Nottinghamshire County Council

Obesity Prevention and Weight Management Consultation
Summary

This report is a summary of the key findings identified through the consultation of obesity prevention and weight management services in Nottinghamshire undertaken between 7th October 2013 and 31st December 2013. The aim of the consultation process was to understand views and opinions about a new proposed model for the delivery of obesity prevention and weight management services from as wide a range of stakeholders and the general public. The findings have been considered and recommendations made in preparation to go out for tender in February 2014.

A number of methods were used as part of the consultation process:

- Questionnaire - online and paper
- Young people's questionnaire - online
- Consultation events (3)
- Service user focus groups (11)
- Textual data collection

A total of 97 responses to the questionnaire were received (63 online and 34 paper copies) and three stakeholder events took place with 111 individuals attending. Responses to the general questionnaire and consultation events suggest that people are on the whole supportive of the proposed model which is seen as a consistent approach for the county and holistic way forward, taking a similar approach to other the models used in other areas of the country. Preventative/early intervention services are seen as being important and respondents were positive to see that weight management services are to be commissioned. Many disliked the box in the model which included the word 'discharge' and felt the need to see more positive on-going support for individuals to maintain weight loss and behaviour changes including community and voluntary sector healthy lifestyle opportunities (especially around physical activity) and peer support. Further work is needed on the outcome and performance management measures for the service specification. The themes consistently identified were: integration; loss of current services; access; person centred approach; criteria, meeting demand and timescales; staff knowledge and training and communication, consistency of messages and marketing.

In terms of considering if weight management services should be offered alongside other lifestyle services it was felt that efficiencies could be gained and the approach may address equity and access issues, however it may be too complex to commission and there was concern about the potential to dilute expertise and services.

A total of 44 people completed the young people's questionnaire. Children, young people and adults are supportive of preventative services which increase physical activity and improve healthy eating; as well as weight management for children and young people who are overweight or obese. Respondents would like to see a variety of preventative interventions in a range of settings including schools, youth clubs, with a large majority of respondents keen to see the establishment of community cooking courses and physical activity sessions being offered.

In terms of weight management for children and young people many stated that weight management should be offered through school based sessions. This is thought-provoking as some children opt out of the National Child Measurement Programme because of fear of being judged in

school; this should be explored further with children, young people and school communities to see if this is achievable and yet also protective of children and young people who may be considered overweight or obese.

Eleven sessions were held across Nottinghamshire with focus groups of service users of all currently commissioned obesity prevention and weight management services including exercise referral schemes, community nutrition and weight management services. A total of 80 service users attended across all 11 focus groups.

A number of themes were consistently expressed by the focus groups. Service users were interested in the social aspect of the services, and the opportunities afforded to get out and meet people, which they would not otherwise have been able to do. They were concerned that the services should be holistic, and not focus on just weight loss, for example. There was repeated mention of the service users' relationship with their GP. The key person delivering the service was the focus of a lot of comments. There were concerns expressed over the future of the service. Service users also expressed their views about how accessible the services were, and about the length of time they were able to access the services for.

The work with service user focus groups has identified that overall satisfaction with services is good, especially with the individuals who are delivering the interventions at the front line and with the psycho-social aspects of the services. There were concerns that the services were insufficiently holistic or individualised, however, at the same time as concerns that change was not necessary on a grand scale and fears that services would be diluted or undermined by change. Where change is desirable, the focus groups felt that it should be to make services more tailored to them. There was also the feeling that Tier 1 of the model should be the focus of investment in order to stop problems taking hold.

In addition the consultation email received 11 responses which included

- Letters and completed questionnaires from different organisations (3)
- Comments from professionals (2)
- Comments from the general public (2)
- Offer of venue options for sessions when services are in place (2)
- A request that the Chrysallis programme delivered in Retford continues in its current format (1)
- Complaint about the religions included in the equality monitoring data (1)

Two letters were received via the post. Both were from service users who had attended a service user focus group. In addition, a petition signed by 19 people was also received to urge commissioners to continue to support the ongoing Chrysallis programme in Retford and to consider it be used as the model for wider development of services across the county.

Recommendations

- To review and amend the proposed system model for obesity prevention and weight management service provision for adults (including pregnant women) and children in Nottinghamshire County to support sustained behaviour change so that it includes universal prevention and on-going support through the community/voluntary sector and peers/family.

- To further develop the outcome and performance measures for the service specification particularly around pregnant women.

- To undertake work to identify potential numbers accessing different parts of the model and the associated costs to enable a greater understanding around need and demand.

- To consider offering obesity prevention/weight management services alongside other lifestyle support services such as stop smoking, drugs/+ alcohol in the future.

- The service specification to be developed so that it supports the commissioning of an integrated obesity prevention and weight management system.

- The service specification to ensure that age appropriate preventative and weight management services for children and young people that are accessible and non-judgemental are provided

- The service specification to ensure that service provision is person-centred, flexible to meet need and provide evening and weekend sessions.

- The service specification to ensure that a communication and marketing strategy and action plan is developed as part of the service provision.

- The new service provider/s to gain a more detailed view of what weight management support should be available for children and young people.

- The new service provider/s to ensure staff have been provided with appropriate training including motivational interviewing skills and techniques.

- The new service provider/s and to provide brief intervention training for 'frontline' staff to be able to raise the issue of obesity. This will include consistent information on healthy eating and physical activity and how to signpost to services.