



CHARGING FOR NON RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL CARE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON THURSDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor V. James – Chair

Councillors:

L. Binding, Ms. A. Gair and L. Jeremiah

Also Present:

Co-opted Members: Mrs M. Jones (Parent Network) – Vice Chair and Mr C. Luke (Caerphilly People First)

Together with:

C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), M. Jones (Interim Financial Services Manager) and R. Morris (Principal Income and Assessment Officer)

1. TO APPOINT A VICE-CHAIR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

Mrs Michelle Jones from the Parent Network was nominated and appointed Vice Chair of the Charging for Non Residential Social Care Task and Finish Group, after receiving unanimous support from Members. It was suggested and agreed at the Group's first meeting on September 25, 2019 that the position of Vice-Chair should be offered to one of the Co-opted Members in the first instance.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received as all the Group Members were present.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest other than the personal interests already recorded for Cllr Vincent James and Mr. Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager for Caerphilly County Borough Council.

4. MINUTES – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Charging for Non Residential Social Care Task and Finish Group held on 25th September 2019 (minute nos. 1 – 5) be approved and signed as a correct record.

The Interim Financial Services Manager took this opportunity to brief Members on matters arising from the Group's first meeting. In September, Members had asked for comparative information from neighbouring authorities on non-residential charges. The Interim Financial Services Manager gave a presentation showing service user figures for Caerphilly County Borough Council as at 30th September, 2019. This analysis was for hourly rate charges and was presented under two columns: - "number of service users whose charge is capped" and the "number of service users who pay the full standard charge." The total number of service users in the County Borough at that time was 1,167. Under the capped column it was explained that 284 service users paid no fees at all, and 277 people were in the highest banding up to the maximum weekly charge of £90 set by the Welsh Government. A total of 390 people paid capped charges over nine bands ranging from payments up to £9.99 to paying between £80.00 and £89.99. The other column of service users paying the full standard charge outlined a total of 216 people over nine bands ranging from paying up to £9.99 to payments between £80.00 and £89.99. It was explained to Members that of the 1,167 service users for hourly rate charges in the County Borough, it was only the 216 people paying full standard charges who would be affected by any future increases in charges for this type of non-residential social care. Members were provided with similar analysis for other local authorities.

A Task Group Member asked a question about charging for care following the granting of Section 117 Orders of the Mental Health Act. The Interim Financial Services Manager explained that as this type of care was imposed on an individual for health reasons there was no charge for this service. Members also asked about the charging policy for the Telecare Service. The Interim Financial Services Manager said that there was a charge for this service but it was not part of charges for non-residential social care. Officers outlined that Telecare had now been adopted by the Social Services department, but previously had been administered by Housing Services. Discussion ensued on the possible impact of incorporating Telecare into the package of non-residential social care services. It was generally acknowledged that this would require further consideration and possibly be considered as part of a future review.

The Vice-Chair wanted it noted that her organisation Parent Network shared a building in Blackwood with Libanus Lifestyle, but that she had no connection with this community interest company which offers Home Help Services.

The Interim Financial Services Manager presented information on Home Care financing which showed that the total cost per contact hour to Caerphilly County Borough Council was £28.80. However, it was explained that there were costs on top of this figure for services such as HR support and service management. It was also explained to Members that legally Local Authorities were not permitted to charge more for care than the actual cost of the service. One Member asked if the Council paid management charges for care provided through the private sector. Officers advised that these costs were included within the tender price and were therefore absorbed within the hourly rate.

One Group Member had requested charging information from two neighbouring authorities. Officers advised that the one charged £10.21 per hour for Homecare and £16.26 for day services. Whilst, figures for the other Council showed a charge of £15.45 per hour for Homecare, and up to £104.24 for day services. Members were reminded that the current daily charge for day care in the Caerphilly County Borough was £8.06. Questions were asked about respite care and the Interim Financial Services Manager explained that this type of care was covered via the package of non-residential social care services.

5. CONSULTATION PROPOSALS – VERBAL UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer showed Members a draft questionnaire that he had compiled with the help of the Consultation and Public Engagement Officer. He outlined that the questionnaire was designed to be compatible with Snap Survey software and that it was the intention to engage with stakeholders via GAVO (Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations) in the first instance and then consult with individuals on a more face-to-face basis. It was generally agreed that a similar approach had worked well during a previous Task and Finish inquiry into charging for non-residential social care.

The questionnaire design was broadly welcomed but it was suggested that a graphic outlining charging averages across Wales be added and a question on where people thought Caerphilly County Borough should be in terms of a Welsh average. It was also suggested that specific user groups be asked whether or not an increase in charges would unfairly impact upon a particular group.

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that Members agree to the proposal that the next meeting of the group would be early in the New Year and focus on invited stakeholders who would be asked to complete the questionnaire and discuss social care charging after a brief presentation by the Interim Financial Services Manager and Principal Income and Assessment Officer. Members were reminded that the Council's budget consultation takes place towards the end of November and into December and that a significant gap was required to avoid any confusion. It was suggested that a stakeholder meeting should take place in February 2020.

6. NEXT STEPS

The Scrutiny Manager distributed a draft interim report for consideration by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee on a request for Cabinet to extend the current timeframe for non-residential social care charges in order that the Task and Finish Group looking into this charging mechanism be given more time to reach their conclusions.

At the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group on Wednesday 25 September, Members were of the view that extending the charging timeframe by a further year would allow for a more in-depth inquiry into future charges for non-residential social care in the County Borough.

There was also discussion on the feasibility of carrying out an effective inquiry within the existing Terms of Reference and reaching conclusions by the autumn of 2020.

There was broad agreement for the principle of maintaining the Task Group's original schedule and reserving the right to use recommendations for the identification of future areas of scrutiny by a Task and Finish group. It was suggested that one such area was the inclusion of Telecare within the package of non-residential social care services.

RESOLVED that the Task Group considers the charging mechanism for non-residential care for the 2021/22 financial year and for subsequent financial years. Also, that recommendations be used for the identification of future areas of scrutiny by a Task and Finish group.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the next appropriate meeting they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR