

## Adult Social Care Equalities Impact Assessment Consultation Feedback

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Equalities Impact Assessment consultation. Your feedback is very much appreciated. An action plan has been drawn up. Actions have been given to named people and our Equalities and Diversity Leads will monitor the plan. The plan will also be included as an appendix to the Adult Social Care service plan for 2009-10.

Below I have tried to answer all the comments that we received from you as part of the consultation. Adult Social Care aren't able independently to action all the issues but some are included in other County Council Plans – I have indicated below where this is the case.

There were also some questions which I have answered. Unfortunately some of them aren't specific enough for us to provide full answers, but I would be happy to answer any further questions directly.

Jane Lewis

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I have included details of our complaints procedure, which should be used if anyone is unhappy with any aspect of our service. Let us know and we can learn from our mistakes.

I have also included details of the You First programme, which is about to start. This programme covers Adult Social Care as well as other County Council departments. They will address many of the issues you raised, which is why they have not been included in the action plan. Your comments have been passed on. A Programme Director has been appointed and will be starting work in Somerset at the end of April.

Comment	Response
<b>Information and Services</b>	
<p>People do not know what services are available and do not have sufficient information, particularly regarding Somerset Direct. There is a need for more advertising of the services available. The name Somerset Direct does not explain what service they provide. A name change would help improve access.</p>	<p>Included in the Action Plan:  <i>Make more use of Your Somerset to publicise Adult Social Care</i>  <i>Development of new SCC internet portal that will help people:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Find information</i></li> <li>• <i>Understand it</i></li> <li>• <i>Choose it</i></li> <li>• <i>Use it</i></li> </ul> <i>Suggested change of name for Somerset Direct</i></p>
<p>A view was expressed that the white Somerset Direct leaflet does not fully explain what they do “as soon as you see it you think of government and council tax”.</p>	<p>Included in Action Plan:  <i>More proactive rather than reactive marketing by Somerset Direct</i></p>

Jane Lewis 6/4/09

<p>The benefits of having peer support and sharing information were raised across all meetings. One person with sensory loss contributed “when I went deaf I asked my social worker if anyone else in the area had a hearing loss that I could pal with...they said they couldn't tell me... that is what we need”.</p>	<p>There are data protection issues with handing out names but there are some hearing loss groups that you could contact:</p> <p>Taunton Tangier Scout Hall Sarah Tazwell 01643 703706 Mary Curtis 01278 444591</p> <p>Bridgwater Mount Street Annexe Paddy Birch 01823 698486</p> <p>Burnham Chichester Close Communal Hall Paddy Birch 01278 698486</p>
<p>There was a strong feeling that you only get to find out about services through meetings like this.</p>	<p>As part of the You First programme there will be more user involvement and consultation. Your comments have been passed on.</p>
<p>People would like to have help with shopping and think that Social Service should provide emotional and practical support and support vulnerable people that don't have family or friends.</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the You First programme. Your comments have been passed on.</p>
<p>Help with upkeep of property inside and outside is also an extra service some would like provided.</p>	<p>This isn't something that we provide directly but handyman services are available in each area:</p> <p>Mendip Care and Repair Ltd., Barley House, The Old Brewery, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5QE. Phone 01749 345379.</p> <p>SCHIP Home Improvement Agency 10 Angel Crescent, Bridgwater, TA6 3EW. Phone 01278 444815</p> <p>Home Aid Partnership Scheme South Somerset District Council Maltravers House Petter's Way Yeovil BA20 1AS Phone 01935 462462.</p> <p>Taunton Neighbourhood and Gardening Care The Albemarle Centre Albemarle Road Taunton TA1 1BA Phone 01823 480706.</p>

<p>There is disappointment that domestic support is no longer provided unless paid for privately and it is felt that this puts a strain on carers.</p>	<p>This will be considered as part of the You First Programme. Your comments have been passed on.</p> <p>The Fair Access to Care Criteria determines which needs are met. There are four levels – critical, substantial, moderate and low. 73% of other local authorities only provide services at critical and substantial levels. In Somerset we also provide services for people with moderate needs but do not meet low needs, which would normally include domestic care.</p> <p>Included in Action Plan:  <i>Clarify and communicate policy to staff that domestic care can be provided to support carers in some exceptional circumstances</i></p>
<p>How do people contact the FAB Teams – many would like to access this service.</p>	<p>The FAB team can provide information and support with claiming benefits for anyone 60 or over in Somerset. The service will be automatically provided for anyone who is receiving care at home. Others should access the service via Somerset Direct – 0845 345 9133</p>
<p>Respite services provided for carers and their families are felt to be very valuable and direct payments have enabled some to do recreational activities.</p>	<p>Glad to hear this.</p>
<p>Direct Payments are not fully understood by some. A Social Worker wasn't sure how Direct Payments are done and one participant phoned A4E to enquire about Carers DP – they said to go back to the Social Worker. Another had a visit from A4E and said "they didn't tell me what I could use the money for or what forms I had to fill in... I don't really understand it".</p>	<p>We commission A4e to provide a support service for people receiving Direct Payments. Your comments will be passed to A4e. In general feedback about the service they provide is positive.</p> <p>The way to contact A4e is through a social worker.</p>
<p>Confusion exists over advocacy services. A carer explained that a referral was needed before A4E could help with a holiday. Difficulties were expressed in knowing which services are provided for which type of person. This was particularly difficult for those with multiple impairments and regarding advocacy services.</p>	<p>There is already a review of advocacy services taking place. At the moment the services are provided via several different groups:          Older People – Age Concern 01823 423496          Younger Adults – A4e 01823 339494          Younger People with Mental Health issues – Advocacy in Somerset 01458 253053</p>
<p>Services provided by Age Concern and Citizens Advice were praised. Knowledge was shared that Age Concern appeared cheaper for piper</p>	<p>There are a variety of organisations who provide Piper Lifelines (or similar services). I can confirm the cost of the Age Concern service is equivalent to £3.16 per week</p>

line.	
<b>Assessments and Social Workers</b>	
A lack of knowledge of what people are entitled to at the assessment stage.	<p>Included in action plan:</p> <p><i>Make more use of Your Somerset to publicise Adult Social Care. Other services seem to have a higher profile.</i></p> <p><i>Development of new SCC internet portal that will help people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Find information</i></li> <li>• <i>Understand it</i></li> <li>• <i>Choose it</i></li> <li>• <i>Use it</i></li> </ul>
Inconsistencies between Social Workers occur when some say they can provide things and other 'won't/can't do that'. Concerns that the value of the services depends on the Social Worker and how good they are.	<p>Acknowledged. In order to provide a service which is user focussed this is inevitable to a certain extent.</p> <p>Included in action plan: <i>Development of the Social Care Governance framework</i></p>
The service provided by OT's was praised for the knowledge of equipment out there.	Good
The need for a named Social Worker to ensure continuity. This would also help some feel they can phone Adult Social Care if they have a named person.	This should already be happening. A named worker should be allocated when the case is first referred. If the case is open and a social worker leaves this should be communicated to the client. We would be happy to investigate specific examples where this hasn't happened.
The need for more regular reviews.	Our review policy is being reviewed and your comments will be taken into account.
Who should people contact to request a review?	If you have a named social worker contact them or ring Somerset Direct on 0845 345 9133
Some people feel they cannot ask for an assessment.	Everyone who needs our services should contact us to ask for an assessment
There appears to be general confusion over the differences between the various assessments for care and benefits.	<p>This is understandable as it is complex.</p> <p>A Social Worker assesses for care. If this shows that you have eligible needs SCC will buy care for you or give you a Direct Payment to buy the care yourself.</p> <p>The FAB team carry out financial assessments to see if you have to contribute towards that care. They can also help with benefits (or you can apply yourself or via another agency like CAB or Age Concern):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Means tested – Pension Credit/Income Support.</li> </ul>

	<p>Depend on your savings and income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on care needs – Attendance Allowance/Disability Living Allowance. You do not have a carer in order to qualify but you must have a need for help with personal care e.g washing, dressing, cooking</li> </ul>
Many had concerns that having an assessment could affect benefits.	Having a care assessment would not affect benefits
Concerns that nothing would happen and that information has to be repeated when cases have been closed.	This should not happen. We have a standard closure letter (see attached) which should be sent after a conversation or meeting with the client or a letter. I would be happy to investigate specific examples if people feel that this has not happened. Or use the complaints procedure. The first stage is informal.
More understanding of a person's age and/or disability is required. Frustrations occur when people are asked to repeat traumatic experiences. When Social Workers change and information hasn't been passed on, users feel uncomfortable when they have to repeat information.	This should not happen. I would be happy to investigate specific examples if people feel that is has. Or use the complaints procedure. The first stage is informal.
Need to ensure Social Workers are trained about long term or severe disabilities.	Included in action plan: <i>Training to raise awareness of disability issues amongst managers</i>
The need to listen more to individuals was raised as an issue, particularly when people were told they needed equipment which they felt they did not need.	This will be fed back.
What happens when a case is closed and the service user is not satisfied that the problem has been resolved?	Please use our Complaints Procedure.
There is a feeling that departments don't communicate with each other.	This will be reinforced.
A need for more understanding of people with hidden disabilities such as angina and diabetes.	Included in action plan: <i>Training to raise awareness of disability issues amongst managers</i>
People had experienced difficulties in getting an assessment when they had been removed from the current list. Some thought that you are removed if you are not in contact for 5 years? Many felt that reviews weren't frequent enough and that cases shouldn't be closed. Several thought annual reviews would be about the right frequency for them	Our review policy is being reviewed and your comments will be taken into account.

or six monthly if they are followed up	
In some cases reviews had not taken place when expected. One person was still waiting for a review following receipt of a Disabled Facilities Grant approx. one year ago.	Disabled Facilities Grants are administered by District Councils. Please ask your Social Worker if you want a review or ring Somerset Direct 0845 345 9133
More choice of dates and times for reviews is required.	You should be able to contact and request a different time/date.
Of those familiar with the system they feel they can request a review if circumstances change. Those who are unfamiliar with the system felt they would find things difficult.	You should have an allocated social worker. If not please use Somerset Direct.
A need for a referral system when people move into a new area.	We would need to work nationally on this with all other local authorities so it is not something we can action independently in the plan.
<b>Complaints</b>	
More available information on the complaints procedure was requested.	Included
The need for an independent complaints procedure (such as PALS).	The later stages of the Adult Social Care complaints process are independent.
Some experiences of using advocacy services and tribunals to get a complaint resolved were shared. One participant had gone to two tribunals and had used Shelter and CAB to get the help they required.	Glad this worked. There is a review of Advocacy Services taking place.
A feeling that nothing would happen if you did complain and that you get pushed from 'pillar to post'.	Please use our complaints procedure. Let us know if you are not happy so we can improve.
There was a concern that you cannot get hold of an advocate to help with issues like this anymore.	We commission the following to provide advocacy services: Older People – Age Concern 01823 423496 Younger Adults – A4e 01823 339494 Younger People with Mental Health issues – Advocacy in Somerset 01458 253053 There is a review of Advocacy Services taking place
When people live in sheltered or extra care housing who should they complain to?	This depends on what they want to complain about. If the complaint is about a service provided by Adult Social Care please use our complaints procedure. Your scheme manager should be able to help with this.
Of those that had made a complaint there was a feeling that it took a long time to be resolved.	The Adult Social Care formal complaints process has specific timescales. The complaint should be acknowledged within 2 working days and a response provided within 20 working days.
<b>Methods Of Contact</b>	
There is a need for alternative methods of contacting Adult Social Care	Looking at how customers access our services is part of the You First programme
Concern over the costs of 0845	Included in action plan:

numbers	<i>Investigate the use of 0300 number to replace 0845 number. These are specifically allocated to public sector. These cost the same to call even from mobiles</i>
One to one contact - a drop-in service as well as a call centre, moved around the county. A one stop shop for services.	Looking at how customers access our services is part of the You First programme
E mail – can you contact Somerset Direct this way?	Yes – Adults@somerset.gov.uk
Alternative methods of contact are important for people with hearing impairments, and a preference for one to one contact was expressed, as “text phones can cut out when picking up signals from other phones”.	You could use e-mail. Looking at how customers access our services is part of the You First programme
Telephone is the preferred method of contact for many followed by face to face or in writing.	Telephone via Somerset Direct is our main way of contact.
When e mail or letters were used better responses had been received. Some had used friends to e mail Social Services to help get a response and this had worked, however many do not have access to a computer.	Better than what? E-mail or phone are immediate and should receive the same response. Happy to investigate specific cases.
There was a general feel that messages left on answer machines were not responded to. Many had got through to answer machines when trying to phone.	The best way to contact is by phoning Somerset Direct 0845 345 9133. They do not have answer phones.
<b>Barriers to Accessing Services</b>	
Pride. I don't think I am disabled enough.	The You First programme will be looking at how to reduce any social stigma involved in contacting social care.
Lack of face to face contact. You have to always deal with different people.	Looking at how customers access our services is part of the You First programme
The need to be listened to more, treated as an individual and not felt like a number/category.	Noted
A lack of verbal and communication skills, made some feel they don't want to bother.	This should be happening and I will circulate the comments but I don't think this applies to all social workers so we would need more specific examples in this case.
Some conditions (such as chronic fatigue) make people feel too tired to deal with it all.	Please ask someone to contact Somerset Direct on your behalf to see what support is available.
Concern that it will lead to a loss of independence and that services may be forced upon them.	Choice is a key principle of social care. No-one will be forced to have services that they do not want.
For those with visual impairments	All Adult Social Care documents on website and

<p>literature “should be Arial 14 and left justified and must avoid background colours”.</p>	<p>standard letters are available in this format</p>
<p><b>Other Issues</b></p>	
<p>Transport continues to be an issue. The cost of community transport schemes has increased and is not necessarily cheaper than taxis. There are also problems in getting transport where other services such as Slinky are not provided in all areas of the County.</p>	<p>Included in action plan:  <i>Feedback to Transporting Somerset (the department who deal with transport issues)</i></p>

<b>Recommendations</b>	
<p>There is a definite need to increase awareness of the services provided by Adult Social Care. Consideration should be given to how to best reach the target audience i.e. people with a hearing impairment may find telephone contact difficult, older people may not be as familiar with internet information and written literature may not be accessible to people with visual impairments.</p>	<p>Included in action plan:</p> <p><i>Make more use of Your Somerset to publicise Adult Social Care. Other services seem to have a higher profile.</i></p> <p><i>Development of new SCC internet portal that will help people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Find information</i></li> <li>• <i>Understand it</i></li> <li>• <i>Choose it</i></li> <li>• <i>Use it</i></li> </ul> <p>The Customer Access Initiation Pilot Project is being undertaken to look at how we can make information accessible in accessible locations. A final report is going to the County Council cabinet in September 09.</p>
<p>Recommendations to resolve this includes;</p>	
<p>Renaming Somerset Direct would increase awareness of the services provided by them. Some names to consider could be; Somerset Information Line, Social Services Directory, Som Direct Information or the Disability Information Service.</p>	<p>In action plan: <i>Suggested change of name for Somerset Direct</i></p>
<p>Use of an 0300 number as opposed to an 0845 number which can be costly for those on inclusive minutes packages and callers from mobile phones.</p>	<p>Included in action plan <i>Investigate the use of 0300 number to replace 0845 number.</i></p>
<p>Provide information in various ways to accommodate the access needs of individuals. Accessible formats for literature to be readily available, an e mail service such as regular bulletin on Adult Social Care services. A drop in service that could be a mobile outreach service held at regular intervals at set locations around the county every six weeks or so, and ensure it's communicated when its coming so that everyone gets a chance to visit. Also move the location for those in rural areas.</p>	<p>Looking at how customers access our services is part of the You First programme</p>
<p>Using local media creatively to publicise the services i.e. HTV local</p>	<p>This is already being done by our marketing department using the Providing for Life campaign.</p>

channels, local independent radio, publications such as The Networker.	We will make use of publications like Networker
Improved partnership working between Adult Social Care and local health care services to enable information concerning Adult Social Care services to be given to people at the point of diagnosis i.e. Information packs at GP surgeries about all services.	This is ongoing. Comments noted. We will be working with Care Choices to produce a Care Directory from April 2010 which will be distributed across the county. We will take into account your suggestion of sending to GP surgeries.
The provision of more coherent and compelling information. Service users should be consulted with prior to the launch of any information to ensure that they understand the message that is being conveyed i.e. one brochure that details all of the advocacy services available so that people can make an informed choice about which service is appropriate for them.	Agree that this is very important. The You First programme includes a group looking specifically at Public, Service User and Carer Involvement. Your comments have been passed on.
Leaflets at the assessment stages to inform people what's available would ensure that people were able to access all services relevant to them, thereby improving their quality of life.	These are already available and should be given out at the assessment stage. They are available on our website. We have added a list of appropriate leaflets to the Care Plan letter which is sent following assessment to make sure that they aren't missed.
Adult Social Care services need to be designed to be user friendly and flexible in order to meet the needs of individuals. Recommendations include;	
Consulting with service users whenever services are being developed, reviewed or introduced.	Agree that this is very important. The You First programme includes a group looking specifically at Public, Service User and Carer Involvement. Your comments have been passed on.
The provision of a named Social Worker and direct dial telephone numbers to ensure continuity. This could be supported by the provision of a business card or contact details within a small 'welcome' pack on their first visit from a Social Worker.	I will suggest adding this to the Action Plan but as far as I am aware business cards have been stopped as they proved very costly and were often wasted when people changed jobs or offices
Reviews based around the needs of the individual particularly in terms of frequency.	Our review policy is being reviewed. Your comments will be passed on.
Detailed explanations given to service users about the assessment and review process so that they feel that they are included in the planning and delivery of their support. It is particularly important that the need to repeat information about the service	This will be addressed as part of the You First Programme

<p>users situation is minimised as this can be traumatic and frustrating.</p>	
<p>Those delivering Adult Social Care Services need an increased awareness of all types of disabilities, specifically those with hidden disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health problems.</p>	<p>Included in action plan:</p> <p><i>Ongoing Equalities and Diversity Training at all levels</i></p> <p><i>Training to raise awareness of disability issues amongst managers</i></p>
<p>All service users to be offered a FAB benefits assessment to ensure that they are accessing all relevant benefits for them.</p>	<p>FAB services are available automatically to anyone receiving a care package. They are also available via social worker or phoning Somerset Direct 0845 345 9133 for everyone aged 60 and over. Unfortunately due to limited resources the service is not available to anyone under 60 who does not have a care package.</p>
<p>Closer working partnerships with the voluntary and community sector to improve access to services i.e. improving choice so that people can get services, information and support from a range of organisations that they feel are relevant to them.</p>	<p>This is ongoing.</p>
<p>A clear and available complaints procedure that is independent from Adult Social Care in order for people to feel comfortable. There needs to be a commitment to ensure that all cases are dealt with and an appeals process available to those who feel that the outcome is unsatisfactory.</p>	<p>Our complaints process has been attached. It is available on our website. The first stages are dealt with by Adult Social Care but the later stages are dealt with by a Review Panel. The Panel chairman will be an independent person – someone who is not a County Councillor or employed by the County Council. Two other people will also be on the Panel (another independent person and a County Councillor).</p>
<p>Ensuring Adult Social Care services are designed so that people feel that they are approachable. Many people delay contacting Adult Social Care as they feel that ‘they are not disabled enough’. This can lead to peoples conditions deteriorating unnecessarily before they access support which could prevent such deterioration.</p>	<p>This will be addressed as part of the You First Programme</p>