



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Utilising Block Residential Care Contracts - to Facilitate Greater Choice - Consultation Analysis Report December 2016 – February 2017

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1. Introduction and Overview

Northamptonshire County Council is proposing to expand its existing provision for long term care beds for older people and people with dementia. This is in recognition of the growing demand for Dementia care and Dementia respite care as well as the rising complexity of care within the ageing population.

Part of the challenge for the Council is to consider how best to use its existing contracts and work with providers to fulfil these needs and ensure that NCC is getting value for money from contracted suppliers.

Making sure the Council does this is important as it is normally less cost effective to buy care on an individual basis than it is to secure good quality provision that can meet a range of needs in a higher volume, in what are known as “block contracts”.

The Council needs to make sure it achieves value for money as this is the only way it can be sure that it will have enough resources to meet the needs of the County’s population at a time of limited budgets and reduced government funding.

The Council currently has a long standing Public Finance Contract (PFI) with Shaw Healthcare. Shaw is a national provider of healthcare, nursing and residential care and already run a range of homes and centres for the Council. This includes three Specialist Care Centres that currently provide 150 beds for the Council and are used for a range of needs including specialist nursing care, dementia care, dementia respite care, rehabilitation and step down care following hospital stays.

However, the Council have found that the beds are not being used as much as the Council would like and that the level of vacant beds suggests that the Council needs to do more of some things and stop providing others. In particular it needs to recognise that it now needs facilities for more complex needs than assumed when the Council first entered into the contract.

The proposal is therefore that the beds will be changed to provide more long-term residential and nursing care and more support for dementia patients, including respite care and short stay accommodation. As such they will become specialist centres that can more effectively meet the complex needs for people living with dementia, provide

support to their families and they can also provide the required specialist nursing care required if people's needs escalate without the need to move them to new care facilities.

There are around 7,700 people living with dementia in Northamptonshire and this number is set to grow, so making more beds available for dementia care will help address the rising demand for support.

By increasing the amount of these kinds of beds across the County, the Council can offer greater choice and more specialist support for those effected by dementia. The beds would be available to all but priority would be given to people who are eligible for social care.

The major changes under consideration are for those service users who are deemed eligible for social care funded by the Council and for whom the block contracts will be offered as a first choice in future. As with all placements this will only be done where the centres can meet the needs of the cared for person including appropriate services, facilities, care levels and wider health and wellbeing standards required by the Council.

In November 2016, the proposal was presented to NCC's Cabinet meeting. At this meeting it was agreed that a 6 week consultation be held to seek the views of all interested parties.

This report is the analysis of the consultation results received.

2. Consultation Methodology

The consultation was carried out in compliance with NCC's Consultation and Engagement Policy and Standard of Required Practice.

The key audience, stated below, were identified for the consultation to be promoted to:

- Members of Northamptonshire County Council's Consultation Register.
- Learning Disability Partnership Board.
- Members of the county's Residents' Panel.
- NCC Commissioning Officer.
- Local community and voluntary sector organisations and faith groups.

- Healthwatch Northamptonshire.
- Northants 50+ Network and Carers Partnership.
- County, Borough and District Councillors.
- Health and Wellbeing groups and organisations
- Other affected parties and stakeholders

Through further stakeholder analysis, key organisations were asked to help promote the consultation amongst their members and other distribution channels.

The open response method was used to generate the material/ data for analysis i.e. respondents were asked to make written submissions. Respondents were provided description and a rationale for the proposal. A copy of the report presented to the Council's November Cabinet meeting was provided.

Details of the consultation was made available on a dedicated internet web page on NCC's consultation register, which is where all of the Council's consultations are published. (Appendix 2).

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/consultationregister

This consultation was also posted and publicised via the Council's Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts. Respondents were given the opportunity to participate through these social media sites.

The consultation began on 21st December 2016 and ended on 1st February 2017.

3. Feedback Analysis and Conclusion

During the consultation period a number of other consultations were being undertaken by the Council. This included the draft Council budget, consultation on paying for care and support, and the development of the Northamptonshire Adult Care Services.

One written comment was submitted specifically about this consultation, which is redacted of personal information and is presented at Appendix 1.

This respondent made reference to the need for block contracts i.e. that they are “normally” excellent value for money; that using them to a full capacity is a must in order that the Council/ tax payer does not pay for empty beds. The respondents asks what safeguards the Council had in place to ensure that they would not be paying for empty beds. Again, this was linked to questioning why the Council was in the current position that it was at 48% vacancy rate.

The respondent raised concerns about impact on full cost service users i.e. those people that paid for all care costs. The impact was referenced to full cost service users helping to subsidise public funded service users. The respondent expressed that the Council’s proposal is unfair and inequitable because priority allocation of the block beds would be given to those who were social care funded. I.e. not those who fully pay for care and it would reduce choice.

The respondent also cited concerns over the shortage on the availability of beds within the county. They referenced this by the number of care homes closing within the county over the past two years.

The respondent further commented on the geographical location of the current Shaw Care home contracted block beds. These care homes are in Corby, Northampton and Rushden. They felt that the district areas of South Northamptonshire and Daventry were missing out much needed permanent care provision. The respondent asked what the Council was doing about permanent care of people from those areas of the county which have reducing care provision

The respondent explained the wider needs of the relative to maintain contact with cared for. They cited poor public transport and long travelling distances from South Northamptonshire which makes it problematic for families to visit, therefore leading to isolation.

A further three general email correspondences, about adult social care services, were received. They did not specifically state which specific consultation they were referring to. However, these respondents did make reference for the Council to use appropriate

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grammar, check information and make it easier for people to understand and participate
in adult social care consultation.

In conclusion, there was only one detailed written response to this consultation. When the Council engagement team spoke to stakeholders to help promote the consultation many said that although their members would be interested in reading the consultation material they may not be in position to respond to it. Some expressed that they will be concentrating their efforts in responding to other adult social care consultations which were of a higher priority to them.

A Appendix 1

Written Response Received by email:

I read both the Report and the Consultation documents with interest and I have to say that I have a number of concerns which I will address in the order of your consultation paper.

Northamptonshire County Council is proposing to expand its existing provision for long term care beds for older people and people with dementia. This is in recognition of the growing demand for Dementia care and Dementia respite care as well as the rising complexity of care within the ageing population.

The only issue I have with this is the potential to have detrimental impact on Service Users who would be full cost. Given the shortage of beds within the county for a number of reasons, by making more of your bed purchases as "Block Contracts" this reduces the number of beds available to full cost Service Users. They already subsidise funded Service Users, so for the bed availability to be reduced would not be fair or equitable.

Part of the challenge for the Council is to consider how best to use its existing contracts and providers to fulfil these needs and ensure that we are getting value for money from our contracted suppliers. Making sure we do this is important as it is normally less cost effective to buy care on an individual basis than it is to secure good quality provision that can meet a range of needs in a higher volume, in what are known as "block contracts". We need to make sure we achieve value for money as this is the only way we can be sure that we have enough resources to meet the needs of the County's population at a time of limited budgets and reduced government funding.

Whilst there is no issue with Block Contracts as they are normally excellent value for money, I see two issues here, the first is the shortage of beds within the county. The question for me is "How are you going to increase the number of beds available, given there have been a number of homes closed over the last year?". Secondly, there are issues around ensuring Block Contracts are complied with. The question for me is "What extra safeguards are going to be out in place to ensure the Contracted Beds are fully utilised and the council does not end up paying for empty beds?"

However we have found that the beds are not being used as much as the Council would like and that the level of vacant beds suggests that we need to do more of some things and stop providing others. In particulate we need to recognise that we now need facilities for more complex needs than we assumed when we first entered into the contract.

This is the same old issue and the argument used for a reduction in Respite Beds at Longlands, several years ago. When I asked for the "Bed State" the figures quoted did not match the figures being used to justify reducing the number of Respite Beds. The figure you are quoting of 48% vacancy level leads to another question "If, the Vacancy Level is 48% then why has this issue not been dealt with sooner?"

The proposal is therefore that that the beds will be changed to provide more long-term residential and nursing care and more support for dementia patients, including respite care and short stay accommodation. As such they will become our specialist centres that can more effectively meet the complex needs for people living with Dementia, provide support to their families and they can also provide the required specialist nursing care required if people's

needs escalate without the need to move them to new care facilities. There are around 7,700 people living with dementia in Northamptonshire and this number is set to grow, so making more beds available for dementia care will help address the rising demand for support.

My main issue here is the three remaining Shaw Care Homes are in Turn Furlong, Northampton, Spinneyfields, Rushden and Thackley Green, Corby and this leaves the South Northamptonshire and Daventry without any additional beds. This is not acceptable as a number of homes in South Northamptonshire have closed over the last year. The public transport is non-existent and therefore the families of Service Users who are placed away from the area may not be able to visit them. Older Service Users placed in care are likely to have partners who are elderly and no longer able to drive therefore they will not be able to visit them thus isolating the Service User from their families.

By increasing the amount of these kinds of beds across the County we can offer greater choice and more specialist support for those effected by dementia. The beds would be available to all but priority would be given to people who are eligible for social care.

This statement is inaccurate because the number of available beds will not be increased in South Northamptonshire and Daventry. I do not see this as fair or equitable for Service Users requiring care and living in this part of the county. This raises the question "What are you going to do to improve the situation for Service Users requiring permanent care in these parts of the county.

The major changes under consideration are for those service users who are deemed eligible for social care funded by the Council and for whom the block contracts will be offered as a first choice in future. As with all placements this will only be done where the centres can meet the needs of the cared for person including appropriate services, facilities, care levels and wider health and wellbeing standards required by the council.

I do not have an issue with Block Contract Beds being offered as a first choice to social care funded service users. However, I do see an inequality and lack of fairness for privately funded Service Users. The County Council talks about treating all Service Users fairly and equitably but this indicates there is an inherent unfairness and inequality here in that priority to the Block Contract Beds will be given to Social Care funded Service Users.

B Appendix 2 Copy of Consultation Register Text

Title: Utilising Block Residential Care Contracts- to Facilitate Greater Choice

Start date: 23rd December 2016

End date: 1st February 2017

Results expected: 15th February 2017

Overview:

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The Council is wishing to seek the views of all interested parties in its proposal presented to its Cabinet meeting in November 2016.

Areas: Countywide

Participation Instructions:

You can give us your views by emailing epit@northamptonshire.gov.uk with your comments.

Alternatively you can write to us at the below address

Engagement, Participation and Involvement Team
Northamptonshire County Council
Room 129, County Hall
PO Box 177
Northampton
NN1 1AY

The consultation findings will be considered and presented to Councillors at a meeting of its Cabinet in early 2017

Participation Links:

- A PDF copy of November 2016 Cabinet Paper



**Utilising Block
Residential Care Coi**

Contact Name: Engagement, Participation and Involvement Team

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