



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing –Chair

Councillors:

C. Bishop, A. Broughton-Petitt, M. Chacon-Dawson (Vice-Chair), P. Cook, K. Ethridge, M. Evans, T. Heron, L. Jeremiah, J. A. Pritchard, D. Price, C. Thomas.

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

Co-Opted Members: Vacant.

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, M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), J. Thomas (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 R. Chapman, D. Harse, J. Rao and S. Skivens.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D. Cushing declared a personal interest only in relation to [Agenda Item No. 7 – Hospital Discharge](#) as her mother had previously been service user of Home Assistance and Reablement Team support (HART).

As a Members of the Task and Finish Group Councillor C. Bishop and Councillor D. Cushing declared a personal interest only in relation to [Agenda Item No. 8 Final Report from the Task and Finish Group on Tackling Potential Mental Health Issues Post Pandemic](#).

3. MINUTES – 26TH JULY 2022.

RESOLVED that Subject to an amendment that the Councillor A. Leonard be included in the apologise for absence it was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 26th July 2022 (minute nos. 1-6) were approved 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

Mark Jacques - (Scrutiny Officer) introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period September 2022 to March 2023.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations 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. HOSPITAL DISCHARGES

Councillor E. Forehead the Cabinet Member for Social Care introduced the report which informed the Scrutiny Committee Members the current services, positions and initiatives regarding the prevention of admission and facilitated discharges from hospital for individuals.

Members noted the National position and pressures on the NHS which, as a result has caused long delays for ambulances, waits outside hospitals and people remaining in hospital longer than necessary due to the crisis in social care which is manifested in a lack of available domiciliary care.

Members noted the current service provision both locally and regionally that works across the interface between health and social care to try to address the current issues joint planning for winter has commenced which has been driven by the national strategic direction, the six goals for urgent and primary care and thousand beds initiative. Members also noted regionally there is a partnership review of the older person's pathway and building on learning from recent initiatives, including Step Closer to Home (SCTH) pathways.

The Head of Adult Services, Jo Williams provided the Scrutiny Committee with updates regarding the areas within the report. The Officer stressed that even though the report refers to pressures during the winter period, post pandemic this pressure is all the year around

although services could be exacerbated in the winter if there are periods of inclement weather resulting in more slips and falls and more respiratory conditions such as flu and covid. The Officer referred to section 5.1 of the report in relation to Home First and the reference made to funding, advising Members they would find out if the funding would continue in November. The Officer also referred to section 5.2.1 of the report and Members were advised that the Community Resources Team have started work within the Medical Assessment Unit at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) at the weekends to try and prevent unnecessary hospital admissions. The Scrutiny Committee Members were also made aware the Health Board has published a notice to service providers seeking the interest of anyone able to provide beds in relation to the Step Closer to Home initiative. Members were informed that The Older Person's Pathway is being redesigned and a report is being submitted to the Gwent Adults Strategic Partnership. An initiative is also being undertaken called "Breaking the Cycle" which is a review of patients in hospitals to see if there is anything that can be done to move them on if they are medically fit. The Scrutiny were also informed that Domiciliary Care is currently on 512.30 hours which represents 67 people within the Community and 3 people in hospital.

The Chair thanked the Officer and discussion ensued.

A Member raised a question in relation to how the service area is looking to recruit new members of staff. The Officer advised the Scrutiny Committee that, there is a lot of work going into recruitment currently such as revamping the website in an attempt to attract people in different ways and make it easier for them, therefore there will be a lot more videos to show people what the work would entail. Caerphilly is also linking with Social Care Wales and the National Campaign that is currently being undertaken. The Officers are working closely with the HR Department looking at the whole recruitment process and looking at ways to make the application process easier. Applications have been submitted to attend all the winter Fayres across the Borough, where Social Services intend to have stalls to try and recruit people.

A query was raised by a Scrutiny Member in relation to whether it was the departments intention to increase home assessments and whether equipment is being provided to prevent slips, trips and falls, in an attempt to decrease the number of hospital admissions. The Officer clarified there is a Falls Clinic which can give specific advice and information. Also, all care staff are trained in the "I Stumble Tool" which is intended to support people and try to prevent as many trips and slips as possible. The Falls Clinic also looks at service users that have a history of trips and falls to try and ascertain if there is a medical reason for them.

A Member raised a number of questions in relation to the report and stated that it was in way a criticism of the staff and resources. The Officer advised The Scrutiny Committee full responses would be provided to the group following the meeting.

Having fully considered the report, the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the contents.

8. FINAL REPORT FROM THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON TACKLING POTENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES POST PANDEMIC.

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report which provided the Scrutiny Committee Members with information of the findings of the Task and Finish group that was established to review how Caerphilly County Borough Council works with partners to tackle any potential mental health issues post-pandemic. Committee Members were asked to consider the recommendations of the review group and recommend that Cabinet supports them. The Scrutiny Officer highlighted to new Committee Members that this report was by a cross party group of Committee Members and was-not a report by Officers.

The Scrutiny Officer thanked all the Panel Members and witnesses for their time and for the contribution that they made to a rigorous piece of work. The Scrutiny Officer outlined how the Task Group had met on five occasions since July 2021 and had received evidence from key

witnesses ranging from the Consultant Clinical Psychologist responsible for the delivery of mental health services across the Gwent region, to the Director of the Mental Health Foundation in Wales. Members heard how the conclusion reached was that the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of the population was immense and that action is now needed locally in mitigation against the resulting issues.

Following Consideration of the report, discussion ensued.

A Member made an observation that the report did not mention how stress from physical pain and delayed operations could affect mental health. The Officer agreed that the stress and pain from any operations that have been delayed because of the pandemic would be very concerning, however this aspect was not considered when the remit of the inquiry was discussed by the Group Members. The Member stated they would have liked it to have been acknowledged in the report.

Following consideration of the report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved for recommendation to Cabinet. By way of Microsoft Forms (and noting there were 8 for, 0 against and 1 Abstention) this was carried.

RESOLVED that: -

1. Caerphilly County Borough Council prioritises the provision of bereavement counselling across the County Borough during future meetings with Health and Wellbeing partners.
2. Caerphilly County Borough Council uses its influence within the WLGA to recognise the importance of the role played by Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners and recommends a collective appeal from all Welsh Councils for additional funding from the Welsh Government for this vital service within GP surgeries.
3. Council communications platforms are actively used to promote community health and wellbeing activities such as Bereavement Cafes organised via the Integrated Wellbeing Network.
4. Caerphilly County Borough Council liaises closely with partners in order to explore ways of allowing increased community self-determination for post-COVID wellbeing recovery through processes such as Participatory Budgeting.
5. Caerphilly County Borough Council actively encourages CCBC staff and Members to undertake Gwent Connect 5 training in order to help improve population mental wellbeing.
6. Caerphilly County Borough Council works with Health and Wellbeing partners to develop a "Tool Kit" outlining some of the key symptoms of Mental Health issues and signposting users to the range of help available such as the Melo website.

9. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 3).

Councillor E. Forehead the Cabinet Member for Social Care introduced the report which provided the Scrutiny Committee Members with details of the projected revenue expenditure for the Social Services Directorate for the 2022/23 financial year and its implications for future financial years.

The Members noted the reasons behind the projected overspend of £1,415k for Social Services in 2022/23, inclusive of transport costs and the potential implications of this projected overspend on Social Services reserve balances and for future financial years.

The Financial Services Manager – (Mr Mike Jones) stressed to Members, that even though there was a large overspend this year, the Social Services reserves are healthy, therefore doesn't pose a challenge for the current financial year. However, those reserves will be depleted as a result and there is the potential for an overspend in the current year which will mean those reserves will not be available in future years, along with the adding the impact of the ongoing recovery from COVID and the cost-of-living crisis, then it does mark the beginning of a challenging period.

The Corporate Director Social Services & Housing – (Dave Street) requested the Scrutiny Members note this is the period 3 report and the first budget report of the year which may not resemble the end of year position. Over the past five years there have been reported underspends. This report has not included any grant funding which may be allocated by WG.

In response to a Member's query, the Assistant Director of Children's Services, Gareth Jenkins advised the Scrutiny Committee that there are plans to expand the Residential Care Services. However, this process can be a lengthy process, as appropriate properties need to be found, and then there is a requirement for them to be refurbished to care standards. Finding these properties, that are large enough to accommodate a group of children and have the level of privacy to safeguard the children and their identities and Members of the Community is difficult. The Officer confirmed there is grant funding in place called the Regional Integration Fund (RIF). Approval from Cabinet has been received to add Capital Funding if required.

During the course of debate a Motion was moved and seconded that a letter be sent on behalf of the Chair of the Social Service Scrutiny Committee to Welsh Government, WLGA and the Minister for Health requesting additional funding for Social Care, by roll call this was unanimously agreed.

Having fully considered the report, the Social Services Scrutiny Committee noted the contents.

The meeting closed at 6.28 pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 11th October, 2022.

CHAIR