

**CABINET SUPPORT OFFICE
SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET**

My Ref / Fy Ref: CM30117
Date / Dyddiad: 11th March 2015



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Cllr David Groves
County Hall
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Dear / Annwyl David

Thank you for your letter dated 10th February 2015, which has been forwarded on to me by the Leader. As you know, I was unable to attend the meeting on 4th February, but would like to respond to the some of the points made by the Committee which relate specifically to my own portfolio as Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Wellbeing.

I note that the Committee requested a briefing or presentation from officers on the roll out of Universal Credit in Cardiff later this year and I have asked the Director of Communities Housing & Customer Services to liaise with scrutiny officers to ensure that an item on Universal Credit is brought forward at a time to suit Committee.

In response to the Committee's concerns about the proposed savings within the Health & Social Care Directorate and their impact and achievability, particularly in the light of related demand pressures, I can confirm that senior officers within the Directorate meet weekly to monitor the delivery of savings and will be able to provide brief updates to the Committee on a quarterly basis on the consequential impact of the savings. I would also be happy to meet with you and relevant officers to discuss how the Committee can support the financial monitoring and scrutiny of both spending and savings figures relating specifically to adult social services.

I further note the Committee's concerns about the perceived diminution of 'choice and control' in the provision of Health & Social Care services, but wish to assure both you and the Committee that these considerations are fundamental to the delivery of adult social care assessment and to service procurement & commissioning. Where an assessment process identifies that a service user's needs are capable of being met by one or more alternative support packages, it is not unreasonable for the Authority to consider the relative cost of each option to 'secure the most cost-effective package of services that meets the user's care needs, taking account of the user's and carers' own preferences'. I would also stress that, following the assessment or review of needs, the outcomes that are agreed are always in response to individual needs and circumstances, so will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

PLEASE REPLY TO / ATEBWCH I : Cabinet Support Office / Swyddfa Cymorth Y Cabinet,
Room / Ystafell 518, County Hall / Neuadd y Sir,
Atlantic Wharf / Glanfa'r Iwerydd, Cardiff / Caerdydd,
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In terms of the use of accessible formats to provide information, I can confirm that all service users and/or their representative or advocate (if appropriate) are contacted using accessible formats that are applicable to them. In general, information is usually provided in writing by letter, but different formats are used as requested and include details of how to contact the relevant officer to discuss the review or change in circumstances. After a review, a questionnaire in the appropriate format is sent to the service user or to their representative or advocate (if appropriate) to ask for feedback. If there are any concerns, these are immediately followed through with the service user. If the service user remains unhappy with the outcome, they are given details of the Social Services Complaints Procedure and the matter is then responded to, as appropriate, using all the relevant process and protocols set out in the Complaints Procedure.

With reference to the specific budget proposals relating to the Cardiff Alcohol and Drug Team, you will be aware that the 2015/16 budget, which was approved by Council on 26 February 2015, was amended to remove the proposed saving. This will allow more time for capacity building and to develop the volunteer counsellor base, including supervision and support mechanisms for the volunteers. The Council will continue to fund existing arrangements until alternative arrangements for delivering these services are operational and those alternative arrangements are to be established at the earliest possible date. If it is still required, I will ask relevant officers to provide the Committee with a copy of the updated Equality Impact Assessment for information.

In the period since December 2014 when the (then) waiting list for counselling services was closed in advance of consideration of the budget proposal, all people referred for counselling have been supported to access other therapeutic services. New services have been operating in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan since July 2014 – one providing open access, outreach and engagement services and the other providing aftercare for people ready to move on from treatment. The nature of these services is such that some of the individuals receiving counselling could be suitable to access those services if they are supported to a point at which they meet the relevant eligibility criteria. However, it is important to note that these services are not classed as an alternative provision as they were designed prior to the proposed budget saving relating to the Cardiff Alcohol and Drug Team.

I hope this information assists in addressing the various points raised by the Committee.

Yours sincerely
Yn gwyir



Councillor / Y Cyngorydd Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member for Health, Housing & Wellbeing
Aelod Cabinet dros Iechyd, Tai a Lles