

Response to Cllr. Mallett's questions - Adult Social Care Select Committee,

14 February 2013

1) Is Squirrel Lodge now fully occupied?

Six individuals (representing the total capacity of Squirrel Lodge) have been assessed and are moving into Squirrel Lodge.

Three individuals have already moved in.

Another person is due to move in on 24th February, following a phased transition plan (he has been doing familiarisation visits).

A further individual is also due to move into the flat at Squirrel Lodge at the end of February. He has been undergoing a phased transition whilst alterations have been carried out to flat by his family (he has had a bath fitted).

The final individual is due to move in March. He requires a longer transition period due to his needs.

2) Members will have received a letter from GMB outlining that Care Workers employed by Surrey CC contractor, Prospect Housing & Care, are being paid at less than the minimum wage.

Prospect have assured Surrey County Council that no person employed is paid below the minimum wage (£6.19 an hour).

Most people are being paid above the living wage (£7.45 an hour). Further explanation of the Minimum and Living wage can be found in Annex 1 below.

A small number of Prospect staff (around 2%) are being paid below the living wage (£6.95 per hour). These staff are already on these terms so they are **not** affected by harmonisation.

Prospect has stated that they intend to bring those wages above the living wage when they are in a position to do so.

For those people affected by the harmonisation, no person will be on a lower hourly rate than £8.48 per hour.

Information has also been supplied that if Prospect cannot reduce costs further than what has already been negotiated, then Surrey CC will not make any further referrals to Prospect for care services.

There has been no request for any further reduction, than those agreed with all providers who wished to become Strategic providers.

Negotiations with individual providers started in 2010 and were based on 3 criteria:

- In year efficiencies
- Hourly rates
- Volume rebates

All of the above are underpinned by improved quality.

No terms are imposed on any of our providers.

Those that we are unable to reach agreement with retain their existing clients unless re-assessments indicates a need for a move. However they are no longer part of the automatic referral process.

Those we reach agreement with are allocated a Relationship Manager and receive referrals on a regular basis.

The Adults Social Care Committee has already received presentations from two other companies, (one a not-for-profit company), whose staff are being paid headline wages due to these companies being forced into what is an effective franchise arrangement. Under this arrangement these companies are being forced to return significant funds to Surrey C. C. monthly. This arrangement appears again to be on the basis that Surrey will otherwise put these companies out of business by terminating contracts for the care of Learning Difficulty persons.

This question is answered by the response above.

Is the Surrey C.C . management satisfied that this coercion to accept terms which significantly change the original care contracts and which result in distressingly unsatisfactory employment terms for care workers, ethical and something which the Surrey C.C. wishes to be associated with?

As indicated above, no providers have had terms imposed upon them. Those that we are unable to reach agreement with retain their current business.

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