

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 SEPTEMBER 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Tuesday, 22 September 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)

Councillors: Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Brian Lloyd, Hilary McGuill, Dave Mackie, Mike Reece, Carolyn Thomas and David Wisinger

SUBSTITUTION: Councillor Peter Curtis (for Ian Smith)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Adele Davies-Cooke and Hilary Isherwood

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager: Commissioning and Performance and Resources, Senior Manager Resources, Senior Manager Integration Social Services, and Service Manager Disability and Progression

IN ATTENDANCE:

Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Andy Dunbobbin and David Mackie declared a personal interest in the following agenda items as they were members of the Fostering Panel:-

Agenda item 4 – Review of Adoption Services following Implementation

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 July 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

28. REVIEW OF ADOPTION SERVICES FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION

The Senior Manager Resources introduced a report to inform of the Annual Report of the North Wales Adoption Services (NWAS) and National Adoption Service (NAS) for 2014/15.

The Senior Manager Resources provided background information and advised that the NAS Annual Report (2014/15) was the first annual report of the fully constituted NAS and set out its role, functions, objectives, performance and future plans. He reported that evidence indicated that the NAS was seeking to establish a more collaborative approach between the Local Authority/Regional services and third sector providers. The report also identified the key requirements of the type of adopter to meet the needs of children and the increase in post adoption services recognizing local authority fiscal challenges.

Referring to the NWS Annual Report and Quality of Care Review, the Senior Manager Resources advised that the report provided comprehensive and detailed analysis, evaluation and recorded activities conducted by the NWS for 2014/15. He outlined the key considerations in the report and advised that the NWS continued to be overviewed by a Management Board of the six Local Authorities and was jointly chaired by the Heads of Service for Wrexham and Anglesey with third sector partners co-opted onto the Board. As concluded in the report the majority of children are placed into Welsh settings and the demand for sibling/baby placements remains a key priority for service development.

The Chair thanked the Senior Manager Resources for his overview and invited questions.

Councillor Dave Mackie referred to the formatting of the NAS report and said that the use of columns to present data created difficulty for 'ipad' users. It was agreed that the Senior Manager Resources would take this problem forward to the NAS.

Councillor Mackie expressed concern that whilst the report contained significant information obtained from surveys in his view it lacked managerial detail around service performance and the achievement of objectives and timescales. The Senior Manager Resources responded to the comments and explained that the information required was contained in the report and he agreed to extract the data and provide a summary to Councillor Mackie following the meeting. He also said he would look at anonymising the management information to send to Councillor Mackie.

Councillor Mackie also commented on the negative feedback which some adopters had made about the quality of the service provided by the NAS. The Senior Manager Resources advised that the majority of pre and post adopters had not reported any negative feedback on service provision. Although unable to comment on case specific issues during the meeting he welcomed the opportunity to address any concerns directly in the first instance.

Councillor Hilary McGuill expressed the view that there was a lack of collaboration between local authorities which slowed down the adoption process and cited the example of where a child was placed for adoption in one local authority and the adoptive parents were placed in another. She also

asked what support was in place for the adoptive parents during the first six months following the placement of a child. Councillor McGuill asked about the timescales involved in releasing the responsibility of a child from the birth parents to the adoptive parents. The Senior Manager Resources responded to the comments and questions and explained that the release of responsibility of the birth parents of a child was made by Court determination. He advised that when a child is placed for adoption an Adoption Support Plan is put in place to ensure the child and adoptive parents receive the relevant support from the Authority and partnership agencies.

In response to the specific concerns which had been raised by Councillors Dave Mackie and Hilary McGuill, the Senior Manager Resources agreed to speak to both Members following the meeting.

Councillor Peter Curtis commented on the increase in the number of children being placed in adoption, the Senior Manager Resources explained that the increase was due in part to raised awareness of the needs of children who could no longer live with their birth parents and improvements in service delivery. Councillor Peter Curtis congratulated all involved on their hard work and achievements. The Senior Manager Resources said he would pass this back to the relevant authorities.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin commented on the work of the Fostering Panel and said that adoptive parents were encouraged to provide feedback on their experience of the adoption process to inform and improve service was encouraged. Councillor Mackie reiterated the comments expressed by Councillor McGuill that some prospective adoptive parents may not wish to make a complaint as they felt this could inhibit the adoption process.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) referred to the significant improvement in service delivery which was evidenced within both NAS and NWAS reports. Members were advised that the NAS and the NWAS were subject to inspection by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) which identified any shortcomings in service delivery.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support both the National Adoption Service and North Wales Adoption Service Annual Reports; and
- (b) That feedback on ensuring that future National Adoption Service Annual Reports be formatted to ensure that they were iPad friendly

29. REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME PROVISION IN FLINTSHIRE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) provided a verbal update on the view of residential care home provision in Flintshire. He referred to the significant challenges facing the sector nationally, regionally and locally, around recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced staff,

complexity of need and palliative/end of life care, support to avoid hospital admissions and accelerate hospital discharges, rising care home costs, supporting people to be independent and remain in home and community settings, and alternative models to current market provision.

The Chief Officer advised that the review would centre on the following three critical areas of challenge; demand and supply, quality and cost. The aim of the review was to develop a fuller understanding of the issues facing residential care provision and predicted future need. The Chief Officer said that a detailed report would be presented in due course to enable a fuller review of the long-term options to be undertaken to protect and develop care market provision for the future.

The Chair commented on the need to challenge the Welsh Government on the level of funding provided for social services in comparison to the funding made available to the Health Service.

Councillor David Wisinger asked if North Wales would be receiving any of the new fleet of ambulances. Following a suggestion from the Chair it was agreed that the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator would make enquiries with the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust on behalf of the Committee.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked if representatives from the private sector would be invited to sit on the review panel. The Chief Officer advised that the review panel would consist of a small core group and a wider consultation process would be undertaken to include the independent sector and Health.

Councillor Andy Dunbobbin said he would like to invite representation from the independent sector to a future meeting of the Committee. In response to the concerns raised by Councillor Dunbobbin around the prior notification of inspections of care homes, the Chief Officer advised that unannounced inspections were undertaken. The Senior Manager, Commissioning, Performance and Resources also advised that visits were undertaken on contract monitoring.

During discussion Members expressed concerns around the closure of some local hospitals in Flintshire and commented on the future demands and expectations of an increasing older population.

Councillor Cindy Hinds referred to the closure of the community hospitals in Penyffordd/Dobshill and expressed concerns that additional beds were not being provided at Wrexham Maelor Hospital as agreed. The Chair suggested that the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator make enquiries on the Committee's behalf with the Health Board.

In response to the Committee's request that Members wished to visit private sector residential care homes as well as nursing homes, the Chief Officer said this would be taken forward through the Care Forum.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

30. MELROSE CENTRE UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) provided a verbal update on the transfer of the Melrose day service to new care service providers and the closure of the Melrose Day Centre. He provided background information and context and explained that following discussions with service users and families, agreement was reached that a cohort of 12 individuals/friends would attend the Windmill day service in Buckley and 13 individuals/friends would be supported at Marleyfield house day service.

The Chief Officer reported that the transfer was successfully undertaken in July 2015 and a review of the arrangements has been undertaken and no issues reported by service users. The Melrose Centre has been made surplus to Social Services requirements and has been given back to the Council's Asset Management Team. There were no staffing redundancies as a result of the closure of the Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted.

31. QUARTER 1 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (social Services) presented the Quarter 1 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report for consideration. The report presented the monitoring of progress for the first quarter of 2015/16 focusing on the areas of under performance relevant to the Social & Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members were advised that detailed sub priority reports were appended to the report.

The Chief Officer advised that performance in the main had been positive, however, two high risks had been identified concerning Living Well (Safeguarding) and Appropriate and affordable homes. The Chief Officer invited the Service Manager, Disability and Progression to provide case examples which detailed the work involved regarding Disabled Facilities Grants for Children. (DFGs)

Councillor David Wisinger suggested that the Planning Department be asked to treat works relating to DFG's as a priority. The Chief Officer agreed to speak to the Chief Officer (Environment and Planning) on this matter.

The Chair asked for an update on the use of Housing Pods to assist with DFG's.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32. ROTA VISITS

The Chair invited Members to report on the Rota visits undertaken since the previous meeting.

Councillor Hilary McGuill reported that she had carried out visits to Rowleys Pantry and Estuary Crafts. She commented on the problems caused for service users as a result of a blocked entrance at Rowleys Pantry and the time taken to resolve the issue. She also commented on the concerns raised around job security for service users.

Councillor Dave Mackie reported on his visits to Tri Ffordd, the Old Brewery, Freshfields, and Gwenffrwd Nursing Home in Holywell. He gave positive feedback on all visits and commented on the excellent facilities and services provided by the Gwenffrwd Nursing Home.

The Chair reported on her visit to AROSFA. She said the visit had been enjoyable and commented on the good relationship between Service Users and staff and the range of activities which were provided based on service user needs. She expressed some concern around the limited car parking facilities.

RESOLVED:

That the updates be received.

33. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the forward work programme of the Committee.

During discussion it was agreed that the Social Service Wellbeing Act update report scheduled for 5 November 2015 be deferred to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 17 December 2015. It was also agreed that the CSSIW report scheduled for 17 December be brought forward to the meeting to be held on 5 November 2015.

In response to a suggestion from Councillor Hilary McGuill that the Committee visit private sector residential care homes, the Chief Officer (Social Services) agreed to speak to the Care Forum to see if they could facilitate any visits. It was agreed that an update would be provided to the Committee at the next meeting to be held on 5 November 2015.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

34. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.50 am)

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Chair