



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY 25TH JANUARY 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing – Chair

Councillor C. Bezzina - (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

Councillors: A. Angel, C. Bishop, K. Etheridge, M. Evans, A. Gair, V. James, A. Leonard, S. Skivens, W. Williams.

Cabinet Member: S. Cook (Cabinet Member for Social Care and Housing).

Together with:

Officers: D. Street (Corporate Director- Social Services and Housing), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director–Children’s Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director- Adult Services), M. Jones (Financial Services Manager), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer).

Users and Carer: C. Luke

Also, in attendance: R. Green (Aneurin Bevan UHB – Corporate Services), C. Taylor (Caerphilly People First).

RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council’s website – [Click Here To View](#). She advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors J. Bevan, L. Jeremiah, J. Stone, C. Thomas.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 23RD NOVEMBER 2021.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd November 2021 (minute nos. 1 - 4) 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.

STATEMENT FROM THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

The Chair advised the Scrutiny Committee that she had given permission to Mr D. Street to make a statement and the Corporate Director would take questions following this statement.

It was brought to the attention of the Scrutiny Members the continuing pressures and ongoing difficulties being experienced by Social Services. Mr Street wanted to raise his concerns with the Scrutiny Members with Wales moving back to level zero and remind them of the recent press release that was made by himself and the other four Directors of Social Services in Gwent asking for the support of families and the general community in assisting to overcome extremely acute difficulties that were being experienced. Assurance was given that some of the difficulties have been improved but they have not gone away.

The Scrutiny Members were made aware of the difficulties in terms of staff availability due to how quickly the Omicron virus spread. There are around 9% of staff unwell. Domiciliary care is running with sickness absence of 17% and there is currently around 60 members of staff that are unwell due to COVID and other related issues.

It was advised there is currently a waiting list of around 465 hours for domiciliary care. The Scrutiny Members were made aware that this has improved since Christmas when the list was around 1000 hours. Scrutiny Members were also made aware COVID is still a significant factor in the care homes with only 6 homes being COVID free.

Social Services are having additional demands placed on them from the Health Board to facilitate hospital discharges and supporting the Community Nursing Service within the community. Care packages are being returned to the Authority by independent providers due to staff shortages.

There has been increased pressures in Children Services with increasing numbers of children and young people identifying with emotional and mental health issues also there have been examples of chronic parental neglect. There are continuing demands for placements.

The requirement to self-isolate will be reduced for the general public however, it is still not clear whether this will apply to Health and Social Care as previously there has been separate guidance issued.

Mr Street advised the Scrutiny Members that the situation has improved however, there are still hard times ahead. Mr Street thanked Gareth Jenkins and Jo Williams for their efforts

especially over the Christmas period it has been hugely demanding on staff. Mr Street asked the Scrutiny Members to understand that although the situation may start improving it will be many more months before we could approach any normality.

Following the statement discussions took place around Day Centres a Member understood that the Authority will be engaging an independent organisation to co-produce a model of Day Services and wanted clarification on whether this had gone out to tender and if a specification had been drawn up. Confirmation was also sought that going forward there would be effective engagement with users, carers, unions and staff and there would be a partnership approach with all Officers and the Community working together. They also requested a statement be put out to the users and carers stating the time scale of the consultation and engagement. A query was raised as to whether the Authority was still redeploying staff to assist in the social care setting to assist with sickness absence.

It was clarified there would be a co-production approach to Day Services. It was confirmed that staff had met with Pembrokeshire County Council who shared with us the specification they used. This is being amended for Caerphilly, procurement will manage the tender process. In relation to making any statement to users and carers it would be more appropriate to wait to see what the Welsh Government review of the guideline's states at the end of the week so this can be reflected in any communication. Regarding the redeploying of staff, this is very limited where carers are concerned. However, in areas such as cleaning and kitchen staff shortages, the Authority was able to provide staff to cover in these areas.

A Member acknowledged social care has been the most demanding service in particular throughout the pandemic. They wanted to thank all staff and thank them for the outstanding work that everyone does.

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 January 2022 to March 2022.

Following consideration, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

6. CABINET REPORT

There had been no requests for the Cabinet report to be brought forward for discussion at the meeting.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

7. AN UPDATE ON THE INTEGRATED CARE FUND (ICF) AND TRANSFORMATION GRANT PROGRAMME – PRESENTATION BY ANEURIN BEVAN UNIVERSITY HEALTH BOARD.

The Scrutiny Committee welcomed Roxanne Green (Gwent Regional Partnership Board) to the meeting. The representative gave a brief presentation to Members on an overview of the Structure of the Regional Partnership Board and the use of Partnership. The Partnership structure was detailed, and its governance arrangements were detailed. The Partnership

intends to bring together health and social care and third sector partners to collaborate and support the priority population cohorts. Members were given information on current Partnership funding and where the Partnership has invested some of its resources which showed an allocation of £36,399, 349

Members noted that the first of the strategic partnership programmes was the Carers Programme which showed an RPB investment of £1,215,218 using a model of combined delivery to provide direct support to unpaid carers and peer networking opportunities.

The second and largest strategic programme is the Adult Strategic Programme which had a current investment of £13,988,144 which was being delivered in four key areas, Connected Communities Programme, Keeping Safe at Home, Improving System Flow and Place Based Graduated Care. Ms Green advised Members of the challenges in relation to the improving system flow programme in terms of the Pandemic.

The third programme relating to Mental Health and Learning Disabilities which received £1,550,047 of RPB investment. Reference was made to the increased demands in mental health provision because of the pandemic.

The Children and Families Strategic Partnership Board was detailed next, and it was noted that this had gone from strength to strength, with the scale and depth of this programme evolving and increasing over recent years. Reference was made to the 'Iceberg Model' the concept of which was to take out specialist capacity closer to home provided the foundation for the Nation MYTH/NEST Framework and looked to provide a strategy to bring back in as many children as it is appropriate and possible to do currently in out of county or out of country placements.

The next steps for the Regional Partnership Boards were detailed and Members were asked to note how these would be developed using the existing areas of activity as a foundation to build a five-year strategic programme with the sustainability of services at the forefront of all partnership planning efforts.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the representative for the presentation. The presentation was then discussed. A Member sought further information on the 'Wrong Door Initiative'. The representative explained it was a Partnership effort to ensure that children and their families have a single point of access into the system. They are then reviewed by a multidisciplinary team and placed on the correct pathway for the relevant service as needed. There will be new guidance for Regional Partnerships Boards, with the intent to change to support and integrated/joint models of care this is going to take place over the next five years. Discussions took place as to whether other Local Authorities were providing similar services. It was explained that in relation to services within the Regional Partnership portfolio, most are part of a regional approach, therefore, services that are being delivered by Caerphilly Borough Council are very much part of a regional approach. The Health Board have a collaborative approach to developing their strategies and models of care.

It was requested that a copy of the presentation be forwarded to Members following the meeting.

Following consideration and discussion, the presentation was noted.

8. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 7).

The report which informed Members of the projected revenue expenditure for the Social Services Directorate and the financial impact of the Covid 19 pandemic upon the Directorate for the 2021/22 financial year.

The report identified the reasons behind a projected underspend of £2,896k for Social Services

in 2021/22, inclusive of transport costs. It also identified the funding made available to Social Services during the 2021/22 financial year through the Welsh Government Covid 19 Hardship Fund and the Welsh Government Covid 19 Recovery Fund.

Members were asked to note that the projected underspend of £2,896k against the Social Services budget for 2021/22 (inclusive of transport costs) includes a number of non-recurring underspends attributable to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic which mask an underlying increase in demand for social care along with significant inflationary pressures within the social care market.

The Scrutiny Committee Members thanked the Officer for the report and discussed the report at length. Clarification and further information were sought in relation to underspends, the cost of domiciliary care to the Authority, increased demand in Children Services and whether the service area would be able to cope with the higher demands. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing clarified 50% of the underspend from this financial year would revert back to the Corporate Body and the remaining 50% would go back into the Social Services reserves. The Officer advised Members the cost of domiciliary care is around £20 per hour but this is very much dependant on who is providing the care. In relation to discussion around the increased demand on Children Services, the Officer clarified the overall work rate has not increased. However, the complexity of the workload has in terms of staffing issues and the placement of children becoming increasingly difficult.

Discussion took place around the waiting list for Occupation Therapy. Members were advised the demands have remained the same. However, with the recruitment of two new members of staff who will be in post at the end of January, the Office is hoping the waiting list will be significantly improved and be able to update at the next Scrutiny meeting.

In response to a Members query the Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing confirmed that recruitment is an area of concern for the future. It was highlighted that the recruitment of staff within the care sector is a national issue.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the detailed report.

Following consideration and discussion the report was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.43 pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th March 2022.

CHAIR