

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 DECEMBER 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 18 December 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)

Councillors: Amanda Bragg, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd, Hilary McGuill, Dave Mackie and David Wisinger

SUBSTITUTE: Councillor Joe Johnson (for Cindy Hinds)

APOLOGY: Councillor Peter Curtis

CONTRIBUTORS: Cabinet Member for Social Services, Chief Officer (Social Services), Service Manager (Resources), Service Manager - Disability Services and Team Manager - Performance

Representatives from the Care & Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) for minute number 41

Vicky Poole (Regional Director for North Wales) and Rob Gifford (Regional Manager)

IN ATTENDANCE: Environment & Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Councillors David Mackie and Hilary McGuill both declared a personal interest as members of the Community Health Council.

40. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2014 had been circulated with the agenda.

Matters Arising

Minute 34: Single Point of Access (SPOA) - In response to a query from Councillor Hilary McGuill, the Chief Officer (Social Services) advised that Cabinet had agreed to develop the SPOA which was due for implementation by Spring 2015. In terms of the Regional Collaboration Fund and the decision by Welsh Government to reduce the third (final) year grant for 2015/16, it was envisaged that sufficient funding would be available to support the SPOA elements.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

41. CSSIW ANNUAL REPORT

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the Care & Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) annual report on the evaluation of performance of Flintshire Social Services for 2013/14.

In presenting the report, Mr. Rob Gifford of CSSIW advised that previous feedback on paragraph numbering had been taken on board for future reports. Councillor David Mackie conveyed Members' appreciation for this. Mr. Gifford provided background to the self-assessment of performance of Social Services carried out within each Council which, together with a range of supporting evidence, contributed to the publication of the CSSIW Annual Report. In summarising the key messages for Adult services, he stated that there was evidence of progress in a number of areas, leading to more individuals living independently and fewer requiring residential care. Less consistent performance was found on Children's services, with some areas requiring strengthening, although there had been evidence of recent signs of improvement. However, it was indicated that there had been an increase in the number of referrals to Children's Services and those on the Child Protection Register.

Mr. Gifford drew attention to the Council's response on progress to address areas for improvement identified for 2012/13, together with information on visits undertaken during the year and areas for follow-up next year.

The Chief Officer thanked Mr. Gifford for the report and said that the Council worked closely with CSSIW on performance issues and shared best practice throughout the year. Within the Service Plan Improvement Priorities appended to the report, he drew particular attention to progress made on:

- *Ability to influence locally focussed strategic planning with BCUHB* - where a high level of activity had been undertaken across the Council.
- *Initial child protection conference timescales / statutory visits for looked after children / timely personal education plans (PEPs) for looked after children* - some areas had been identified as requiring further investment and the approach taken forward to look at the stories behind indicators to improve the quality behind statistics, for example the joint working with Education colleagues to improve PEPs.
- *Addressing the fall in numbers of known young and adult carers* - good progress had been achieved through the resolution of data collection issues.
- *Reviewing the impact of recent senior management structural changes* - significant progress was reported in moving to a new operational structure, with agreement of the senior management model and a third member of the team due to start in February 2015.
- *Absence Management outcomes and impact upon capacity* - where significant improvements had been shown in the last year and would continue to be monitored for 2014/15. The importance of considering the detail behind statistics was highlighted to ensure that individuals complied with reasonable expectations in terms of attendance.

In highlighting two areas of significant challenge, the Chief Officer referred to Health assessments for looked after children and work by the Council in

encouraging Health partners to improve their performance. He said that adult high quality nursing care was a national issue and that despite progress made in Flintshire, as indicated in the report, this remained a 'Red' risk status.

Councillor Mackie referred to concerns previously raised with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) about the impact of its performance on the Council's performance indicators, and asked if a letter could be sent on behalf of the Committee to reinforce this message. On the educational attainment of looked after children, he said there was a recognition of the challenges due to the different circumstances of children coming into care, eg if the child had not received prior schooling, and therefore setting realistic targets for individuals was a better approach.

The Chief Officer suggested that further concerns on BCUHB could be raised directly with its Chief Executive who was due to attend a future meeting of the Committee. He spoke of the need for the Council to maintain influence and pressure on partnership working with BCUHB, whilst recognising it was currently undergoing a period of change. On educational attainment, he agreed with the need to look at the quality and nature of provision through joint working with Education. The Service Manager (Resources) gave assurance of close working arrangements between Social Services, Education and a range of school partners.

Councillor Hilary McGuill raised various concerns on changes within BCUHB, the impact of any Council merger on outcomes for Children's Services and the challenges on encouraging looked after children to take up health assessments. In terms of educational attainment of looked after children, she commented on the impact from stability of placements which could be shared with the Committee, and the potential for access to Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Mr. Gifford agreed that baseline data should be assessed to establish reasonable expectations in terms of educational attainment and that presenting the stories behind individuals to CSSIW could be reflected in future reports.

In respect of BCUHB, the Chief Officer said that good professional and corporate relations were being maintained with BCUHB as one of the Council's major partners, but appropriate challenge was an ongoing theme. He advised that every opportunity was being taken to improve take-up of health assessments, as that the issue was regularly highlighted at meetings. The Chair said that this also could be raised at the joint meeting with Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny in Spring 2015. The Cabinet Member for Social Services added that the issues of health assessments and educational attainment of looked after children had been highlighted at meetings of the Children's Services Forum.

As a kinship carer, Councillor Andy Dunbobbin acknowledged the challenges around education attainment of looked after children but added that support was available through effective partnership working such as courses offered by Coleg Cambria.

Councillor McGuill asked how many beds were commissioned in nursing homes for patients leaving community-based hospitals. The Chief Officer

advised that a number of beds were available through the Intermediate Care Fund and a breakdown of the provision was shown on page 87 within the Improvement Plan progress report.

Councillor Amanda Bragg queried the reason for the increase in referrals to Children's Services and those on the Child Protection Register during 2013/14. The Chief Officer said that this rise had been experienced across many other Authorities and was thought to be due to increased awareness resulting from a number of high-profile child safeguarding cases reported nationally. However, the level of referrals to date for 2014/15 had stabilised and was more in line with the Wales average. Mr. Gifford was in agreement with these comments, as the data for previous years had been lower.

RESOLVED:

That the CSSIW evaluation of performance and the Authority's response to areas that have been identified for improvement, be noted.

42. NORTH WALES ADULTS SAFEGUARDING BOARD

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to consider the proposal that the statutory requirement to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board be discharged on behalf of the Authority by the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board (NWSAB). This would put the safeguarding of adults on to a statutory footing similar to that already in place for safeguarding children.

The report set out the development of arrangements for the NWSAB in comparison to that for children's boards, with the recommended approach for a regional board with sub-regional delivery groups to ensure that local practice met local need. The implementation plan with proposed timescales was appended to the report.

In response to a query from Councillor Hilary McGuill, the Chief Officer explained that the NWSAB membership would comprise senior officers with responsibility for safeguarding from each Authority, together with colleagues from Health and North Wales Police. It was indicated that Jenny Williams (Director of Social Services in Conwy CBC) would chair the Board initially until agreement could be reached on a permanent arrangement. The Chief Officer agreed to email the Committee with confirmation of the membership.

Following comments from Councillor McGuill about Member involvement and accountability, the Chief Officer said it was likely that senior officers on the Board would be responsible for cascading information to Members and that Flintshire's view would be represented in discussions on governance and responsibility within the Board. He added that regular reports on the activities and effectiveness of the Safeguarding Children's Board would give Members the opportunity to challenge, and felt that the same approach would apply for the NWSAB.

Councillor McGuill raised concerns about the use of electronic communications due to the potential increase in travel by some NWSAB members. The Chief Officer acknowledged this but gave assurance that

appropriate decisions on the use of such equipment as opposed to a one-to-one meeting would need to be assessed, depending on each situation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the statutory requirement to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board be discharged on behalf of the Authority by the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board; and
- (b) That the structure for the regional Safeguarding Adults Board, to be known as the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board (NWSAB) as shown in Section 4.2 of the report, be noted.

43. MID YEAR CHIEF OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chief Officer (Social Services) presented his 2014/15 mid-year service performance report for his portfolio, covering the period April to September 2014.

On Direct Payments, the Committee was informed of details of positive work undertaken such as identifying areas of good practice and information exchanges with external groups.

In response to queries from Councillor Hilary McGuill, the Service Manager - Disability Services provided explanation on the use of the multi-room sensor pilot in Telecare and a video-based alarm facility which was due to be piloted in January 2015 using funding from the Intermediate Care Fund. She offered to provide the Committee with further details on this at a future meeting.

Councillor Amanda Bragg sought assurance on the procedure for assessing suitability of properties, particularly for those who were unable to communicate effectively. The Service Manager - Disability Services explained that the process was based around the needs of individuals, involving consideration of a number of factors. She spoke of good links with housing associations on the identification and acquisition of suitable properties for rental to service users. On Telecare services, she provided information on the initial assessment, review and monitoring of equipment.

Councillor David Mackie commented on potential problems on shared properties. The Service Manager explained that each service user within each property was given an individual Tenancy Agreement. If one individual chose to end their agreement, options were available for the remaining tenants to maintain theirs or for an Accommodation Panel to consider a replacement. Although there had been no long-term tenancy problems to date, the Council had a responsibility to address voids.

In response to a question, the Service Manager said that out of approximately 120 placements, there were only around five or six voids. She went on to say that a single occupancy property would need to be sourced for individuals in some circumstances.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the comments/observations of the Committee are fed back to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance.

44. QUARTER 2 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report for the Committee to note and consider elements of the 2014/15 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Committee for the period July to September 2014.

Independent Living

The Team Manager - Performance referred to measure PSR/009a which represented Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) adaptations for one child and explained that the outturn had been adversely impacted by the sourcing of specialist equipment required for the work and delays to the grant process. She went on to say that the work had been completed one month after it had started.

The Chief Officer stated that performance had been improved through adjustments to the Occupational Therapist assessment process, with no negative impact on quality.

Councillor David Mackie raised concerns around the average days taken to deliver major adaptations in owner/occupier and private rented properties compared with those in Council owned properties. The Chief Officer commented on improvements made to the joined-up approach by Social Services and Housing to undertake this work and suggested this as a topic for the joint meeting to be arranged in the New Year. The Service Manager - Disability Services spoke about the different processes involved and the potential for delays if consent was not received promptly from landlords.

In response to similar comments from Councillor Joe Johnson, the Service Manager pointed out the complexities for some adaptations which could involve seeking planning permission or obtaining quotes from contractors. She said that improvements had been made to reduce stages of the process and welcomed any suggestions from Members.

Councillor Hilary McGuill suggested the grants could be accessed directly by the applicant to arrange their own adaptations. The Service Manager said that this was already an option, however most residents preferred the Council to undertake this. It was hoped that the introduction of a further option to enable Care & Repair to carry out work would help to speed up the process and improve future performance figures.

In response to a request from Councillor McGuill, officers agreed to provide details on the time taken from a request for DFG adaptations through to completion of the work.

Councillor David Wisinger asked about the various sections involved in processing a DFG application and whether this could be better prioritised, possibly with involvement by the Planning department. The Service Manager explained that the Housing section had undertaken work on the list of approved contractors to speed up the process on quotations.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the recommendation in the report which gave an opportunity to feedback comments to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Hilary Isherwood felt that the application process could be further simplified through the use of a single point of contact and that perhaps Age Concern could be involved to assist with applications from vulnerable people.

The Service Manager suggested that a group of Members may wish to view the flowchart process to see if any improvements could be made. The Chair said that this had already been done and that a better approach could be through a joint workshop between the Committee, the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and officers from the Planning department.

Councillor Veronica Gay suggested that a request be made for the Planning Protocol Group to consider the DFG process.

Integrated Community Social and Health Services

The Chief Officer commented on the Council's effective use of the Intermediate Care Fund and future risk, explaining that more information would be received by the Committee in the New Year including discussion on how best to provide support using current resources.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That feedback be provided to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee who are responsible for the overview and monitoring of performance;
- (c) That the Environment and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committees be requested to examine the adaptation process with a view to suggesting any improvements; and
- (d) That the item on adaptations be discussed further at the joint workshop with the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

45. ROTA VISITS

The Facilitator asked Members to stay behind after the meeting to view the list of rota visits to be covered over the next six months. In response to a query by Councillor McGuill, the Facilitator agreed to confirm the number of outstanding reports.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.

46. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Facilitator introduced a report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme. She confirmed that as requested at the previous meeting, a representative from the Assessment Team would be present at the next meeting on 29 January 2015.

Following comments raised by Members on Ambulance response times, the Facilitator explained that a mutually convenient date was being sought from representatives of both the Ambulance Trust and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, as discussion on this matter concerned both parties. The Chair suggested it would be useful for any queries and comments to be forwarded to the Facilitator to collate prior to the meeting.

The Committee agreed the following:

- A special meeting may be required for the relevant representative to attend for the Collaborative Projects item (currently scheduled for March 2015).
- On the educational attainment of looked after children item for the joint meeting with Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee in Spring 2015, a request would be made for example case studies from across the board, including any impact from disruptive placements.
- The joint meeting with Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee (yet to be scheduled) to include an extra item on homelessness issues.
- In consultation with Chair, the items yet to be scheduled would be allocated dates. The Chairman of the Children's Services Forum would be asked to provide an update, to be circulated to the Committee. Any questions raised could then be passed back to the Chairman for a response.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated accordingly.

47. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.50 am)

.....
Chairman