



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES
PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON
TUESDAY 30TH MAY 2023 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing – Chair

Councillors:

A. Broughton-Pettit, R. Chapman, P. Cook, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, D. Harse, T. Heron, J. A. Pritchard, J. Rao, S. Skiven

Councillor: E. Forehead. (Cabinet Member for Social Care).

Also in attendance: Cabinet Member: J. Pritchard (Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change).

Co-Opted Members: Vacant.

Together with:

Officers: J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), D. Street (Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), A. Jones (Committee Services Officer).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being live streamed, and a recording would be made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. [Click Here To View](#).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Bishop, M. Chacon-Dawson (Vice-Chair), L. Jeremiah, A Leonard, D. Price

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J A Pritchard declared a Personal interest as she is a Member of Llais. As this was a personal interest only there was no requirement for her to leave the meeting and she took full part in the debate.

3. MINUTES – 18TH APRIL 2023

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th April 2023 be approved as a correct record and by way of Microsoft Forms (and in noting there were 9 for, 0 against

and 1 abstention) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 18th April 2023 (minute nos. 1-5) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

5. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Mark Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period April 2023 to July 2023.

It was proposed that reports on the Gwent Frailty Service, Caerphilly Cares and a report on Domiciliary Care be added to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme.

Following consideration of the report and subject to the additional reports proposed, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting (and in noting there were 11 For 0 Against and 0 Abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that subject to the addition of the report requests discussed, the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

6. NOTICE OF MOTION – MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE CHARTER

Councillor N. George (Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Property) in support of the Notice of Motion, summarised the motion and the reasons for it. Committee Members heard how he was seeking Council approval to adopt the Motor Neurone Disease Charter. Members of the group were advised that by adopting the Charter Caerphilly County Borough Council will be agreeing to raise awareness of the disease by promoting the MND Charter as widely as possible.

The Committee was asked to support the Notice of Motion and recommend to Council that it be approved. Cllr George introduced Judith Rice (Campaign Contact for Southeast Wales Branch of the MND Association) and requested permission for her to speak to the committee on the Charter.

Judith Rice introduced herself to the Committee and explained that she was present to explain what the MND Charter was seeking to achieve. Mrs Rice outlined the five principal points of the Charter.

1. The right to an early diagnosis and information.
2. The right to access quality care and treatments.
3. The right to be treated as individuals and with dignity and respect.
4. The right to maximise their quality of life.
5. Carers of people with MND have the right to be valued, respected, listened to and well-supported.

Mrs Rice explained that if Caerphilly County Borough Council adopted the Charter it would be

a way of supporting people with this horrendous illness within the Community. It was explained that the Charter is not a legally binding document and that the Council is not obliged to make specific pledges of commitments and would not be accrediting or giving Council kite marks. It would be a partnership between the Council and the association. The Council would be sending a message that they are supportive of the rights under the Charter.

Mrs Rice confirmed if the Council adopted the Charter, a further meeting would be arranged to present the Charter to the Leader.

The Chair thanked Mrs Rice for her presentation and invited questions or comments from Members.

Members of the Committee confirmed that they fully supported the Council adopting the MND Charter and it was requested that the Council review training for care workers.

The Assistant Director, Adult Services confirmed that Caerphilly home carers and external providers were receiving appropriate training.

The Chair asked if there was any Counselling for the individuals and the carers as part of the Charter. Mrs Rice confirmed that this was included within the Charter and advised that there is a Carers Department who would be pleased to come and talk to the Council and provide advice if required. Mrs Rice confirmed that she would make enquiries if needed.

Following consideration of the notice of motion the Social Services Scrutiny Committee:

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Notice of Motion be supported. By way of electronic voting (and in noting there were 11 For 0 Against and 0 Abstentions) this was unanimously agreed.

7. LLAIS PRESENTATION

Councillor E Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care was pleased to invite colleagues from Llais to make a presentation to the Committee. Members were advised that Llais is a new citizen's voice body for Wales, which from the 1st April had taken over from the seven Community Health Councils who had represented the interests of people in the NHS in Wales for more than 50 years.

Alyson Thomas (Chief Executive Llais – Your Voice in Social Care) and Angela Mutlow (Strategic Director for Operations and Corporate Services Llais) introduced themselves to the Committee and were grateful for the invite to the meeting.

A PowerPoint presentation was provided to the committee. It predominantly advised Members that Llais was a new independent statutory body set up by the Welsh Government as a sponsored body under the provisions of the Health and Social Care Quality and Engagement Wales Act 2020. The legal name is Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social care, and the operational name is Llais Your Voice in Health and Social Care.

The Committee were advised that Llais is looking for the Council to help raise awareness of the organisation and their activities. It was also seeking to hear what resources can be provided to help the Council to do this and develop ways of working effectively in partnership in order to understand the key priorities and challenges for health and social care services within the Caerphilly County Borough area.

A Member sought clarification on how complaints would be handled as Social Services and the health board have their own complaints procedures.

The Chief Executive of Llais advised that any concern or complaint would be allocated its own complaints advocate to support the process. The advocate would also work with both Health and Social Services complaint teams.

A member raised a query over the right of Llais to enter care homes. It was outlined by the Member that previously Community Health Councils had rights to enter hospitals.

It was confirmed that Llais has a right of entry to care settings and that hospitals and Local Authorities have specific duties to help and co-operate with Llais activities. Members heard how there was a presumption of access unless there were reasons why it would not be possible. Committee were advised that the Code of Practice on entry to premises was designed to provide a clear framework for Llais in order to plan its activities and consider any sensitivities when visiting different settings.

The Chair raised access to a care home and asked if Llais were contacted about an issue would they have a right of entry.

The Chief Executive of Llais confirmed that if the organisation had been contacted by an individual, they would have a right of entry as they had been invited by the person and would not need to seek permission from the care provider. If no one had requested Llais visit a particular care home, then permission would need to be sought from the care provider. The provider would need to then arrange a convenient time for a visit.

If access is refused, then the care provider would have to be specific with their reasons for the refusal and would need to help to rearrange a visit or arrange for people to be heard in a different way. If this happened on a regular basis it could be that the matter would need to be referred to the commissioning body, local authority, health board or NHS Trust. Concerns would also be shared with Care Inspectorate Wales and Welsh Ministers.

The Chair sought clarification on the process for volunteers. The Chief Executive of Llais confirmed that a key change was that Llais is determining its own arrangements for volunteers and will produce its own recruitment arrangements. This is currently being designed and it is hoped it will make it easier for individuals to get involved.

A Member expressed an interest in becoming a volunteer and highlighted a number of conflicting issues previously under Community Health Councils. It was observed that Llais seem to be adopting a more flexible approach and the Member asked what this would involve.

The Chief Executive of Llais confirmed that they were creating flexible volunteering roles and that any individual can undertake one or more of the roles depending on their availability and interests. Members heard how there were distinct roles and that Llais let volunteers choose what suited them and advised that specific training would also be provided.

The Chair thanked Llais for their presentation and requested that an update be provided to the Committee in a years' time.

The Chief Executive of Llais thanked Members and confirmed that Jemma Morgan, the Regional Director, would keep in touch and share what Llais had been working on.

8. 2023/24 SOCIAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET

Councillor E Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care presented the report which provided Members of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee with an update on the 2023/24 Social Services Revenue Budget. The Director confirmed he was happy to respond to any questions.

A member raised a query on 5.12 & 5.13 and enquired if the figures quoted would be enough and if there were any contingency plans if not.

The Director advised on the pressures facing all people services at present and considering the cost-of-living pressures and inflation pressures it would not be possible to say if it would be enough at this stage, but provided Members with assurances that the situation would be closely monitored. In relation to any contingency, Members heard that there were some service reserves and if required for one off expenditure these reserves could be used. In addition, it was highlighted that based on historical records going into the Winter quite often Welsh Government provides grant funding as a support, but this is not always guaranteed, and would require careful management and monitoring, especially as demand grew and assurances were given that the complexity of those demands and reports would be brought to the Committee in the future.

A Member raised a query on 5.2.4 in relation to additional posts being required to address increasing demands and also sought clarification on what these posts were for, one day additional leave and 5 days given by cabinet. The Member also sought clarification on the review of withdrawal of short-term funding.

It was confirmed that the posts are fixed term posts for social workers in both children services and children with disabilities that sits in the adults section and are required due to the demand. Members also heard about an additional post in the IAA (Information Advice and Assessment Team) and one in telecare for the response side of the service.

In terms of leave, 5 days had been agreed by Council in February. It was highlighted that leave for Caerphilly Council employees was lower than other authorities which led to staff leaving to go elsewhere for more leave. It was outlined how the move helped with staff retention, and that this addition is given to staff who have worked for more than 5 years with an additional 3 days for staff employed for 3 years or more.

The Director responded in relation to the withdrawal of Welsh Government grant funding and advised that Council had to plug the gap and also confirmed that it does sit within Social Services.

A Member raised an issue in relation to the new model for day care services and stated that statistics from the consultants HICO showed there were fewer service users being provided for, the Member enquired if this had been considered within this budget.

Members were advised that this has been considered in the report under discussion.

Following consideration and discussion the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report.

9. SUPPLEMENTARY PAYMENT FOR RESIDENTIAL/NURSING CARE HOMES TO SUPPORT INCREASED COSTS OF AMENITIES AND FOOD COSTS

Councillor E Forehead, Cabinet Member for Social Care introduced the report to Members of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee alongside the 2023/24 Social Services Revenue Budget update. The Director confirmed he was happy to respond to any questions.

A Member raised a query over why the Council is subsidising large residential care homes rather than all of them and paying for vacant beds. The Member requested an explanation.

The Director stated that the sector is in absolute crisis because of high running costs for electricity and gas at nursing homes. Heating was required 24 hours a day. The uplifts given through funding and additional funding from the Council was 10.1%. But, all homes have come back and stated that this is not enough and they cannot continue to provide the services on this basis.

The Committee were advised that most of the care homes within the County Borough were run by privately owned local entities and not large national organisations with shareholders, and the Director observed that the comment about whether funding should go to smaller homes was valid. However, he highlighted that many larger providers had provided evidence of their financial records which showed that they were also struggling.

A Member questioned why a fifth of the beds paid for were vacant.

The Assistant Director, Adult Services advised that some vacant beds in homes were block booked by the Health Board for “Step Closer to Home” discharges. When the Health Board did not use these beds, it disadvantaged the service. Members heard that it would take time to get back up to full occupancy. It was highlighted how there were a large number of residential beds available, but the demand was for EMI nursing beds and a number of deaths had also contributed to the current vacancy levels. Members noted that it was difficult to determine how the funding should be distributed, several options had been looked at and it was felt that this was the fairest way.

The member thanked officers for the response and observed that it highlighted how the Health Board and Council needed to work closely together.

Members discussed the ageing population in the Caerphilly Borough and staff issues within the sector. They were advised that there is increasing demand is for EMI nursing rather than residential care. Members heard how the Council cannot legally provide nursing beds and that there are also challenges in recruiting nursing staff in hospitals and care homes.

A Member thanked officers for their report and welcomed that the report referenced equality of homes and observed that any help for the cost-of-living crisis was wonderful. In terms of fairness the Member was pleased to hear that smaller care homes were also benefiting, and he asked if officers would go back to these homes to see if there was anything further that can be done to help.

Following consideration and discussion the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report.

The meeting closed at 18:57PM

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th of July 2023.

CHAIR