

Proposals for Service User Research

Background

London Borough of Hackney Governance Scrutiny Commission is conducting a *Whole Place, Whole Person review on long term Unemployment related to mental health* review in the municipal year 2014/15. The review is being led by the Chair of the Commission, Cllr Rick Muir. The Commission comprises of 5 Councillors and their work is supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Team in the Chief Executive's Directorate. The Commission's final report and the Cabinet Member's response will go to Cabinet meeting.

Councils' are facing a set of tough and complex pressures. Local government is facing a decline in revenue alongside the increasing need for services to residents. These early years of austerity have been characterised by authorities taking action to reduce costs through a range of measures. Local authorities have responded decisively – but further spending cuts loom.

Prolonged austerity is driving an important shift in local government. Local public services need to be viewed in a much more holistic way, with a focus on how multiple organisations, and citizens themselves, can contribute to securing desired outcomes. This new landscape will require fundamentally different organisational cultures and behaviours to make it successful.

Taking a medium to long term focus the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission decided its review will consider new ways public sector services locally, could work more cost efficiently to improve service user outcomes in Hackney that will support officers to redesign the way public services work.

Taking the principles of Total Place, Troubled Families and Community Budgets, the Commission wishes to look at how services can be delivered to meet service user needs in a more efficient and cost effective way. This review will including looking at the total spend of a service area to consider how the organisation's services collectively can be provided differently.

Context

In the context of continued budgetary pressures, developing systems that accurately measure the impact of interventions clearly remains a critical challenge. As councils make an honest appraisal of what the future holds, many are redefining their purpose and role and finding new ways of working. However, taking an outcomes based approach brings its own challenges. Councils need to have a good understanding of the cost of delivering outcomes on a multi-organisational basis across their areas.

In Hackney there are 27,000 on welfare benefits. A high proportion of those on benefits are long term unemployed approximately 14,000. A worklessness review

Draft Document Not Agreed

carried out by Council in 2009 / 2010 made the following findings related to the long term unemployed:

- There are around 14,000 adults who are long term unemployed in the borough and this number has not changed in the last decade
- These levels are higher than the national and London average
- Existing programmes for support into work have not impacted this group in Hackney
- Just under half of those LT unemployed in Hackney relate to experiences of mental health problems
- Full implementation of the welfare reform changes are likely to impact this group significantly.

It is estimated around 13 million has been spent locally on employment support for this group which has not changed in the last decade. The Commission has chosen to focus on LT unemployed with mental health because this is the largest category on LT unemployment benefits in Hackney. If individuals from this cohort receive health support it is through adult social care. However many people fall below the threshold for adult social care support and thus enter into the employment programme.

The LT unemployed are a vulnerable group, who have not benefited from generic support programmes. The single work programme assessment favours physical disability and not mental health. The Commission was informed many people from this cohort treated in the employment programme do not follow a linear sequence, instead their pathway is chaotic. Quite often this has meant people fall out of the programme.

The barriers above are further compounded by the changes to the labour market which has made it harder for this group to get back into employment; because once a service user has transitioned to IB/ESA, it takes great effort to get employers to view them as employable.

Review

The Commission believes that only way to meet this challenge while protecting provision, is to radically rethink how services operate, focusing on the big spend areas and looking across existing service silos.

The work of the Commission will involve the following pieces of work:

1. Review of existing research and data on this group - demographic characteristics, type of health problems experienced, analysis of causal factors
2. New qualitative research with Hackney citizens who are LT unemployed linked to mental illness to understand triggers, barriers, interaction with services
3. Collecting evidence from other authorities doing innovative research and work in this area
4. Discussions with partner organisations locally so that we understand the range of existing programmes and their views on what needs to change

Draft Document Not Agreed

5. Calculation of how much money could be saved if more preventative and more effective measures were taken with this group
6. Consider what successful outcomes might look like for this group.

Further to point 2 above and to understand their views about the role of the Council and its partners and the barriers they face to achieving the desired support and outcome. Councillors want to hear the services users' story and explore what their needs, requirements are from services, support and their desired entry point into services.

This qualitative research will give Councillors a detailed understanding of the service user's journey giving clarity of their needs from services and support and information on their experiences accessing the existing services and support available.

Aims of research

The Council's previous cross cutting review of worklessness helped the organisation to understand the benefit claimant profile in Hackney. Through this exercise they looked at the provision offered and commissioned. This highlighted that employability was not a guaranteed output and there was a series of factors that needed to be taken into consideration. The Council is following up on this previous cross cutting review to establish how local services can be provided more efficiently whilst meeting the needs of service users early to prevent high spend / need.

The key aim within the review is to support prevention and identify the causes of high spend/need, to consider how service providers can provide earlier intervention to better meet the needs of service users. This research will enable Councillors to see the service users' journey, through services, understand how they interact with services, identify the entry points into service / support and the outcomes achieved as a result of the service and support received.

Carrying out this research will enable the Commission to feed the voice of the service user into the Council's cross cutting review to help service providers understand the needs of service users and consider how they can create better links between services to reduce demand for this group.

Through the research with service users Members wish to:

- Get an understanding of the causes of LT unemployment connected to mental illness in Hackney
- Identify the barriers this group face to re-entering the labour market or engaging in education and wider social participation
- Assess the effectiveness of existing programmes locally that engage with this group.

Objective of research

To enable service providers to design a service that supports the service users and meets their needs. Councillors wish to start with the service users voice talking to

Draft Document Not Agreed

Hackney's people about the problems they face, rather than services and their objectives.

The objective is to help to reduce duplication of support and services to the same individual by having services designed around earlier intervention or at the point of need, thus being more effective.

Councillors wish to find out about the:

- Service user experience of services and their knowledge of where to go to get support and access services
- the triggers, barriers, interaction with services for the LT unemployed linked to mental illness
- Service users experience of services and support statutory and non-statutory service providers.
- An understanding of the service user journey and at what point they access support services
- An understanding of what the cohort see as successful outcomes for them and what support they may require to achieve these outcomes

Methodology and service user profile

To make recommendations the Commission will need to understand and obtain the views of Hackney residents who are LT unemployed and on IB/ESA. We particularly welcome input from the contractor on how participants could be recruited. Any experiences of working on similar projects with the agencies and service providers listed below are welcomed.

It is noted IB claimants do not attend JCP offices regularly and that there would be data protections issues in relation to accessing data on individuals from social services agencies and in relation to contacting clients directly in writing.

This research is being organised as part of the scrutiny review which is a Member led process. This research should be carried out in a setting that the participants feel comfortable in. This may impact on the choice of venue.

As it is likely participants will be in receipt of benefits, payments or honoraria (whether cash, voucher or in-kind) must be compatible with the rules of their benefit entitlements and not put participants or the Council at risk of violating any benefit conditions. In addition they should receive a good standard of refreshment (a light buffet meal with drinks on arrival is suggested) and travel expenses or travel provision, where permissible.

Criteria

It is suggested that the participants comprise of **20** residents and that the composition of the group is broadly representative of the current socio demographic profile of those LT unemployed with MH issues such as:

- age
- gender

Draft Document Not Agreed

- ethnicity
- housing tenure.

Obviously with a small group this may be problematic but when selecting the final membership of the group, it is requested the contractor bear the above criteria in mind.

Councillors are seeking to elicit views from a specific range of individuals and recommend that the following categories be used if possible:

- (a) A range of IB /EAS benefit claimants with at least half the group experiencing mental health
- (b) Participants 35 years old and above.
- (c) A long term IB claimant who is still seeking work or ESA claimant who is in the “Ways into Work Programme” or JCP Work Programme / flexible Fund and who would still like to work.
- (d) An individual who has an employment history.
- (e) An individual who has been out of work for 12 months or longer.

Key:
IB – Incapacity Benefit
ESA – Employment and Support Allowance
JSA – Job Seekers Allowance
JCP – Job Centre Plus

Notwithstanding the diversity of this group we would ask that the facilitator make every effort to frame questions to which all the participants could respond or have a view.

It is suggested the research takes the form of one to one interviews with service users and their support worker (if required). This is due to the vulnerability of the service user cohort (long term unemployed local residents on IB/ESA linked to mental health) and sensitivities of the issues being discussed.

Members would like you to speak to service users who access support or services through the following:

- Statutory providers – LBH (Adult Social Care), East London Foundation Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group (their commissioned organisations)
- Job Centre Plus – Work programme and JCP Flexible Fund
- Other providers – VCS grant programme (providers not commissioned), Ways into Work Team and Public Health grants programme.

Reason for commissioning

The service user qualitative research conducted will feed into the cross cutting review being carried out by the Council to influence and shape service provision

Draft Document Not Agreed

locally. The key aim is to support prevention and identify the causes of high spend/need, to consider how earlier intervention such as better links between services can reduce demand.

The vulnerability of the service user cohort and sensitivities of the issues being discussed, will require an experienced facilitator and moderator to capture their views and the information required; that will enable local providers and commissioners to redesign the way public services work to meet service user needs more efficiently and cost effectively.

Cllr Rick Muir
Chair of Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission

DRAFT