

**SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**9 SEPTEMBER, 2021**

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held remotely on Thursday 9 September 2021

**PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)**

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

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Carol Ellis

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Christine Jones (Deputy Leader for Partnerships and Cabinet Member for Social Services); Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager - Children and Workforce; Service Manager Disability and Mental Health and Team Manager - Performance

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator; Community and Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

**26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)**

None.

**27. MINUTES**

On page 9 Councillor Mackie made the following amendment to the minutes. Councillor Mackie stated this report and the report commencement of the social economic duty both make it clear that public bodies when making strategic decisions must have due regard for the impact they may have on people with protective characteristics which he felt they would do any way.

Subject to the amendment, the minutes held on 1 July 2021 were approved, as moved by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Wisinger.

Councillor Gladys Healey made amendment to the spelling of her surname on page 9, 10 and 11 and also asked that Gladys be included to avoid confusion with her husband.

Councillor Marion Bateman asked for her Christian name to include in her name to avoid confusion with her husband.

The Service Manager Disability and Mental Health confirmed that the CHC Monitoring Officer post would be advertised within the next few days which was raised by the Chair.

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021 were approved as moved by Councillor Mackie and seconded by Councillor Jean Davies.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**28. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme. She advised that there would be a Special Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September at 11.00 am to consider the Budget for the coming year and that a Mid-Year Performance Report may be added to the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December with a possibility that a couple of the items may be moved to the January meeting.

In response to the question the Chair raised about discussing the financial impact of Covid on the budget, the Chief Officer (Social Services) suggested that a short verbal update could be given at the Budget meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September but stated that it would not be a full report. A programmed discussion would take place later in the year which the Chair agreed to but emphasised the need to be aware of the impact of Covid on the Private Sector.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Marion Bateman, the Chief Officer (Social Services) shared with the Committee what he had learned from an earlier meeting that day with the Director of Social Services for the Welsh Government (WG). He reported that there would be a consequential for WG as a result of the funding agreed in Parliament with the increase in National Insurance for Health and Social Care. He stated that the situation may not be clear by 30<sup>th</sup> September as WG had flexibility and would take time to decide on how it was allocated within Wales.

The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator referred to the action tracking report and advised Members that Betsi Cadwaladr and University Health Board (BCUHB) and responses from WG were ongoing outstanding actions. The Community and Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator reported that both had been chased and a holding response had been received from WG stating that they would respond. The Committee would be updated once responses had been received.

The Senior Manager - Children and Workforce reported that most of the issues that were discussed with the Link Officer over the summer through the Young Voices Out Loud Group were matters that the Children felt were important and were routinely shared between existing and new Social Workers as part of handovers. He clarified that feedback would be given at the next Children's Services Forum.

Councillor Cunningham referred to the walk around town centres that Councillor Marion Bateman suggested at the last meeting and asked if anything had been done. The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator confirmed that she had liaised with the Strategic Policy Advisor and site visits would be arranged when the situation improved.

Councillor Cunningham also asked if it was possible to take into account the cutting of the hedges along the footpath from the A55 roundabout in Broughton to the roundabout by the airfield as people in wheelchairs would struggle to use them.

The Chair updated the Committee about the letter she had written to BCUHB concerning the moving of patients to Connah's Quay GP Surgery due to the closure of Queensferry GP Surgery. In response to one of the points about the consideration of using Deeside Hospital as a proposed site, they stated that the hospital was currently fully utilised and that there was no space for additional services. Other reasons included that the car park was not suitable for additional patients and there was no direct bus route. The Chair disagreed with all these comments. They also suggested that patients might try to access services direct from the hospital which the Chair stated was not the case at Holywell Hospital where a GP Surgery was located. BCUHB were currently consulting the patients regarding the proposals.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the draft 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 progress made in completing the outstanding actions be noted.

**29. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) ASSURANCE CHECK**

The Chief Officer (Social Services) presented the findings of the report on the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) who were an independent regulator of Social Services Care and Childcare in Wales. The Assurance Checks took place virtually between 19<sup>th</sup> and 23 April 2021. CIW focused its key lines of enquiry within the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which were:

- People - Voice and Control
- Prevention
- Well-being
- Partnership and Integration

The Senior Manager - Children and Workforce added that it was a challenge to have eight Inspectors come in during a Pandemic and that he hoped that the Committee could see from the Action Plan that they had listened to what the inspectors had said and acted on their observations to improve, learn and reflect on what needed to be done. He stated that the actions that had been set were all green with the exception of Workforce Recruitment which was amber

due to the insufficient supply of experienced qualified Social Workers within Children's Services.

In response to a question raised by the Chair concerning a safeguarding issue, the Senior Manager - Children and Workforce stated that this related to one case and reassured the Committee that the children were kept safe during the pandemic.

He added that they had looked at their systems and moved staff capacity so that they could keep on top of the referrals and make live decisions and recording of situations. In addition, a Welsh Government approved trainer had been in and confirmed that they were compliant in their processes but made suggestions in some areas which have been implemented. He also clarified that it was now not possible to reschedule a meeting if an agency was unable to attend and that they must send a report. However, if this was unavoidable and it had to be postponed then it needed to be signed off by a Service Manager.

The Chair and other Members suggested that the Committee should send a letter to all staff congratulating them on their work. Councillor Marion Bateman mentioned the amazing work that Play Officers and Aura Sports had undertaken along with the Theatr Clwyd and suggested that they should be invited to one of their Committee meetings. The Chair, with agreement from the Committee, suggested that a letter of thanks also be sent to the Theatr Clwyd.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) thanked the Committee for their comments which he would pass to staff and welcomed the proposal for Theatr Clwyd to attend a future meeting.

Councillor Cunningham asked if Coed Duon was still being used as a step down facility. The Chief Officer (Social Services) clarified that it was no longer being used as demand had reduced after a year but it was a positive move to use it early in the pandemic.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) thanked the Committee for their support and understanding. Councillor Cunningham added that the political balance on the Committee was exceptional and wanted to do what is best for Flintshire.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the positive feedback received from CIW following the Assurance Check in April 2021 be noted; and
- (b) That the response to areas of improvement identified by CIW and the Service's Action plan to address these be noted.

### **30. PROGRESS UPDATE ON LLYS YR IARLL AND GLAN Y MORFA**

The Service Manager Disability and Mental Health introduced the report and provided Members with information relating to two new housing initiatives that had been developed in partnership with Wales and West Housing Association, the Council's Housing Strategy and the Housing and Assets Team:

- Llys Yr Iarll, Flint
- Glan y Morfa, Connah's Quay

In response to a question from the Chair about Glan y Morfa, the Service Manager Disability and Mental Health stated that there was currently no problem in moving people on as it had only been open for a few months but was aware that housing stock was in short supply. She advised the Committee that one of their officers worked closely with the Housing Team and sat on the Specialist Housing Panel and that when a property had been identified as vacant by the Housing Team and other Housing Association providers via the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) service, she inspected it for suitability.

The Service Manager Disability and Mental Health confirmed to Councillor Gladys Healey that Glan y Morfa had been fully adapted and was currently being used by people in wheelchairs and that there was no time limit on how long that people stayed there but stated that it would be months rather than anything longer as it was for people who were waiting for long term homes after leaving hospital.

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

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the contents of the report and the positive partnerships formed which has resulted in more housing opportunities for people with disabilities be noted; and
- (b) That the wellbeing outcomes for disabled people and the reduced demand on social services be noted.

### **31. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE**

The Team Leader - Performance introduced the Statutory Annual Report on Social Services Complaints and Compliments which covered complaints received between April 2020 and March 2021. She reported that similar to the previous year, 93 complaints had been received and 721 compliments had been received which was nearly double from the previous year.

The Chair said that the number of compliments that had been received had been exceptional and that the report was one of the best she had read, to which the Committee agreed.

The Chair then questioned as to why the complaints were almost double compared to the previous year within Children Services Child to Adult Team. In response, the Service Manager Disability and Mental Health stated that the complaints were not directed at the Service but on how the parents were feeling at the time with the situation. Parents had struggled during lockdown due to reduced capacity and in some cases closure of facilities and found it difficult being at home with children with challenging behaviour.

The Team Leader - Performance agreed to send the Committee a summary of the complaints.

Councillor Gladys Healey praised staff on the way they had conducted themselves with their clients as there were no complaints about dignity within adult social care. She added that pay and conditions for Care Workers should be improved to alleviate the problem with staff shortages.

In response to Councillor Gladys Healey, the Senior Manager - Children and Workforce stated that there was no evidence around the complaint about poor communication within Children's Services and after investigation it had been put down to the fact that a child had overheard an adult conversation within the household.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) wanted to thank the team for the timescale in which they had responded to complaints in both Adult and Children's Services given the circumstances during the year.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

That the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and lessons being learnt to improve service provision be noted.

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

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

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.28pm)

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**Chair**