



SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MULTI-LOCATIONAL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES PENALLTA HOUSE AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2022 AT 5.30 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor D. Cushing –Chair

Councillors:

A. Broughton-Petitt, M. Chacon-Dawson (Vice-Chair), P. Cook, K. Ethridge, M. Evans, D. Harse, T. Heron, L. Jeremiah, A. Leonard, J. A. Pritchard, D. Price, S. Skivens.

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

Co-Opted Members: Vacant.

Together with:

Officers: Officers: G. Jenkins (Assistant Director–Children’s Services), J. Williams (Assistant Director- Adult Services), M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer), J. Thomas (Committee Services Officer), J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer).

Also in attendance: J. Welham (Regional Programme Director), Dr J. Hill (Regional Clinical Director, MyST Regional Programme), Phil Diamond (Head of Regional Partnership Team).

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, J. Rao and D. Street (Corporate Director – Social Services and Housing) and A. Gough – Health Board Representative.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None Received.

3. MINUTES – 6TH SEPTEMBER 2022

RESOLVED that subject to an amendment relating to a point of clarification on page 3,

item 7, Para 4 the word 'unmet' be added to the sentence to read 'The Scrutiny Committee was informed that 'unmet' need for domiciliary care currently stands at 512.3 hours per week, which represents 67 people within the community and 3 people in hospital and a subsequent amendment to Page 3, Item 8, Para 5 – in that the word 'no' had been omitted from the sentence. The sentence to read "A Member raised a number of questions in relation to the report and stated that it was in no way a criticism of the staff and resources."

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 6th September 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 October 2022 to March 2023.

Following consideration of the report and amendments suggested by the Scrutiny Officer and Cllr J. Pritchard it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that with the removal of The Review on Day Services report from the November meeting and the addition of a report on Aids and Adaptations be added to the January meeting the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. REGIONAL MARKET STABILITY REPORT 2022-2025

Councillor E. Forehead the Cabinet Member for Social Care introduced the report which informed the Scrutiny Committee that each Regional Partnership Board in Wales is required to publish a regional overview of the stability of the commissioned services in the area. The report included the current position of the registered services in Gwent with a specific focus on the relative 'stability' of the services commissioned. This is known as a "Market Stability Report" (MSR).

The Scrutiny Committee were advised the purpose of the report was to seek Members view prior to being referred to Council for a decision.

The report seeks the views of the Scrutiny Committee Members with reference to:

- 3.1.1 As required under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) accept and agree the Market Stability Report for the local authority area.

3.1.2 The LA continue to engage with Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and support the development of the regional Area Plan, where actions will be identified setting out how priorities will be addressed.

The Chair thanked Councillor Forehead for the introduction and welcomed Phil Diamond Head of Regional Partnership Team to the meeting and discussion ensued.

A Member made reference to the section of the report which informed the Scrutiny Committee that there are a number of vacancies in care homes, some at only 40 percent occupancy, and the possibility of them having to close due to it no longer being financially viable to remain open. Also, the issue with domiciliary care being overwhelmed with many packages, particularly complex care packages which require many hours of domiciliary care that are not currently being able to be provided. The Member requested information on whether these two issues could be resolved together by persuading service users with complex requirements that are currently choosing to remain at home, that care homes would be more appropriate for their needs. The Member suggested that this could then be an opportunity to provide domiciliary care hours to persons who are currently unable able to access any hours.

In response the Head of Adult Services, Jo Williams, informed the Scrutiny Committee Members, that one of the winter plan initiatives is the Health Board is currently looking to commission 80 beds across residential and nursing homes, which will be used to temporally allocate to people who are currently unable to leave hospital as they are waiting for care packages. Care homes currently have the opportunity to submit tenders to advise how many beds they are able to block book for this purpose. This would assist them to be financially more sustainable. However, there remains a staffing crisis within care homes, therefore a lot of the vacancies they have is due to them not have the staff. The Authority is working with care homes, who have advised their costs are going up a couple of hundred percent due to fuel costs which is impacting on their viability.

Phil Diamond informed the Scrutiny Committee Members, that as part of the Population Needs Assessment engagement has been made with a large number of people across Gwent. Normally the preferable option with people is to be able to stay in their own home for as long and as safely as possible. However, there are some instances where this isn't possible.

In response to a Members query The Head of Children Services Gareth Jenkins informed the Scrutiny Committee the reason for more children being taken into care compared to other years, is because there has been an increase in both numbers and complexity post COVID. Therefore, due to an increase in assessments this has resulted in, increased packages of care and children looked after within Caerphilly. The Officer did assure Members, that numbers have not significantly increased and have remained stable within the past two and a half years. However, a factor to the increase is due to the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children that are being taken in through the National Transfer Scheme. The Officer also advised Members, that the cost has increased, this has been driven by the market and the lack of available placements for some children. The Scrutiny were assured that Caerphilly is not alone in this situation and there is a national crisis regarding placements for children.

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

7. REGIONAL INTERATION FUND

Councillor E. Forehead the Cabinet Member for Social Care introduced the report which informed The Scrutiny Committee Members that the Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) is a mechanism by which the WG intends to fund the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) in the future. The report explained this new concept of tapering funding and outlines the financial challenges and pressure to the Authority over the next five years. Councillor Forehead drew Members attention to the consequences of this tapering in section 5.5 of the report, which

outlined the financial consequences for Caerphilly in terms of Caerphilly specific schemes and regional schemes, if agreed it could ultimately require the Authority to allocate further growth funds to Social Services or the schemes would need to be taken down. Alternatively, other services in social care would need to cease to continue the funding.

The Chair thanked Councillor Forehead and Members were afforded the opportunity discuss the report and to ask the Officers questions.

Members expressed concerns regarding the tapering arrangements set out in section 5.5 and 5.52 of the report. There were further concerns regarding whether money could be withdrawn at any time from the regional schemes should any Local Authority within the Regional Partnership wish to do so. A Member sought clarification on whether this was a way in which WG can ensure that LA's take part in schemes that are on WG's agenda rather prioritise agendas within each LA. Clarity was also sought on whether once the funds start to diminish from WG will the LA's be expected to invest their own funds into whichever scheme is in place under the tapering arrangements.

Jo Williams advised the Scrutiny Committee the funding comes with clear guidance and how it is to be used which is specified within the report in terms of priority groups and how the funding is allocated. WG is being clear that any future funding modules will come through the RPB. The Officer explained that if any future funding is allocated then it is important the LA understands the evaluation criteria and what Caerphilly consider the regional priorities to be with the defined areas.

Concerns and clarification were also sought regarding 5.2 which relates to Caerphilly specific schemes and the funding being almost halved in the next six years. The Chair requested that the Cabinet Member arrange for a letter to be sent to WG to highlight the concerns and disagreement by the Scrutiny Committee Members. Councillor Forehead assured the Chair and all the Members it was her intention to send a letter to the Minister highlighting all the concerns. The Scrutiny Committee thanked Councillor Forehead.

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

8. MyST PRESENTATION.

The Scrutiny Committee welcomed Mrs Jennie Welham (Regional Programme Director) and Dr Jael Hill (Regional Clinical Director, MyST Regional Programme) who presented the Scrutiny with an update on 'My Support Team'.

The Scrutiny were updated on the progress of the MyST Team since June 2021 and the team is now a fully operational regional programme.

The Scrutiny noted that the team currently have 15 intensive cases on their community caseload and 9 in their residential caseloads. Dr Jael Hill and Jennie Welham shared with the Scrutiny Committee a young person's story with whom the team have been working with to move from residential care into a community therapeutic foster care home, and the progress the young person has made since being involved with the team. A video was also provided which shared foster carers experiences.

The Chair thanked colleagues for delivering the presentation and invited any questions for the Members.

Both the Chair and Councillor Heron requested that their admiration and recognition for the valuable work carried out by foster carers be noted.

In response to Members queries the Scrutiny Committee were informed that Caerphilly currently has one Therapeutic Carer, but the team is hoping to recruit a further three as soon

as possible. The Scrutiny Committee noted that carers are usually recruited through other carer referrals. Dr J. Hill advised Members that Therapeutic Carers work alongside the clinical staff and receive the same training.

Following consideration and discussion, the presentation was noted.

9. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (MONTH 5).

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 £804k 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 Chair thanked Councillor Forehead, and the Scrutiny Committee Members were afforded the opportunity to ask the Officers questions.

In response to concerns highlighted by a Scrutiny Committee Member regarding the £400,000 overspend in relation to out of county care and what the Authority is actively doing to recruit foster carers within the Borough. Gareth Jenkins advised Members that recruitment of foster carers has always been a challenge. Caerphilly has taken part in expensive campaigns to recruit foster carers however, reinforcing what was confirmed in the earlier presentation often the best way of recruiting foster carers is by recommendations from other carers. There is a presence most weekends in supermarkets throughout the Borough. The financial rewards for the mainstream carers within Caerphilly is very competitive. Unfortunately, the greatest issue is not having enough carers. The Officer advised Members that during the pandemic a number of children were placed into residential care who would ordinarily have been placed with a foster carer. The Officer also highlighted that Caerphilly currently have 35 children in residential care which is the highest Caerphilly has ever been. The Officer informed the Members that WG policies are trying to eliminate profit from children's care.

The Officer advised Members that Caerphilly are looking at expanding their own Residential Provision and that there is a Complex Needs Panel that meet monthly which carry out reviews of all the children that are out of county in residential care and set plans accordingly to move them to a family setting should it be safe to do. The Officer assured Members that all children aged over fifteen and a half that are currently in residential care have a very clear plan in place on reintroducing them back into the community with a range of supported accommodation to allow some level of independence.

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

The meeting closed at 7.11pm.

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd November, 2022.

CHAIR