

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3 DECEMBER 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Remote Meeting on Thursday, 3 December 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Michelle Perfect and David Wisinger

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones (Cabinet Member for Social Services); Chief Executive; Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults; Safeguarding Unit Services Manager; Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning and Wellbeing and Partnership Lead

IN ATTENDANCE: Overview & Scrutiny Facilitators and Democratic Services Officer.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

None were received.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2020 were approved and moved by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Wisinger.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2020 were approved and moved by Councillor Healey and seconded by Councillor Cunningham.

14. EMERGENCY SITUATION BRIEFING (VERBAL)

The Chief Executive explained that the current situation was fluid. He and his Chief Officer colleagues would be ensuring that Members received short up to date verbal briefings at the start of meetings. He also commented that it may yet be necessary to reinstate the situational briefings which had been delivered to members during the first six months of the emergency.

In response to questions raised by Councillor McGuill the Chief Executive explained that for the first two weeks 1,000 units per week of vaccine one were expected with considerable numbers to follow and subject to approval and licencing two other vaccines were close behind. Antibody testing was not relevant at this stage and everyone would be offered vaccination in phases.

Councillor Cunningham asked about the storage of the vaccines and if they would be effected by opening and closing fridges. The Chief Executive explained that it was all in hand and was the main reason why they were only administering the vaccine in hospital settings at this stage was due to low

temperature refrigeration facilities. At some point next year the more mobile vaccines would be administered by GP's and Community Pharmacies.

The Chief Executive clarified that people in Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas could move freely into Wales and vice versa but people should not move out of Tier 3 in response to a question raised by Councillor Lowe.

Councillor Ellis asked about the movement of patients from Hospital to Care homes and the Chief Executive said that there was no evidence that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) or any other Health Board had breached the discharge rules and that nobody should be released to a care setting without appropriate testing that proved negative which was confirmed by the Chief Officer (Social Services).

The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults confirmed that there had been a Care Home in Holywell with infection which had been well managed and was due to be open for business by the end of next week.

Councillor Gladys Healey enquired as to which out of the three vaccines Wales would have, given that the Pfizer vaccine is the most expensive. The Chief Executive advised that the UK will have all procured vaccines which would become plentiful in supply..

RESOLVED:

The verbal update was noted

15. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking for consideration and reported that the Arosfa update would be moved to the meeting on 4th March 2021 and that the Part 9 Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2019/20 was no longer going to be brought to the Committee as it would have already been to Cabinet in December.

The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults said that residents were due to move into Holywell Extra Care on 21st January 2021 and she would get an update on how they were settling into their new environment and report back as requested by the Chairman.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions

16. RECOVERY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) gave a brief summary of the Recovery Strategy and stated that the vast majority of services were maintained at a high level throughout the emergency period maximising the support to vulnerable people. Some services had a change in demand while others were business as usual. He explained that, where needed, service delivery had been adapted to use blended approaches with some people in the office as needed. Also there had been recent significant pressures on Care Homes and Home Care availability but things were now more stable and hoped that this would be sustained before vaccines commenced. He and the Cabinet Member had been meeting with all operational teams to show appreciation to their commitment.

The Chairman asked what had not returned to normal and the Chief Officer (Social Services) explained that some respite services for older people had not been possible to run, some day services had not opened in full, Children's respite services – Arosfa and face to face training courses had not been running but were held virtually. Some were now being held face to face. He added that some changes would be reviewed and may be kept.

Councillor Gladys Healy asked if there was enough staff to monitor the situation of children who were not attending school and were being home schooled which she added she would also raise with Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny. The Chief Officer (Social Services) said that Education Social Workers were the front line services for when children did not attend school and from a Social Services point of view they had not encountered any problems. He stressed that it was important to work with them to support people and families of those children who were not able to attend school. Welsh Government had asked if we were monitoring Children on the Child Protection Register which we are doing pro-actively.

The Chairman was interested to know what had been lost by not being office based from a safeguarding point of view. The Chief Officer (Social Services) didn't think that they had lost that much, which they need to learn from for the future and that they adapted really well as young people were much more comfortable with technology and digital methods. From a health and wellbeing point of view allowing small groups of staff to go into the office to form a pod was a proactive thing that they had done as staff had missed the support that they got from office contact in terms of unloading cases.

In a response to the points that Councillor Ellis raised about the risk register references and discharges from hospital the Chief Officer (Social Services) said that he was concerned about the pressures but that they had done everything they could to respond and maintain good quality services which he praised the staff for. He explained that the ones that had an underlying risk rating of red was a fair rating because of significant pressures. The risk rating of yellow suggested that there had been improvement that had strengthened that area of service. The protocol on hospital discharges had been followed to the letter resulting in moves to Residential Care Homes not being as easy as they were which lead to having to be more flexible and develop new services i.e. The Oaks in Shotton and Ty Treffynnon which were still being used.

When asked by Councillor Cunningham how Ty Treffynnon was running the Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults confirmed that it had been working well although it did have an outbreak but was now back open. It had a fantastic response in terms of discharge to assess and recover resulting in the majority of people going back home and very few people having to move into long term residential care which was a great measure of success. A review to decide what to do next was due this month as the 12 month lease ends in April 2021.

In response to a question asked by Councillor Bateman about proof of vaccination the Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning said that medical records would be updated as it would for any other vaccination but that testing would still continue for those who had had the vaccination as it was only 90-95% effective and it was unknown if the virus would change in its presentation as time progresses like the flu virus does.

The Chairman asked if it was a requirement in recruiting staff for Nursing Homes that they have had the vaccination. The Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning said that her understanding was that as the vaccine was not compulsory it could not be a requirement and colleagues within BCUHB had been talking about NFC registration and the importance of doing the right thing.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

17. MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR RECOVERY, PORTFOLIO AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report for the performance of the service against performance indicators which were set early in the reporting period and stressed that in many ways it was a positive report as many areas had been maintained.

In response to a question asked by Councillor Cunningham the Chief Officer (Social Services) said that the adoption services had coped quite well with the impact of the emergency situation and was improving. The funding of the adoption service has been reviewed and each of the North Wales Authorities had committed an increase in funding to the service. He confirmed that Councillor Kevin Hughes was the Councils' representative on the panel.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Healey.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

18. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S ANNUAL REPORT TO INCLUDE THE "NEW SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES"

The Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning briefly introduced the report before handing over to the Safeguarding Unit Services Manager who advised Members that in terms of Adult Safeguarding and Children and Adult safeguarding Flintshire was one of the first local authorities in the North Wales area to move very quickly after lockdown into virtual meetings. She then gave a more in depth report on the following:-

- Impact of COVID 19 and response of the Safeguarding Unit
- Adult Safeguarding under COVID 19
- New National Safeguarding Procedures
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS)
- Adult Safeguarding and Adults at Risk
- Children's Safeguarding and the Child Protection Register
- Number of Child Protection Case Conferences held
- Looked After Children
- Links to the Regional Safeguarding Board

Councillor Gladys Healey asked if the numbers of domestic violence had increased because of the emergency situation during isolation. The Safeguarding Unit Services Manager said from an adult safeguarding point of view there was a slight increase in the first couple of months during lockdown but nothing substantial over the last six months. In children, the highest category in the last 2 years of registration has been emotional abuse linked to domestic violence and the highest category in the last 12 months has been neglect. There was a change there that needs a better understanding of. It would be interesting to see if the highest category had gone back to emotional abuse rather than neglect when we get the data for the last 6 months. Many areas have reported an increase in domestic violence but that is not the case for Flintshire.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Lowe

RESOLVED:

- (a) That members accept this report as relevant information in relation to Flintshire Safeguarding for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 and additional information provided; and
- (b) That members note the variety of activity across the Safeguarding Unit and the continuing development and improvement in service provision.

19. COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT UPDATE

The Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults introduced the Wellbeing and Partnership Lead who took us through the report which gave an update on the change in programme to the Community Services Transformation Project which is one of 4 for North Wales. She pointed out that the impact of the emergency situation had been significant with the workforce and financial resources being diverted to respond to the initial emergency responses work.

The Chairman raised concern about a vacancy that had been vacant since the end of October. The Wellbeing and Partnership Lead advised that the post was currently on hold due to the reduction in funding for next year pointing out that now was not an opportune moment to bring in a new member of staff when potentially it would have to end in March.

Councillor Bateman was pleased about the Dementia Respite Support Service. A new service of Support Workers spending evenings and overnight in an individual's home for up to 2 consecutive nights when their needs were escalated to save moving the patient.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) thanked the Wellbeing and Partnership Lead for her tremendous work. He added that the Transformation Programme was very hastily adapted to support the response to the emergency situation.

The Wellbeing and Partnership Lead added that on a regional level there had been some work through the Community Transformation Programme that was specifically around supporting primarily older people. A number of ipads had been purchased and made available to older people with plans to help them with virtual consultations with Consultants in hospitals and also to help to tackle some loneliness and isolation. Ongoing work was being undertaken to recruit digital champions.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee supports and is assured that the key areas being developed as part of the Transformation programme are appropriate and will support local needs in Flintshire; and
- (b) That the Committee acknowledges that the impact of the CSTP will be affected by a reduced level of funding for 2021/22 and that the detail to prioritise activity in 2021/22 is ongoing at the time of writing this report

20. SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE

The Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning gave a brief summary of the report which provided an overview of the additional work being undertaken to support the Council's newly qualified social workers with the disruption of the emergency situation in the following two areas

- Newly Qualified Social Workers
- Developing our Social Workers

Councillor Bateman thanked the Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning for the speedy response that she had given not only to the previous questions that she had raised but also for the in depth information she had just presented.

Councillor Mackie was also pleased with the way things were going in particular how Glyndwr University had changed what they did to fit in with the Authority which demonstrates a good relationship.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Davies.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That members are informed of the impact of the COVID pandemic on social work learning and development;
- (b) That members note the Council's work supporting the current newly qualified social workers; and
- (c) That members are informed of our proposals for the development of First Year in Practice Social Workers through to Experienced Practitioners.

21. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE 2019-20

Report for information only.

22. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.50 pm)

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Chair