

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 JULY 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA on Monday, 2 July 2012

PRESENT: Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)

Councillors Marion Bateman, Peter Curtis, Adele Davies-Cooke, David Evans, Cindy Hinds (Vice-Chairman), Stella Jones, Brian Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Gareth Roberts, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillor Hilary McGuill

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Director of Community Services and Head of Development and Resources

For minute number 11 - Complaints Officer for Social Services

For minute number 12 - Planning & Development Officer

For minute number 13 Service Manager, Housing Renewal Manager and Management Information Officer

IN ATTENDANCE:

Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 May 2012 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Matters Arising

The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator referred to page 2 and advised Members of the following:-

- The information requested by Members on Looked After Children had been circulated to the Committee by email.
- The suggestion for a representative from Countess of Chester Hospital to attend a future meeting of the Committee would be discussed at the workshop scheduled to be held on 10 September 2012.
- An email had been circulated to provide an update on Rota Visits. Lin Hawtin had taken over the responsibility for them and would be providing an updated list for Members and training was also to be arranged.

On the section under Forward Work Programme on page 3, the Facilitator advised that a copy of the Executive report on the Adult Social Care Transport Policy had been placed in Members pigeon holes.

RESOLVED:

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

10. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR

The Chair congratulated the service users and staff at Abbey Metals who had won a national competition on 'best day opportunities'. They were presented with the award for the company of the year which was a fantastic achievement.

11. COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

The Head of Development and Resources introduced a report to inform Members about the compliments, representations and complaints received by Social Services for Adults and Children for the year April 2011 to March 2012.

He detailed the background to the report explaining that local authorities were required to maintain a representations and complaints procedure for social services functions and report annually to the Welsh Government (WG) on its operation of the procedure. There were three stages to the procedure with stage 1 being considered at local level, stage 2 still being within the Council but independent of the original service manager and stage 3 which was the complaint being reported to WG. The Head of Development and Resources explained that Heads of Service welcomed complaints to improve the service and added that far more compliments than complaints were received.

The table on page 8 provided a breakdown of the 89 complaints received by Social Services for Adults. The Head of Development and Resources indicated that 10 had progressed to stage 2 in 2011-12 which was an increase from four in 2010-11. Details of the complaints were reported in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.32. He detailed some of the wide variety of methods for putting complaints right and said that the timescale for actioning complaints was 10 days for those at stage 1 and 25 days for those which progressed to stage 2; all complaints had been completed within the appropriate timescale.

Paragraph 3.33 to 3.48 provided details of the compliments which had been received by Social Services for Adults which totalled 213. Compliments for Social Services for Children totalled 54 which was a slight increase on previous years but was also reflective of the increase in referrals to the service which had seen 821 for 2011-12 compared to 606 referrals for 2010-11; details were provided in paragraphs 3.49 to 3.59. Of the compliments received, 70% were responded to within the 10 day timescale compared with 57% for 2010-11. Social Services for Children recorded 69 compliments in the year 2011-12 from families and the Courts and an additional 15 compliments relating to the work contributions to the Youth Justice Service.

The Head of Development and Resources explained that the Welsh Government (WG) had produced a consultation paper 'Making Things Better'

which proposed changes to managing complaints about Social Services in Wales. The proposals included the removal of Stage 3 (Independent Review Panel) and the role of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) in dealing with complaints about residential homes and people who self-fund. Officers had responded to the consultation paper and a further report would be submitted to Committee once WG had confirmed what the changes would be.

Councillor M. Bateman expressed her thanks to the Homecare Service which she said had been excellent in her experience.

The Chair asked a question on behalf of Councillor H.J. McGuill on why there had been an increase in the cost of investigations for the year for Social Services for Adults from £2,300 in 2010-11 to £12,602 for 2011-12. She also queried why a figure for investigations for Social Services for Children had not been included; the Head of Development and Resources confirmed that a figure could be provided. He added that the increased costs of investigations for Social Services for Adults was due to a higher number of stage 2 complaints. The Chair also referred to an email from Councillor McGuill to Ian Maclaren, Assistant Planning Officer (Children), requesting the figures for complaints and compliments in the previous year including numbers for each service to enable comparisons to be made. The Assistant Planning Officer (Children) agreed to provide the information requested.

The Director of Community Services said that complaints were viewed as an opportunity to put things right and reiterated earlier comments that compliments outweighed complaints. He added that less than two percent of referrals to Social Services for Adults resulted in a complaint.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

12. SOCIAL SERVICES BILL

The Director of Community Services introduced a report to provide an update on the draft Social Services (Wales) Bill and Flintshire County Council's response to the recent consultation paper. The Director introduced Alison Kulkowski, the Planning & Development Officer, to the Committee and explained that she had prepared the response shown as appendix 2.

The Director detailed the background to the report and explained that appendix 1 gave a summary of the Bill with appendix 2 showing the responses provided to the consultation. It had not been possible for the response to be discussed by Committee before the deadline due to the Election and formation of a new Committee, however copies of the bill had been sent to previous Members to provide any comments or feedback to officers prior to the deadline. The six main areas were reported in paragraph 2.05 and the key points for each area were summarised in appendix 1 to the report. The Director explained that not all of the 98 questions had been answered in the response. In particular he highlighted responses to questions in section 2.2 on Assessment of Need,

section 2.3 Portability of Assessments and section 3.4 Collaboration in Integrated Social Services.

It was reported in paragraph 3.02 that the Bill repeatedly stated that Welsh Government (WG) did not see the need for any additional resources. However Flintshire's response raised concerns about whether there would be sufficient resources available to meet increased commitments and expectations in the face of growing demand for services. Paragraph 3.03 also reported that Flintshire's considered response also advocated for flexibility in how local authorities delivered services in order to be responsive to local need and protect local democracy. The Director explained that the response highlighted that the proposals in the Bill could not be achieved by Social Services alone and that commitment by all statutory partners would be required to fully take forward and implement the change programme.

He concluded by informing the Committee of the statement made recently by the Deputy Minister that a significant decision had been made that the Bill would not include an element in the regulations of inspection of Social Services and that this would be the subject of a separate White Paper. It had also been agreed that the Bill would be introduced into the National Assembly in January 2013 instead of October 2012 as had been indicated in appendix 1.

The Chair felt that the introduction of a common IT system would be required to allow all statutory partners to work together but she felt that this would be a major cost. She also expressed her gratitude for the comments of the Deputy Minister on the issue.

Councillor S. Jones welcomed partnership working but said that a number of colleagues had reservations about decisions being made by others and the issue only being brought back to Overview & Scrutiny for rubber-stamping. She felt that there had to be an opportunity for Scrutiny Committees to be able to discuss issues and have an input into the final decision. The Director agreed and said that there was a need for a full and frank discussion.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services commented on the statement by the Deputy Minister who she said had been supportive. She added that a Citizen's Panel was to be introduced to give users and stakeholders involved a voice in the strategic design at an All Wales level. This had been welcomed as a positive step.

On the issue of collaboration, Councillor M. Bateman queried why video conferencing was not used more frequently. The Director advised that it was used at officer level and the Chair indicated that she had used it during her time as an Executive Member. Councillor P. Curtis felt that video conferencing was useful on a one-to-one basis but said that it was difficult when more people were involved.

The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator advised the Committee that the recommendation at paragraph 4.01 should start with the words 'That Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees' and not as indicated in the report.

RESOLVED:

That Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee receives the report for information and notes the consultation response.

13. QUARTER 4 AND YEAR END SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Director of Community Services introduced a report for the Committee to consider the 2011/12 Quarter 4/Year End service performance reports, note the draft year end position of the Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) and note the progress made against the Improvement Targets contained within the performance reports.

Development & Resources

The Head of Development and Resources gave a short presentation on the performance within Development & Resources, outlining work which had been undertaken to improve performance and areas where improvement was needed, as outlined within the report.

The Chair referred to paragraph 3.2 on page 95 on the introduction of locality working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and said that as a member of the Stakeholder Group, she shared the concerns reported.

Councillor P. Curtis requested that a breakdown be provided to give information on short term/long term sickness figures. Councillor S. Jones said that short term sickness was more of a concern and that this should be considered carefully. Following a comment from Councillor M. Bateman on whether sickness was being caused by employees being in the wrong job, the Director advised that discussions with the employees concerned took place on a case by case basis. The Chair suggested that the Facilitator contact Human Resources to clarify whether the information requested by Members was already considered at Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Councillor D.E. Wisinger also requested that the sickness figures breakdown include details of the department.

Social Services for Adults

The Service Manager gave a short presentation on the performance within Social Services for Adults, outlining work which had been undertaken to improve performance and areas where improvement was needed, as outlined within the report.

In response to a question from Councillor D.I. Mackie on the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), the Chair indicated that the table on page 106 provided a breakdown of the average time taken for an Occupational Therapy assessment to be carried out and the average time taken in Housing/Care & Repair for the DFGs to be completed. Councillor Mackie also expressed concern and confusion that the information for DFGs seemed to be repeated on pages 98, 102 and 106 in the report. The Service Manager explained that DFGs featured as a national figure but also in the Council's own improvement actions and this was the reason

for the duplication; however she indicated that the information could be shown in a clearer manner.

The Director of Community Services said that the template used was a new format which was being used corporately for the production of the quarterly performance reports following a pilot scheme within the Housing Directorate. The Chair expressed her disappointment at the new format which she felt was difficult to follow. Councillor M. Lowe suggested that a Member workshop be held on DFGs. The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator advised that the new format had been developed following concerns raised in relation to quarterly performance reporting. A group consisting of officers and Overview & Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs had been convened and subsequently a small sub group including Member representation had developed the revised format. She suggested that the comments be passed on to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Chair also asked the Cabinet Member for Social Services to forward the comments of the Committee on the format of the reports to Cabinet.

Councillor P. Curtis said that he was pleased to see the downward trend in the waiting times for an Occupational Therapy assessment. The Director of Community Services reminded Members that the figure was also better than the Welsh average and that the number of assessments undertaken had increased significantly in quarter 1. The Chair also asked Members to note that there were very few complaints about the service.

Social Services for Children

The Director of Community Services gave a short presentation on the performance within Development & Resources, outlining work which had been undertaken to improve performance and areas where improvement was needed, as outlined within the report.

The Chair referred to page 72 and asked whether a completion date for Arosfa had been identified. On the issue of the ID card A2A, the Cabinet Member for Social Services said that the rollout was scheduled to take place on 9 July 2012.

Councillor D.I. Mackie referred to indicator SCC/039 on the percentage of health assessments for Looked After Children that had been undertaken and raised concern that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) were unaware of the problems. The Management Information Officer said that a meeting had been held with BCUHB and referred Members to the table on page 85. A breakdown of the reasons the assessment had not taken place were identified in the table with the majority being appointments which were offered to families but which had not been kept. In response to a question from Councillor Bateman, the Management Information Officer said that there was only one Looked After Children Nurse working in Flintshire and that colleagues would provide cover if the Nurse was on holiday or was ill. She agreed to report back to the Committee regarding who funded the post.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be received;
- (b) That the Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator request a breakdown from Human Resources on the Workforce sickness figures;
- (c) That concerns relating to the format of the report be submitted to Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and
- (d) That an awareness session on Disabled Facilities Grants be scheduled for Members.

14. ROTA VISITS

The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator reminded Members that a training session was to be arranged. An updated list would be provided shortly by Lin Hawtin, Commissioning Manager, who had taken over responsibility for rota visits.

RESOLVED:

That the update from the Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator be received.

15. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the report to consider the Forward Work Programme for the Committee.

Members were advised that Peter Graham would be in attendance at the next meeting to provide a presentation on the Children's Services Inspection. The Facilitator also advised Members that a Forward Work Programme planning session had been arranged for Monday 10 September 2012.

Following a suggestion from Councillor C. Hinds for the Committee to consider the issue of disabled people who were having to be reassessed to check their entitlement to Disability Living Allowance and the ongoing effects that this created, the Chair said that it could be submitted as a suggestion to the Forward Work Programme planning session. The Cabinet Member for Social Services indicated that welfare rights came under the remit of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Councillor S. Jones commended the work of the welfare rights team which others, including the Chair, concurred with. The Cabinet Member suggested that a joint meeting with Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee be arranged to consider the issue of welfare rights and the Chair indicated that a joint meeting would also be required to consider the Telecare service.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

16. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.28 p.m.

17. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was 1 member of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

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Chair