

Healthy Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee 11th April 2017

Update report on the Southwark Mental Health Social Care Review

South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust

In November 2016, the integrated mental health and social care arrangements between Southwark Council and the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust were dissolved following recommendations to the council from the Southwark social care review. The social workers, who had been working within integrated arrangements and co-located with the Trust staff in multi-disciplinary teams, moved to a central team and the local authority statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, which had been delegated to the Trust through section 75 arrangements, were returned to the responsibility of the council.

This report provides a brief progress report from the Trust's perspective since November 2016.

As the committee is aware, the Trust raised concerns about the disaggregation of the integrated arrangements to the committee in November 2016. Following the implementation of the social care review, operational managers and frontline staff from both organisations, have been working professionally and collaboratively to minimise any risks and service disruption to service users arising from the separation of health and social care functions.

Fortnightly meetings take place with senior operational staff in both organisations to jointly address problems and challenges in a timely and collaborative way, in addition to monthly management meetings between council and Trust managers. These meetings have provided a forum to enable clear communication of changes and new processes to service users and carers and staff within Southwark council and the Trust.

Through these interface meetings, the health and social care functions have been separated out and a number of operational processes and issues have been jointly worked on such as: referral processes into the central team for social care and AMHP assessments, appointeeship, carers' assessments and 'read-only' access to the Trust electronic patient records, (ePJS) for social care staff.

There remain a limited number of outstanding issues that require further discussion and agreement. In particular the Trust does not concur with the Local Authority view on the matter of safeguarding adults responsibilities which are clearly very different now, in the absence of a section 75 agreement which grants delegated authority to act. The Trust has received expert legal advice in relation to this to ensure that we act within the law in relation to NHS duties. A formal information sharing agreement and the development of a memorandum of understanding between the two organisations are the other outstanding issues.

As predicted, during this implementation phase, some problems have arisen in the short-term which have led to delays in response times, duplication and additional bureaucracy as Trust staff are now required to complete referrals to social care as opposed to having an integrated, holistic approach.

Since implementation, there have been staff shortages in the social care teams, with a number of vacant social work posts in the new teams. We believe that authorisation has now been given to recruit to these posts; so hopefully, this situation will improve in the medium to long-term.

This staffing situation has resulted in delays in referrals being dealt with and there is currently a list of approximately 200 service users, who have been referred from the Trust for Care Act assessments, being held on a waiting list. To minimise any clinical risks, Trust staff are working with social care colleagues to prioritise referrals and actions that are urgent.

As the committee is aware, the Trust was disappointed by the decision of the council to dissolve long-standing integrated arrangements and still have concerns about the potential longer-term strategic impact on the health and social care system, as outlined in the previous report to the committee in November 2016. However, the Trust remains committed to collaborative, partnership working with Southwark Council and will continue to work closely at all levels with social care colleagues. A formal independent evaluation of the impact of the review at a later stage would be welcome to inform strategic planning and development of both organisations.

Kristin Dominy
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6th April 2017