their proposals, the 5 Boroughs have been clear that it must achieve a balanced budget by the end of this financial year.

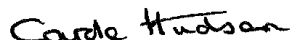
This is in a context of a Trust overspend of £7million and the need for a Recovery Plan to manage the over provision of service. Budget reductions of this magnitude undoubtedly carry a risk to the current level and coverage of services and could have knock-on effect on the financial implications for the Council.

As a result of all of these concerns, the Council is not currently in a position to support the proposals contained in the "Change for the Better". The model in its present form, is not in the interests of health services in Halton, St Helens and Warrington and should not be implemented in its present form until the issues raised in this letter and from the Joint Scrutiny recommendations are considered further.

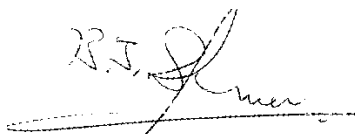
We remain concerned that there will be a potentially negative impact on many service users and carers, with fewer services available and tighter rationing of those services. The lack of clear financial information and plans and the lack of capital funding, challenges your ability to deliver the proposals outlined in 'Change for the Better'.

Should further information be provided to address the significant concerns identified above, the Council of course would reconsider the proposals.

Yours sincerely



Carole Hudson  
Chief Executive



Councillor Brian Spencer  
Leader of the Council