



Cllr Rob Jarrett
Cllr Anne Pissaridou
Cllr Andrew Wealls
Julia Riches

6 March 2014

Dear Cllr Jarrett, Cllr Pissaridou, Cllr Wealls and Ms Riches

Re: Request for CAMHS to be called to account

As you know, mASCot have made huge efforts to highlight the plight of many ASC families struggling to get the help they need and help that, on paper, is being provided. We are now finalising our Scrutiny feedback and will send as soon as it is finished.

The scrutiny started with a call for CAMHS to be investigated and the CYPOSC then widened the remit to look at all services. The most problematic service is CAMHS and yet this is the service that has evaded scrutiny. We understand this is not the first time CAMHS have failed to fully respond when asked to give evidence at a scrutiny review. We presume this is because the Trust is not accountable to the city council and therefore does not feel obliged to respond. We therefore ask who is responsible for ensuring services provided for residents of the city are meeting needs and are accountable?

The Scrutiny is in its final stages and as such the mASCot committee are now writing, as a **matter of urgency**, to strongly request that in the interest of public accountability, CAMHS be further questioned about their performance and service provision as new issues have come to light;

1. Recent developments at Sussex Partnership Trust (appalling staff engagement revelations) and,
2. A deeply concerning PaCC Connect CAMHS meeting 4 March 2014

This week two of the mASCot committee, Lisa Yates, and Paula Donovan, attended a Parent Carers' Council PaCC Connect (focus group) to discuss Mental Health and Wellbeing - focussing on support and services for parent carers and children with special needs. Senior mental health care professionals/manager from CAMHS attended:

- Peter Joyce, General Manager at East Sussex/Brighton & Hove CAMHS
- Matt Stone, Service Manager for Specialist Services, Sussex Partnership NHS
- Clare Arnold, Senior PMHW at CAMHS

We are incredibly grateful to PaCC and AMAZE for arranging this meeting. The meeting itself however was shocking. Parents asked straightforward questions and talked with quiet dignity about their struggles to keep their 'children alive' but received noncommittal and blasé responses from CAMHS staff. Matt Stone admitted to not having actioned any of the AMAZE/PaCC 'Talk Health' report recommendations and Peter Joyce glibly referred to having done 'something' whilst gesturing



over his shoulder to previous parent recommendations pinned to the wall. There appeared to be no awareness that it is **not ok** to have report after report be written, with recommendations, only to attend a meeting to report that nothing had been done and with no apology for the apathy. After all the work of the Pathfinders to encourage parent participation and 'voice' the agency clearly has no regard for, or apparent interest in, listening or responding to service users needs.

Questions asked were not answered and parents were told to take issues to the CAMHS Partnership Strategy group. Recommendations had not been actioned and staff seemed unperturbed by their lack of action. Whilst we are not trying to 'shoot the messengers', the problems are not solely the responsibility of those managers present but the culture and working practices they are operating under, we were however left wondering how it is possible to have such little regard and respect as to be so disconnected to the plight of vulnerable families. At one point Peter Joyce said he didn't know what 'survey' was being referred to, to which he had to be reminded of the Council ASC Scrutiny. He seemed unconcerned and almost unaware of its existence and can only assume this lackadaisical attitude is systemic.

Comments made were - *'we talk about things, but they go into black holes'; 'we've been in a state of flux'; 'someone's on maternity leave', 'oh yes, other families report they don't feel supported either'; 'what we say we are going to do we should do'*. Mr Joyce commented that there is often a lot of talk about doing things, but little ever gets actioned. At one point one parent reflected *'you've done nothing since the last meeting have you?'*

Only parents and PaCC/AMAZE staff were present in the room. Had MPs or city Councillors been there to query value for money and ethical care, perhaps the unconcerned delivery might have been different.

Please therefore, can CAMHS be called back to respond to the Scrutiny. Not Alison Nuttall or those who can deflect from the issues by quoting statistics and figures, but the ground floor staff such as Brenda Davis, Peter Joyce, Matt Stone and Peter Goodwin. We would be happy to meet with you beforehand as can advise on the areas that need further exploration. The impression the staff gave is 'same as usual'.

The service appears unaccountable and untouchable, and this status quo is now wholly unacceptable. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Sam Bayley - Chair
Paula Donovan & the mASCot Committee

cc
Paolo Boldrini AMAZE
Ros Cook AMAZE
Rachel Travers AMAZE