

**SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**19 JANUARY 2023**

Minutes of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held as a hybrid meeting on Thursday, 19 January, 2023

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

Councillors: Mel Buckley, Tina Claydon, Paul Cunningham, Robert Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, David Mackie, Debbie Owen and Linda Thomas

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Jean Davies

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Christine Jones (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing): Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning; Senior Manager Children and Workforce; Senior Manager for Adults; Adult Safeguarding Manager and one of the Child Protection Conference Chairs.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer.

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

None were received.

**40. MINUTES**

The Chair referred to page 4 of the minutes of 30 November and requested that Dave Coyle be contacted for any progress he had concerning the minor injury unit at Deeside and the IV Suites and services in Community Hospitals. Councillor Gladys Healey added that large GP surgeries should also be included where large rooms were sitting unused.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were approved and moved by Councillor Mackie and seconded by Councillor Rob Davies.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved and moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Thomas.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

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

The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme and informed Members that a report on Disabled Facilities Grants and Occupational Therapy would be added to the April meeting. Also, a possible report to the June meeting on How Children Enter our Care System – Varying Degrees of Intervention, Universal Credit and Young Care Leavers.

Councillor Ellis asked if there could be an update on waiting times for OT Assessments at the April meeting.

Councillor Owen asked if there was an issue with communication between Social Services and Housing on issues concerning protecting victims and children in their own home due to domestic violence. In response, the Senior Manager Children and Workforce advised that they were aware that Domestic Violence and Domestic Abuse had an impact on adults and children and as part of their Early Help Hub consisting of 17 agencies, 2 of which were from Housing, worked together on referrals and looked at how they could support children and families at an early point. There was also a good initiative with the Police called Operation Encompass which enhanced communication between the police and schools where a child was at risk from domestic abuse. The purpose of the information sharing was to ensure schools had more information to support safeguarding of children and in a better position to understand if an incident had taken place. He suggested that an item be added to the Forward Work Programme as it had been a number of years since the Early Help Hub had been reported on. He also explained to Members about the Toxic Trio which covered mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse which the Early Help Hub see a lot of.

The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) responded to a question raised by the Chair regarding Climbie visits and advised that there was a recommendation years ago following a death of a child that elected Members should be able to have direct discussions with front line staff so that they had an understanding of issues. Overview & Scrutiny Members previously went to Flint to see the teams to ask questions but this was paused during the pandemic, however as staff were now back in the offices it would be a good idea, especially for new Members to meet the staff.

The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) would liaise with the Facilitator to provide all Members with the contact details for the agencies involved in Domestic Violence and Abuse which was requested by Councillor Ellis.

Councillor Claydon asked if there was any regular reporting about handling domestic abuse in either this Committee or Housing Committee. The Chair agreed to ask all Committees that reported on the subject to highlight it on their agenda so that they could have access to it. The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) added that when the item was brought to Committee, the Officer responsible for Violence to Women and Domestic Abuse would be asked to attend to give an overview of the work carried out.

The Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny confirmed that all Action Tracking items had been completed.

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

## **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be approved;
- (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.

## **42. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning introduced the Adult Safeguarding Manager and one of the Child Protection Conference Chairs who was there to answer any questions from Members, due to the absence of the Safeguarding Unit Manager who wrote the report. She explained that the purpose of the Annual Report was to inform Members of the work that had been done, the work that would be done and to consider key statistical and performance related information about children and adults at risk for whom the Authority had significant safeguarding and corporate safeguarding responsibilities. Also to consider the impact of the All Wales Safeguarding procedures that were launched back in 2019.

Councillor Ellis questioned if the Safeguarding Board included Health which the Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning confirmed that they were a key partner at the Safeguarding Board as well as all of the sub-groups that sat beneath. The Adult Safeguarding Manager added that there were two Safeguarding Specialists based in Wrexham Maelor Hospital with whom they were in regular contact. She also advised of good links with the Countess of Chester which could be difficult cross border with the different legislation.

The Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning confirmed that there were 191 Children on the Child Protection Register in response to Councillor Ellis.

Councillor Mackie was concerned about children leaving care because of their age and thought that they should be looked after beyond the age of 18. The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) explained that there were different categories of care leavers but if a child had been looked after for more than 13 weeks, the responsibility did not end at the age of 18 as there was an additional responsibility to support them up to the age of 25. He explained that the 'When I'm Ready' initiative was when children who turned 18 were given the opportunity to stay in the foster care environment if they wished. He added that the policy was in the process of being updated based on what has been learned and feedback that has been received since it was introduced a few years ago.

The Chair further questioned what guidance was given in respect of the lump sum of money they were given by Welsh Government. The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) advised that the Basic Income Pilot (BIP) was

a Welsh Government two year pilot where care leavers received a guaranteed monthly income. He confirmed that locally they were working with CAB who gave financial support to young people to use the money responsibly. Welsh Government were also undertaking an evaluation and had sent out questionnaires to our Looked After Children who were in receipt of BIP so that they could understand the impact it had. Councillors and Corporate parents were also involved in the evaluation in order to get their perspective. The Senior Manager - Children and Workforce advised that when received, the results would be reported back through the Children's Services Forum to get opinions from young people to see how it had worked, what had been learned, what the benefits were and what were the challenges. He added that whilst BIP was a two year pilot scheme, there would need to be an exit strategy as there could be significant implications, as some care leavers had become reliant on it.

Councillor Gladys Healey queried where Dementia sat under as she did not think it should come under Mental Health. The Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning advised that collectively they had a huge part in Dementia along with the Health Board. In addition, there was the North Wales Dementia Strategy across the six local authorities and locally within the Regional Strategy was the Flintshire Strategy which dealt with a lot of issues that were raised. A lot of the work was around awareness of professional colleagues and networks. The work of the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia Champions helped us to understand what Dementia is at all stages but particularly in the early stages when it was not diagnosed and people were living with it.

The Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning explained that the Adult Protection Reviews and Child Protection Reviews principles were both the same, in response to the Chair. Key learning issues from one particular practice review was who held the case in the safeguarding world when it was multi-disciplined i.e. person moving from a care home to care home or home to a care home, as people transitioned a lot; the reviews were about learning and not blaming.

The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) added that within the last two years, there had been two Child Practice Reviews of which one had just been concluded and the report was with Welsh Government. He explained that the outcome was expected to be published in mid-February. He explained that the event happened a couple of years ago which had enabled them to have learning events to look at themselves and see how they worked with others. The second review was still live and was due for its third review meeting at the end of January. He pointed out that lessons learned reoccurred at all levels within Children's reviews and emphasised the need to understand their daily lives and experiences in the home as well as looking into the history of the referrals to get the whole picture, to enable a multi-agency understanding for assessment and support. Communication between all agencies was key.

The Chair questioned how often children on the Child Protection Register for over 12 months were visited. The Protection Conference Chair responded by saying that the All Wales Child Protection Procedures dictated the involvement with families and the guidelines stated that visits to any child on the Child Protection Register should be every 10 working days but that Social Workers met up with them more frequently depending on the individual cases as they were

rated red/amber/green. Visits could be announced or unannounced and could take place at home, at school or on their own on a one-to-one basis.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee accepts the report as relevant information in relation to Flintshire Safeguarding for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and the additional information;
- (b) That the Committee takes due regard to the variety of activity across the Safeguarding Unit and the continuing development and improvement in the service provision; and
- (c) That the Committee is satisfied that the Safeguarding Process for Adults and Children in Flintshire is robust.

**43. MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Senior Manager (Children and Workforce) introduced the Mid-year Performance report for the Council Plan and explained that the report provided analysis for the whole Council Plan and not just the Social Services portfolio, indicating progress within the organisation on actions and measures. This report identified the measures that were off track and categorised as red, of which there were none for this portfolio. He highlighted some of the main points within the report which came under the five areas this portfolio contributed to:-

- Independent Living
- Safeguarding
- Support for People to Live at Home
- Local Dementia Strategy
- Well Connected, Safe and Clean Local Environment 2022/23

In response to a question raised by the Chair, the Senior Manager for Adults advised that people who identified themselves as needing equipment in the home should contact the single point of contact team and that following assessment, small items of equipment would be provided quickly by the Community Equipment Store. Anything that involved adapting homes would take longer.

In response to issues raised by Councillor Ellis concerning equipment and care, the Senior Manager for Adults responded by saying that the waiting list for packages of care had reduced considerably in the last few weeks. People in more rural areas were waiting a number of weeks as well as people who needed carers multiple times a day. With support from the Brokerage Team and their relationship with Domiciliary Care providers, they had been looking at ways to recruiting carers into those agencies who were able to provide it directly. The number of hours of people who were waiting for care had reduced by 400 hours over the last couple of weeks, with possibly a further 150 hours could be offered to people in the Community. Currently there was nobody at the Countess of Chester Hospital waiting for a package of care due to the increase of hours.

She added that the length of response and assessment from OT was not years as someone had indicated: the longest wait which was categorised as a low priority was six months, which was a long time for the person waiting but the people categorised as high were being seen quickly.

Councillor Gladys Healy asked how many people were waiting for a package of Care from Wrexham Maelor Hospital who had to come into the Community Hospitals. The Senior Manager for Adults confirmed that they do use the Community Hospitals to discharge people from the Maelor and the Senior Manager - Safeguarding and Commissioning confirmed that three people were currently waiting for a package of care.

The Senior Manager for Adults reassured Members that people would not be discharged from hospital if it was unsafe within Wales she was aware that in England that people were being moved to hotels before a package of care was found.

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

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee noted the levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of the priorities as at mid-year within the 2022/23 Council Plan;
- (b) That the Committee endorsed and supported the overall performance against 2022/23 Council Plan performance indicators as at mid-year;
- (c) That the Committee was assured by the explanations given for those areas of underperformance; and
- (d) That the Committee was reassured in areas where we are outperforming.

**44 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 3.55 pm)

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**Chair**