

# Portsmouth Carers' Voice ("PCV")

Report to the Portsmouth City Council ("PCC")  
Carers' Executive Board  
Friday 2 June 2017



## Private & confidential document

### 1. Introduction

1.1. The Executive Board last met on 23 January 2017.

1.2. Two members of PCV attended that meeting:

- Andrew Parsons, Chair
- Gill Harmer, Vice-Chair.

1.3. At that meeting PCV raised two key issues raised in earlier meetings:

1.3.1. Lack of respite care.

1.3.2. Lack of any organisational document to help carers.

1.4. This brief report aims to:

- Inform the Executive Board about the key things that have and have not happened from PCV's point of view since the last January meeting.
- Make a few practical suggestions.
- Inform the Board about future PCV events this year.

### 2. Key things that have and have not happened since 23 January 2017 from PCV's point of view

2.1. From PCV's point of view very little has happened since 23 January 2017.

2.2. There remains a lack of respite care and there is still no organisational document to help carers.

2.3. This is very disappointing and it has caused two valuable long-standing Committee members, Sue Dawkins and Anona Harris to resign.

- 2.4. Anona resigned saying she thinks PCV is “just a talking shop”, which is a sad and indicting comment from someone who has spent years volunteering to help carers.
- 2.5. The PCV Committee has recorded its thanks to both Sue and Anona for all their past efforts, unanimously welcomed their experience and wants them to if at all possible stay involved with PCV. (What is decided at any future Executive Board meeting might help persuade them PCV is not just a “talking shop”).

### **3. Respite Care**

- 3.1. On a positive note, Angela Dryer (PCC Deputy Director of Adult Services) has been helpful. By email dated 10 March 2017 Angela replied quickly to an email sent by PCV Committee member Brian Bradshaw, helpfully explaining the then position regarding respite care. PCV wishes its thanks for her help to be noted.
- 3.2. At the PCV Forum held on 18 May 2017 Rachael Roberts (PCC Senior Manager responsible for the Carers’ Service) and Clare Rachwal (PCC Team Manager at the Carers’ Centre) mentioned that the City Council was likely to fund a “trial” respite care bed at Cosham Court Nursing Home for one year and that in the first instance bookings would be dealt with by the Carers’ Centre.
- 3.3. PCV welcomes this new development and has asked whether the facility at Cosham Court will definitely be available so that it can be publicised at the Carers’ Information Day on 13 June 2017.
- 3.4. PCV has also asked that the cost to carers of using this trial facility is made clear up-front and carers are made aware they will need an assessment by a suitably qualified social worker.
- 3.5. One bed is a start. More are however required because there are already concerns that Cosham Court is not universally suitable. For example, one PCV member has recently visited and expressed concerns to Angela Dryer that many of the residents appear to be very elderly, some receiving end-of-life care and many confined to their beds. By contrast her husband is an intelligent 67 year old man, who although physically disabled needs plenty of activities and stimulation. (He previously Corben Lodge when she needed respite and that was ideally suited to meet his needs).
- 3.6. Overall, in practical terms it sadly seems that little progress has been made since the issue of lack of suitable respite care was raised years ago.
- 3.7. Such lack of progress has caused one of the senior and experienced members of PCV to resign, describing PCV as “just a talking shop”.

### **4. Practical suggestions regarding respite care**

- 4.1. The fundamental problem still seems to be that there are too few beds available for respite care caused by a combination of:

- Cuts to funding, causing all concerned in the provision of care serious worry and difficulty.
- (Linked to the above). Care homes closing and those still surviving naturally focusing on long-term beds.
- The apparent continued lack of priority given to respite care when allocating limited budgets.

4.2. PCV is realistic. It understands that not much can be done, (at least not unless there is significant political change), to remedy the first two causes. The third and last cause is however different. PCV suggests that quite apart from being the decent human thing to do, although “money is tight” it makes financial sense to allocate scarce resources to properly fund respite care.

4.3. By way of simple example, if a carer is denied any respite care something eventually has to give. Their own health will inevitably suffer. Denying them respite care can accordingly lead to the awful (and from provision of care point of view very expensive) scenario of both the carer and the person for whom they care being hospitalised and requiring long-term support of various kinds.

## **5. Organisational document to help carers**

5.1. For over a year PCV has been pressing for such a document to be produced.

5.2. Such a document is important and many carers have made clear it is important, including in the face-to-face meeting and discussion carers had with Innes Richens (PCC Chief Operating Officer) at the PCV Carers’ Information Day at the Portsmouth Guildhall on 11 October 2016. To understand its importance, one needs to place oneself in the shoes of a carer, or even more importantly in the shoes of someone who might for the first time realise they are or might be a carer because there are many people who are carers without realising it. Then one needs to imagine what it is like to try to find out who can help. That is currently a daunting task. Carers are currently put off. All too often they give up trying to speak to the right person.

5.3. This hopefully explains why there is currently a dire need for a clear guide.

5.4. The issue of producing an organisational document has been raised at a series of Carers’ Executive Board Meetings held on 20 October 2016 and 23 January 2017. The most recent agreed action to be taken (Item No. 2 in the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2017 was that Clare Rachwal, Team Manager at the Carers’ Centre, would finalise and print a chart/diagram to show main organisations/providers in the City with whom carers may come into contact by the end of March 2017.

5.5. Reasons given for not producing it have so far ranged from it being “impossible” to being not worthwhile because “everything keeps changing”. Despite this, PCV still thinks it both possible and indeed important for an organisational document/chart to be produced.

5.6. At the PCV Forum held on 18 May 2017 Clare Rachwal and Sara Langston (who deals with information and advice in Adult Social Care) mentioned a new proposal to create a web-based directory, which seems to be a good idea.

5.7. PCV is however concerned that when carers asked if there was a time-table for completing such a directory the answer received was that it was “impossible” to estimate how long it would take.

5.8. In summary PCV fears the issue of producing an organisational document will be delayed yet further and believes further delay is unacceptable.

## **6. Practical suggestions regarding an organisational document to help carers**

6.1. Far greater priority should be given to producing such a document and a deadline date for a 1<sup>st</sup> draft to be produced should be agreed.

6.2. This issue should not be left solely to any one person, be Clare Rachwal or Sara Langston. A team should be working on it, giving it priority.

6.3. Ideally the organisational document should encompass all organisations involved in provision of care to make it useful to all carers, including carers of adults, children, disabled persons and addicts.

## **7. Future PCV events this year**

7.1. A list summarising PCV events this year is attached.

7.2. The main PCV events this year are:

- **Wednesday 21 June 2017** at 2.15pm – Carers’ Special Service at St Jude’s Church, Southsea.
- **Tuesday 13 June 2017** from 10am to 2pm – Carers’ Information Day at the Portsmouth Guildhall, Main Hall.
- **Thursday 23 November 2017** from 11.30am to 2pm – PCV Forum at the Cockleshell Community Centre, Henderson Road, Eastney, Portsmouth PO4 9SJ.

7.3. Regarding the Carers’ Information Day on 13 June, partners so far involved with the event are PCC Adult Social Care, the Carers’ Centre, Portsmouth Hospitals Trust, Solent NHS, Action Portsmouth and Healthwatch. PCV would ideally like both Innes Richens and Angela Dryer to speak at the event, with time to listen and answer questions afterwards.

7.4. Regarding Committee Meeting and Forums, all carers and those involved professionally in the provision of care are welcome. Their success depends on such attendance.

## **8. Important general question**

8.1. An important general question PCV would like to raise is:

**On what care issues do all those involved in the provision of care services, (including the City Council, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Solent NHS Trust and Portsmouth Healthwatch), think Portsmouth Carers' Voice can be of particular help and make a useful contribution?**

8.2. If the answer to this question is that there are no such issues, the sad conclusion might be reached that there is no point to Portsmouth Carers' Voice. On the other hand, if there are such issues, it would be really helpful for PCV to know what they are perceived to be to better help it make a useful contribution.

**Andrew Parsons**

**Chair**

**Portsmouth Carers' Voice**

**Friday 2 June 2017**

## Portsmouth Carers' Voice

### Dates of Committee Meetings, Forums and Special Events



**Portsmouth Carers' Voice Committee Meetings** take place at Action Portsmouth Office, All Saints Church, 338 Commercial Road, Portsmouth PO1 4BT on the following dates in 2017:

- Thurs 16 Feb, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 16 March, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 27 April, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 25 May, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 22 June, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 20 July, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 24 August, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 21 Sept, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 19 Oct, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 16 Nov, 2pm-4pm
- Thurs 14 Dec, 2pm-4pm

### Portsmouth Carers Voice Forum Meetings

- **Thurs 16 March** 11.30am-2pm, Cockleshell Community Centre, Henderson Road, Eastney, Portsmouth PO4 9SJ
- **Thurs 18 May** 11.30am-2pm, Blue Lagoon, Hilsea Lido, London Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth PO2 9RP
- **Thurs 23 November** 11.30am-2pm, Cockleshell Community Centre, Henderson Road, Eastney, Portsmouth PO4 9SJ

### Carers' Special Service

- **Wednesday 21 June 2017** at 2.15pm at St Jude's Church, Southsea.

### Carers' Information Day

- **Tuesday 13 June 2017** 10am-2pm, Portsmouth Guildhall, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2AB