

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
26 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 Thursday, 26 July 2012

PRESENT: **Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)**

Councillors Marion Bateman, David Evans, Stella Jones, Brian Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Gareth Roberts, Ian Smith and David Wisinger

SUBSTITUTES: Councillor Robin Guest (for Hilary McGuill)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Peter Curtis, Adele Davies-Cooke, Veronica Gay and Cindy Hinds.

ALSO PRESENT:

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Director of Community Services and Head of Social Services for Children

Peter Graham from Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) attended for minute number 19

IN ATTENDANCE:

Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

19. INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT AND CARE MANAGEMENT

The Head of Social Services for Children introduced a report to advise Members of the outcome of the inspection in March 2012 of Children's Assessment and Care Management within Flintshire County Council's Social Services for Children, and agreement of the action plan in response to the inspection report.

Peter Graham from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) was introduced to the Committee. He detailed the background to the report and provided a presentation for the Committee. The main features of the presentation were:-

- Focus of Inspection
- Criteria for Evaluation
- Methodology
- Headline Summary
- Detailed Evaluation for Criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4

- What works well for Criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4
- What needs to improve for Criteria 1, 2, 3 and 4

The Chair gave her thanks to Mr. Graham for the presentation and also congratulated the Head of Social Services for Children and her team on the results of the inspection.

Councillor D.E. Wisinger asked whether inspections were ever carried out without prior warning being given and in response Mr. Graham said that unannounced inspections were occasionally carried out. Councillor Wisinger also asked whether interviews with children or the elderly were undertaken with their carer present, as he felt they may find it difficult to speak in front of the carer. In response, Mr. Graham said that the child/elderly person had the choice of who they wanted to be present when they were interviewed but added that in his experience, they were not scared to say what they wanted. Mr. Graham also explained that children/elderly people could also respond to questions in writing if they preferred and added that obtaining evidence was an important part of the inspection. The Head of Social Services for Children said that the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer ensured that children being interviewed were taken care of. She detailed other initiatives of how children and young people in the looked after system could put their points forward. Another initiative included the Conference Buddy Scheme for Child Protection Conferences and the user survey forms which were young people friendly. The Chair suggested that some of these areas that had been mentioned could be put forward as good practice by the Authority.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest welcomed the positive report and added his congratulations to the Head of Social Services for Children and her team and also to the Chair who had been Executive Member for Social Services at the time of the inspection. He queried the entry on developing a more consistent approach to the application of risk assessment and asked whether any thought had been given to the length of time that had elapsed since the disc had been issued. Councillor Guest also asked about sickness absence, completion of assessment document and the recording of data within the computer system. On sickness absence, the Director of Community Services said that there were specific issues in key areas but that sickness absence rates had reduced which was an improvement. The recording of data within the computer system was one of the key actions within the action plan but he agreed with the suggestion from Councillor Guest that the action plan could be amended to reflect what was being undertaken in the Authority. The Head of Social Services for Children responded to the question about the disc and said that there were no issues with the content of the information but that due to the turnover of staff within the service, a reminder was to be sent out about the disc and its content. On the completion of assessment documents, she said that it was important to ensure that there was a proper process in place to alleviate the concerns which had been highlighted.

Councillor M. Bateman added her thanks to the Head of Social Services for Children and her team and to the Chair for the inspection results. She asked for further information on sickness absences and in response the Director of Community Services said that there were issues which had resulted in medium to long term sickness absences.

Councillor D.I. Mackie thanked Mr. Graham for the presentation and in welcoming the inspection results, added his congratulations to the team. He said that he had been lucky enough to visit the Children's Services Department on a Climbíe visit and commented on the employees who were all committed to helping others.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services reiterated the comments of the Committee and gave thanks to the Director of Community Services, the Head of Social Services for Children and her team and he thanked Mr. Graham for the presentation.

RESOLVED:

That the findings of the inspection and the resultant action plan (with the amendment to the action plan suggested by Councillor R.J.T. Guest) be accepted.

20. CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED DISABILITY SERVICE/DIRECT PAYMENTS

The Head of Social Services for Children introduced the report to provide Members with a combined update as to the future structure of the Children's Integrated Disability Service (CIDS) and to inform Members as to the current position in relation to Direct Payments for young people.

The Head of Social Services for Children detailed the background to the report. It was reported that the management of the social care aspect of the CIDS was to transfer back under Children's Fieldwork Services from August 2012. The Head of Social Services for Children said that it was important to ensure the stability of the team and she felt that this could be achieved under the new arrangements.

Councillor D.I. Mackie said that he had had difficulty in reading the report and queried the entries at paragraph 2.02 and 3.01. He also referred to the chart on page 29 which provided details of the unused direct payments which had been recovered. The Director of Community Services said that Direct Payments and CIDS were linked as CIDS recommended direct payments and said that paragraphs 2.02 and 3.01 explained that the CIDS project had been re-evaluated. On the query about the chart on page 29, he said that the authority had a responsibility to ensure that payments were being used in the way that they were designed for and added that the income recovered could be used for others in need of the service.

The Head of Social Services for Children said that packages for Direct Payments varied year on year and were based on need. On the issue of income recovered she gave an example of when the payment had been calculated but was no longer be needed, so would be recovered. It was interesting to note that within Adult Social Care a growth in demand for Direct Payments saw a comparable reduction (and sometimes savings) in other budget areas, but this had not been the case for Children's Services.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest referred to the table at paragraph 3.06 and requested an explanation of why the income recovered had been approximately

10% in years 2009/10 and 2010/11 but had increased to nearly 30% in 2011/12. In response, the Director said that he would provide a written reply to Members of why this had happened.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Members accept the report for information on the future structure of the Children's Integrated Disability Service, and note the implications of the increasing Direct Payments service for children; and
- (b) That the Director of Community Services provide a written reply to Members on why there had been a large increase in the income recovered in 2011/12.

21. SHORT BREAK PROVISION AT AROSFA

The Head of Social Services for Children introduced a report to advise and inform Members of the progress of the shortbreak service at Arosfa which will aim to provide respite care to children with disabilities in the age range 8 to 18 years.

She said that she was pleased to present the report to Members and said that the budget would offer a three bedded facility for 350 days per year compared to the current placement opening for 240 days with two beds. The original intent of a six bedded unit had been suspended pending future budget settlements.

The Director of Community Services endorsed what had been said and added that he had been delighted to support the Head of Social Services for Children in taking the proposal forward. He said that he hoped that Members would be keen to visit the unit when it opened. The Chair agreed that the unit was welcomed and said that it would help to improve the Out of County Placement budget.

Councillor R.J.T. Guest paid tribute to the Director, the Head of Social Services for Children and the Service Manager for the work they had undertaken. He spoke of the history of the unit and of the problems which had been encountered. He asked that his thanks be passed on to Ian Jones from the Environment Directorate for the help he had provided. In response the Director said that there had been some concerns from local residents but that it had been recognised that these had been addressed and worked through and it was positive that the project had moved forward quickly.

In response to a question from Councillor D. Evans, the Head of Social Services for Children said that the two bedded facility at Cornel Clyd which was not owned by the Council but was leased was to close and would be replaced by this unit.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee endorse the proposed opening of the new unit on 12 September 2012 (subject to registration with CSSIW) which will provide an

additional resource to meet the needs of children/young people with a range of complex health, social and learning disabilities; and

- (b) That the Committee recognise the value of support and provision for this group of children/young people.

22. ROTA VISITS

The Chair explained that a letter had been sent to all Members on rota visits and the Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator said that the letter was inviting them to take part in rota visits and to advise that training would be provided. The Chair reminded Members that it was an expectation that those on this Committee would undertake rota visits.

Councillor H.G. Roberts felt that he was not qualified to carry out the rota visits and in response the Chair said that Members carrying out the visits did not replace the role of the inspector. She added that training would be provided and that the visits were an overview for Members to familiarise themselves with the site. The Facilitator explained that Nicky Slater and Lin Hawtin were the lead officers for rota visits. It was proposed that Members who had experience of undertaking the visits would be a 'buddy' for those who had never undertaken the visits.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

23. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

The Facilitator explained that a Forward Work Programme planning session was to be held at 2pm on Monday, 10 September 2012 to determine the Forward Work Programme for the forthcoming meetings. It was also proposed that Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) attend the meeting on 1 November 2012 to provide an update. The Chair indicated that due to the recent proposals put forward by BCUHB, she had made a request for a special Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting to which all Members would be invited. The date was yet to be confirmed but it was anticipated that it would be early in September 2012 and a letter would be sent out to all Members when the details were known.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be amended to reflect the suggestions made.

24. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.20 p.m.

25. **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

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

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Chair