

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
8 MARCH 2012

Minutes of the meeting of the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 8 March 2012

PRESENT: Councillor R.B. Jones (Chairman)

Councillors: D. Barratt, M. Bateman, D. Cox, H.T. Howorth, D.I. Mackie and D. McFarlane

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: P.J. Curtis and A.J. Davies-Cooke

CONTRIBUTORS:

Executive Member for Social Services, Director of Community Services, Head of Social Services for Children

IN ATTENDANCE:

Learning and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

Partnership Manager Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Strategy (for minute number 85)

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

83. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 8 December 2011, 9 December 2011, 5 January 2012, 23 January 2012, 13 February 2012 and the joint meeting of Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 13 February 2012 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

MATTERS ARISING

8 December 2011 – page 5

The Head of Social Services for Children said that the self assessment days had been undertaken in January 2012 and a report was being produced and would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

5 January 2012 – page 20

The Head of Social Services for Children said that the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspection on the Flintshire Fostering Service had been completed and a report was to be drafted.

13 February 2012 – page 30

The Director of Community Services said that following the joint committee meeting, legal guidance had been sought and progress of the establishment of a Shadow Regional Collaborative Committee for Supporting People through Executive had been delayed until clarification had been received.

13 February 2012 – page 35

The Director of Community Services said that following the meeting held on 13 February 2012, the Executive had agreed to the establishment of a Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring Hub in North Wales. He explained that currently five of the six North Wales Authorities had supported the hub with a response awaited from the sixth Council. He added that the other Authorities had also raised concern about the issue of local governance.

RESOLVED:

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

84. SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION REPORT

The Head of Social Services for Children introduced the report to provide Members with statistical information in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding.

The statistics in the report covered the period 1 July 2010 to 30 September 2011 and the Head of Social Services for Children was mindful of this. A second Safeguarding Manager had been appointed and a Safeguarding Unit had been formed from 1 December 2011. Full details were provided of the works which had been undertaken which included the design of a rota for the chairing of meetings under Section 4, the production of monthly reports and a capacity to review processes including the move to paperless reporting. Following a question from Councillor H.T. Howorth, the Head of Social Services for Children explained that the two Children's Safeguarding Managers were Aileen Law and Jayne Belton.

Councillor Howorth also referred to paragraph 3.06 and asked whether the Munro Review of Child Protection was official policy in Wales. The Head of Social Services for Children said that it was not and that a formal response was awaited from the Welsh Government (WG) on whether all or any of the recommendations were to be adopted in Wales. She highlighted recommendation 2 from the Munro report on the safeguarding performance of other agencies as well as Children's Services and said that the Authority had been providing its performance information to the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) but had not received information from other agencies. She also commented on the conference buddy scheme and said that Wrexham County Borough Council and Torfaen County Borough Council had expressed an

interest in working with Flintshire County Council to make an application to the Welsh Office for a grant to do work around parent and children's experiences. The result of the application and any work undertaken would be reported back to the Committee in due course.

On the issue of inspections, the Director of Community Services said that Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) was considering its approach to reviews and indicated that this could have an impact on inspections.

Councillor Howorth commented on the special schools in Flintshire and spoke of the requirement for parental education and asked how the link between social and health care and lifelong learning was dealt with. In response, the Head of Social Services for Children said that a number of drop-in sessions for parents had been arranged in the past but had not been well attended. The Director of Community Services said that this was an issue to build on in the future but also spoke of the challenges of working across boundaries.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 2.02 on appendix 1 and asked why the trend was different in Flintshire compared to the rest of Wales. He commented on the out of date information and asked whether the recommendations in the Munro report were being taken account of by the Authority even though guidance had not yet been received from WG. The Director responded by highlighting recommendations 7, 13 and 14 and advising that the role of the Director of Community Services was different in England to Wales. On recommendation 14 on the designation of a principal child and family social worker, he said that a revised professional structure for social workers had been produced on which he provided details and said that it was a key issue for the future. He expressed his frustration at not receiving a formal response from WG which he felt would be welcomed.

The Head of Social Services for Children highlighted recommendation 1 and said that this was due to the timeframe for assessments and that the review of the performance indicator framework would allow for the timeframes to be softened.

Councillor M. Bateman asked whether there was provision in the budget for the recommendations in the Munro report. In response, the Director said that the in-year budget covered the appointment of a new Children's Safeguarding Manager and the post of an Adult Safeguarding Manager was covered in the budget for 2012/13. However, he said that there was no specific funding for the Care Council recommendations and how to accommodate the role whilst keeping a balance in the service would have to be identified.

Councillor D. Barratt asked for an update on the information shown in the report from September 2011 to March 2012 and raised concern at the figures shown in paragraph 4.04 of appendix 1 on the timeliness of the submission of social work reports to Child Protection conferences. He also

referred to the graph on page 57 where it was reported that there was an increase in the number of cases of unmet need in March 2011 and asked whether this was a concern. In response, the Head of Social Services for Children said that she would obtain the information from September 2011 to March 2012 for Members but indicated that the figures were not significantly different. However, she explained that the number of cases of Looked After Children in Flintshire was increasing. On the issue of reporting to Child Protection conferences, she said that this was a concern but that work was being undertaken on the issue. There had been a peak in the number of unmet need cases in March 2011 and it was explained that the identified pressure had resulted in funding being made available to plug some capacity gaps on the teams. Details were provided of the whole service approach which was being undertaken and the Head of Social Services for Children commented on the continued struggle to appoint experienced social workers to vacant posts on the duty team although all vacancies were currently filled. The Director of Social Services said that the unmet need case figures were monitored regularly and added that it was a challenge to make social work on initial assessments an attractive career.

Councillor D. McFarlane expressed his concern on the information shown on the second point on page 50 about the representatives who had not been able to attend conferences. In response, the Head of Social Services for Children explained about the difficulties experienced by schools in releasing staff to attend conferences. At one conference Wrexham Social Services had been invited but had been unable to attend and the decision of the Police representatives to withdraw from some conferences was a concern and was being monitored.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the information from September 2011 to March 2012 be provided for Members.

85. FEEDBACK FROM MEMBER TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (ACRF)

The Director of Community Services introduced the report to update Members on the work of the Member Task and Finish Group on the draft Social Services Annual Performance Report.

He explained that the Task and Finish Group had provided feedback on the early draft of the report and that both positive and negative comments had been put forward. The offer of external evaluation had been received from 'Positive Politics' and had provided similar feedback to that of Members. Further details on some of the comments received were provided by the Director of Community Services. There was a need to be self critical but also to highlight details of improvement and the ordering of the report also needed to be considered. The draft was currently being reviewed by the Partnership

Manager Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Strategy and the Planning & Development Officer and the final comments from 'Positive Politics' were expected shortly. It was suggested that the Task and Finish Group hold a further meeting to review the report before the final version was submitted to this Committee at its meeting on 29 March 2012. It was suggested and agreed that the meeting of the Task and Finish Group take place at 10am on Thursday, 15 March 2012, with a venue to be confirmed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments of the Task and Finish Group be noted; and
- (b) That the Task and Finish Group meeting be held at 10am on Thursday, 15 March 2012 to review the report prior to its submission to the meeting of this Committee scheduled for 29 March 2012.

86. ROTA VISITS

Councillor H.T. Howorth reported on his visit to Cornel Clyd. In response to a comment, the Head of Social Services for Children said that the facility had been run by Action for Children since it had been established and it had been decided to go out to tender for the new arrangements. She explained that the managers were aware of the process of tendering and that they should be informing the staff of the work being undertaken. On the issue of the small number of children who used the facility, she added that the service was accessed through an assessment by Social Services so was not available to all children. She then detailed the different types of respite care that were available and also explained that the care packages at Cornel Clyd were now reviewed annually which had not always been the case.

Councillor Howorth also reported on his visit to Orchard Way and he commented on the Work Placement Scheme which some service users were able to access for a number of years and others who could not use the scheme. The Executive Member for Social Services provided details of where work placement opportunities were undertaken and said that she felt that this was the way forward. She said that it would not suit all but that it was important that the opportunity was available. The Director of Community Services spoke of the team in Flint who had the role of moving users into everyday work.

RESOLVED:

That the update be received.

87. 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 detailed the items for consideration at the joint meeting with Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the morning of 29 March 2012 and the meeting of this committee in the afternoon on the same date.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

88. DURATION OF MEETING

The meeting commenced at 2 p.m. and ended at 3.10 p.m.

89. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

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

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Chairman

SUMMARY OF DECLARATIONS MADE BY MEMBERS
IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S
CODE OF CONDUCT

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	DATE: 8 MARCH 2012
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MEMBER	ITEM	MIN. NO. REFERS
NO DECLARATIONS WERE MADE		