



In-house service, the way forward

Adult Social Care in Barnet



Barnet UNISON Office

Barnet House,
1255 High Road,
Whetstone
London N20 0EJ
Tel. 020 8359 2088
FAX 020 8446 5245
Email: contactus@barnetunison.org.uk
www.barnetunison.me.uk

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Dexter Whitfield, Director
Adjunct Associate Professor, Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre,
University of Adelaide
Mobile +353 87 7055509
Tel. +353 66 7130225
Email: dexter.whitfield@gmail.com
Web: www.european-services-strategy.org.uk

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Adult Social Care

This report is a response to the Revised business case on Adult Social Care alternative delivery vehicle and implementation of the new operating model to the Adults and Safeguarding Committee, 19 September 2016. It follows earlier detailed reports by Barnet UNISON in November 2015 and March 2016 expressing deep concern about the Council's proposals for Adult Social Care.

Recommendations to Committee

Barnet UNISON:

- Endorses the recommendation to continue to develop and improve the in-house service working with staff and UNISON.
- Recommends that a joint working approach with the NHS be adopted rather than a "shared services" model.

In-house service

We welcome the recommendation to develop and improve the in-house service. Public consultation clearly supported the in-house option (50% strongly or tended to support) with 41% similar support for a NHS "shared services" model. Only 14% expressed similar support for a public service model.

The revised business case and Committee report make the case for the retention and improvement of the in-house service. Both reports emphasize that *"...a council managed service is the most tried and tested delivery option"* (para 2.5, Committee Report).

Joint working with NHS

We believe that selecting a "shared services" organisational model, for example, an Accountable Care Organisation, is likely to be a distraction, because it will inevitably be consumed in legal, financial, employer and other organisational matters. Instead of the traditional response of setting up new organisations that frequently deliver only slightly improved services, we urge the Council to focus on working with service users and staff to improve service delivery by concentrating on working methods, systems coordination and accountability.

This strategy is supported for the following reasons:

Firstly, the focus should be on methods of improving service delivery through coordination and integration of working methods rather than an organisational model. A joint working approach has the benefit of identifying the services that are best suited to joint working and to make specific operational arrangements that maximise benefits to service users, the Council and NHS.

Secondly, the Council recently agreed to take mental health services back in-house from the NHS, so it seems perverse to propose that Adult Services should now enter into a "shared service" model with the NHS.

Thirdly, the lack of time frame – the Committee report refers only to 2017, but given the financial and operational problems and uncertainties in the NHS, the time frame could easily turn out to be much longer.

Finally, there is already a legal framework, Section 75 agreements (National Health Service Act 2006), under which joint working arrangements have, and could continue to be developed for identifiable service groups and/or specific health and social care needs.

Staff engagement

Staff and UNISON engagement will be critically important in all stages of the development, testing and training for a new operating system and in determining the scope, viability and assessment of coordinating and integrating Barnet Council services with the NHS.

Other improvements

The new operating system for Adult Social Care should carefully consider whether there is a continuing need for a commissioning function. The integration of client and contractor functions could make a significant contribution to savings.

References

London Borough of Barnet (2016) Revised business case on adult social care alternative delivery vehicle and implementation of the new operating model, Report to Adults and Safeguarding Committee, 19 September,

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s34553/Revised%20Business%20Case%20on%20Adult%20Social%20Care%20Alternative%20Delivery%20Vehicle%20and%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Ne.pdf>

London Borough of Barnet (2016) Appendix A: Changing the way we deliver and organise adult social care in Barnet, Report to Adults and Safeguarding Committee, 19 September,

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s34554/Appendix%20A.pdf>

London Borough of Barnet (2016) Appendix B: Revised Business Case:

Adult social care alternative delivery vehicle, Report to Adults and Safeguarding Committee, 19 September, <http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s34555/Appendix%20B.pdf>