



## **SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, TREDOMEN,  
YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY, 18TH JUNE 2018 AT 5.30 P.M.**

---

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Binding - Chair  
Councillor J. Bevan - Vice Chair

Councillors:

A. Angel, C. Bezzina, Miss E. Forehead, A. Gair, D.C. Harse, V. James, L. Jeremiah, B. Owen, S. Skivens and C. Thomas.

Cabinet Member: C. Cuss (Social Care and Wellbeing).

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer) and A. Dredge (Committee Services Officer).

Co-opted Member: Mrs M. Jones.

Also Present - Representatives from Caerphilly People First: F. Poole (Chair), S. Cochrane (Vice-Chair), C. Taylor (Support Worker) and J. Wright (Supporting Role – Torfaen CBC).

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D. Cushing, M. Evans, J. Gale and Mrs A. Leonard and Mr C. Luke (Co-opted Member).

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

### **3. MINUTES – 30TH APRIL 2019**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 30th April 2019 (minute nos. 1 - 7) be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **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**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period June 2019 to April 2020. Members were asked to consider the work programme and to make any amendments or request additional agenda items to be included for future meetings.

Members were advised that Mr J. Green (Dementia Friends Trainer) was not available to deliver the training at this meeting due to a family bereavement. It was agreed that the training be rescheduled for the next meeting on the 10th September 2019. Members requested additional reports regarding the Adoption Process in respect of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and a breakdown in Mental Health in Caerphilly. The Director proposed a further item regarding a follow-up review of Corporate Arrangements for the Safeguarding of Children which will set out appropriate recommendations and actions in moving forward. The Chair proposed this report to be scheduled for the meeting on the 22nd October 2019 and the Regional Partnerships Boards report currently scheduled for that meeting be moved to a future meeting date.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that subject to the aforementioned, the work programme appended to the report be approved and published to the Council's website.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

## **6. DEMENTIA FRIENDS TRAINING**

Mr J. Green (Dementia Friends Trainer) was not available to deliver the training at this meeting due to a family bereavement. The training was rescheduled for the next meeting on the 10th September 2019. The Scrutiny Officer advised that he'd sent condolences to Mr Green on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee.

## **7. CITIZENS CHARTER "GWENT CHARTER FOR WORKING TOGETHER" PRESENTATION**

The Chair welcomed F. Poole (Chair), S. Cochrane (Vice-Chair) and C. Taylor (Support Worker) from Caerphilly People First and J. Wright (Supporting Role – Torfaen CBC) to the meeting. They delivered a presentation that explained the purpose of the Charter and what it aims to achieve.

The Charter was written by people with learning disabilities from all across Gwent. It is based on what people with learning disabilities said they want to happen in Gwent and it was explained that it is not about asking for more services or money. It's about asking for people to be treated equally and be afforded the same opportunities as everyone else. The Committee were asked to read and sign the Charter and to consider if as individuals or the organisation complies with the Charter and how/if this can affect how contracts are made, people are employed and staff are trained to provide services. Unfortunately, the Charter had not been made available at this meeting and the Assistant Director for Adult Services presented a poster that set out the themes of the Charter that included 'Listen to me and Work with me'.

Members were advised that many organisations have signed the Charter and in moving forward the learning disability and mental health partnership are considering using the Charter rather than the Learning Disability Strategy in terms of illustrating progress made .

Members discussed the importance of the Charter and questioned if the Council itself has signed the document. It was explained that individual Officers have signed and would like the Scrutiny Committee to endorse the Charter prior to its presentation to Cabinet. Members were pleased to note that Ms Poole during her role within Caerphilly First has been successful in obtaining paid work, with Growing Space. In response to a Member's query, it was confirmed that other Local Authorities have signed the Charter and the team will write to organisations ensuring compliance. The Chair would like to invite the representatives back to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting as he would like to expand upon the work of the Charter by working with the Cabinet Member and Directors for this work to be considered 'business as usual' in moving forward.

The Committee were advised that the Team have recently rolled out a training session which includes a quiz and have delivered this in several schools raising awareness of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues being able to be active participants of their communities. They recently attended Pontnewydd and Malpas Schools Special Educational Needs (SEN) Departments. It was explained that children in years 5 and 6 showed more maturity in terms of their reaction to the subject matter by enquiring, listening and understanding as to what learning disabilities are.

The Team have secured funding previously from Caerphilly People First, the Lottery, Lloyds Bank and Local Authorities and are now looking to obtain further funding to develop the business and training opportunities.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Caerphilly People First for attending the Scrutiny Committee meeting and delivering their detailed presentation and Members noted the contents therein.

## **8. CAERPHILLY FOSTERING SERVICE UPDATE**

The report provided Members with an update on the Fostering Service a year on from the implementation of the revised Fee and Payments structure, as requested by the Committee on 1st May 2018.

The Scrutiny Committee were reminded of the pressures facing Children's Services and in particular the pressure of increasing numbers of children Looked After, increasing complexity and challenging behaviours and the relentless demands made by the Courts. These pressures are compounded by the availability of suitable placements for children.

A report had been presented to the Scrutiny Committee in May 2018 which identified that Caerphilly had been experiencing a year on year net loss in the number of foster placements being provided. That report identified that, despite a positive radio advertising campaign and an increased number of enquiries to Caerphilly, prospective carers were choosing to apply to other Local Authorities or Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) because of the remuneration packages being offered. It was noted that Caerphilly's foster carer fee levels were one of the lowest in Wales and this was impacting on the ability to recruit sufficient carers. As a result, new enhanced fees and other allowances were proposed with significant investment being required to support this. These proposals were considered and supported by the Scrutiny Committee in May 2018 and were ratified by Cabinet in June 2018.

The Committee noted that the new remuneration package has had a direct impact on recruitment of new foster carers. Equally, it has had a direct impact on existing foster carers who report feeling valued and feeling part of the Caerphilly Team. Combined with the ongoing training and support provided by the Fostering Service, Caerphilly has strengthened its position in the region.

Members discussed the amount of carers currently employed by Caerphilly and although the figures have increased the Department are not looking to achieve a specific target in recruitment. This is the first year the department has reported a net increase in foster carers

and placements offered. The overall increase to date has been 15 foster care households offering 20 placements. Members were pleased to note that enquiry rates continue to remain high and there are currently 10 prospective carers at various stages of the assessment process. It was explained that much effort has been made over the last 18 months in terms of recruitment and this process takes time to progress.

In responding to Members questions, Officers advised that there are no children currently waiting for placements. If there is no in-house availability other options would be considered depending on the circumstances for example Independent Foster Carers within a 5 to 10 mile radius. There may also be a need to consider out of County placements where protective measures are required.

Members discussed the fee structure and the position of other Local Authorities within the region and Officers explained that it is difficult to compare remuneration packages of care to the independent sector due to the level of support provided by the Department. A Member referenced that 8 Foster Carers had left in the last year and it was explained that the majority of people leave due to retirement and health reasons. Overall, people are proud to work for Caerphilly and many applications have been received as a result of 'word of mouth'.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that contents of the report and the positive improvements achieved across the service area, be noted.

## **9. PREVENTING UNNECESSARY HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS**

Members were advised that the Department are currently in the middle of a Wales Audit Office examination in relation to the Council's Well-Being Objective 5 - Creating a County Borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The emphasis is working in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABuHB) to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitate timely discharges.

The report updated Members of the initiatives in practice to prevent unnecessary admissions to and facilitate timely discharges from hospital. 'Home First' is one of a suite of initiatives sponsored by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board. It aims to support the continued development of a 'seamless system' of care, support and wellbeing in Gwent in response to the Welsh Government's new long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales'. The report explains what Home First is, why it was created, what it aims to deliver and how its effectiveness will be measured and monitored.

The Scrutiny Committee were advised that Discharge to Assess (D2A) is an initiative the Community Resource Team (CRT) have introduced in Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF). This was initially piloted and is now an established discharge pathway. D2A aims to reduce the amount of time individuals stay in hospital unnecessarily, who can be safely discharged back to the community with minimum or no formal support in place and an assessment carried out post discharge at home. Evidence suggests assessing an individual in their own home reduces their level of dependency, which in turn often reduces the level of support required long term. Focus also shifted to helping individuals achieve what matters to them by providing creative individual solutions that includes using their own strengths as well as family and community links rather than commissioning standard care provision.

Members discussed the figures provided by the Transformation Team in relation to the ageing population in Wales in that over a quarter are aged 50 plus. Those aged over 65 are expected to increase from around 600,000 in 2013 to 900,000 in 2037 and the number of over 85's is growing at an even faster rate (Age Cymru, 2015). Wales also has a higher proportion of people aged 85 plus compared to the rest of the UK (Stats Wales, 2012). It was explained

that the demand for social care services are growing in the context of significant demographic changes and the growing incidence and large prevalence of complex, long term conditions.

The Committee discussed the responses to winter pressures (set out in paragraph 5.9) expressed by ABUHB and the wish to secure support services for Emergency Departments. A Member sought clarification for the process of accelerated discharge times and how this is managed. Officers advised that the Key Performance Indicators provided is a direct replication of the service that was previously commissioned by the Health Board and Local Authority's had to provide direct comparisons. The emphasis is on the person being assessed within 4 hours but not necessarily being discharged within 24 hours. In terms of the Home First progress, Officers advised that one challenge has been the reporting mechanism. The Committee noted that as a result of this a Performance Officer has been appointed by the Authorities. They have commenced in post and are developing a standard reporting tool to address anomalies which will be populated monthly.

Members then discussed a further challenge in respect of the Regional Partnership Board (RPB), in that they are charged with working up bids, money is then paid to the Health Board (the treasurer). In terms of timescales, this does not allow capacity to present to Scrutiny and Cabinet. It has been assumed that the transformation grant process will include quarterly monitoring and evaluation, to inform an exit strategy should the transformation grant funding cease in March 2021. Councillor Cuss advised that he sits on the RPB (with voting rights) and suggested that a joint Scrutiny Committee could be formed across Gwent in moving forward with this process. He expressed his concerns with the governance process and this was echoed by the Committee. The Director added that this frustration is acknowledged across the region. However, Welsh Government has decided on this route for grant funding and governance to assist with RPB's. The Chair requested it noted that he has concerns regarding the governance arrangements for this process.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved. By a show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the progress that has been made in Home First across the region using transformation grant funding, be noted;
- (ii) the Adult Services Department is in the middle of a Wales Audit Office – Well-Being of Future Generations examination of the authorities Well-Being Objective 5 “work in partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and facilitate timely discharges, be noted;
- (iii) a report on the outcome of the examination be presented to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee in due course.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2019.

---

CHAIR