

## **Via Response to Representation 12 March 2024**

Consultation on the measures intended by Via following the transfer of the Community Drug & Alcohol Services for Adults in Gloucestershire on 01 April 2024 opened on 10 January 2024 and closed on 06 March 2024.

We believe we have properly informed and consulted in a meaningful way. We have responded to individual questions and feedback both in person at 121s, and by email.

Our written response to the representation made by James Bentley is as follows:

### **Deputy Manager Position:**

We acknowledge the comments appreciate your concerns. We have revised our staff structure, a copy of which is available on the microsite. We are confident that our revised structure will best support the service. We are further confident that we will successfully recruit to any vacant posts and a recruitment campaign is already underway in terms of planning so that we can advertise without delay at the appropriate time. We have seen potential for some of these posts to be filled internally and staff will have opportunities to pursue, post transfer, if they wish to. We will also test the external market and ensure that recruitment criteria are fully met. We are confident that we can continue to provide support and work with all staff to deliver the best possible services for people in the county.

Please note on the staff structure: *\*The representation of the Forest of Dean with Stroud is to represent line management responsibilities only.* Staff covering this area will be able to travel from and work within the Gloucester hub. All current locations remain, including satellite bases, and we'll be looking to work with the staff team and those who use our services to develop and further our reach.

### **Concerns About Women's Only Practitioners**

We're working in a collaborative way with our Partners and stakeholders, to ensure best provision for those who use our Services. The Via Recovery Practitioner is a generic role, albeit practitioners will be assigned to teams and specialisms. We want to ensure there is capacity, and choice, for those who use our Services. We acknowledge there is no Women's Only Recovery Practitioner in the Via staff structure at present.

### **Mandatory Qualification**

At Via we invest in the CPD of our staff. Support to fund and complete an externally accredited qualification, specifically in the field of substance misuse has been well received at the 121s. The requirement for a qualified workforce is in line with Dame

Carol Black's report, as is the requirement for an evidenced-based, qualified workforce employed in a CQC Registered Service.

Staff completing the qualification will be supported with one Study Day per month, up to a maximum of 12 days. It is anticipated the qualification will take 12 months to complete. Individual circumstances will be considered, and specifics will be discussed and explained as part of the on-line event lead by Via's Learning & Development Team and as part of the induction.

### **Industrial Action Considerations**

We believe we have informed and consulted in a transparent and meaningful way throughout. We have been truthful and consistent. The employee information was received on 29 February 2024. The information is extensive, and we have carefully reviewed it. Individual employee letters have been sent to CGL for distribution, pretransfer. These letters confirm Via as the new employer from 01 April 2024; they contain job match details and confirm existing contractual terms and conditions. We consider the timeline between receiving and then reviewing, processing and providing written confirmations to be reasonable in the circumstances and meets with our legal obligations under the Regulations.

Our initial measures letter stated, "*Whilst we do not envisage a redundancy situation arising, we cannot confirm until we are in receipt of all Employee Liability Information requested...*" We are now able to confirm that we do not foresee a redundancy situation arising.

### **Concerns with Nursing Staff**

We have listened to the feedback about clinical provision and would like to thank everyone for their valuable input. We have revised the (clinical) staff structure and a full copy of the revised structure is available on the microsite. Rather than a reduction in nursing provision, you will see increased provision, with 1.0FTE Health & Wellbeing Nurse (3.0FTE in total) and 1.0FTE Independent Prescriber (3.0FTE in total) supporting each of the main hubs.

### **Upcoming Survey Design**

The representation dated 16 February 2024 is the only written representation received from the Elected Representatives in relation to the consultation about the transfer.

We have not received survey results other than the reference made by James to potential action regarding a potential redundancy situation. We are pleased that no such redundancy situation has arisen in any event.

Post transfer we are always keen to hear the views from our staff teams. Feedback is welcomed and valued; there are always opportunities for all staff at Via to input their thoughts ideas and feedback.