

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL - COUNTY HALL ON FRIDAY, 29
NOVEMBER 2019**

PRESENT

County Councillors G I S Williams (Chair), J Charlton, D E Davies, S McNicholas, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J M Williams and R Williams

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: MC Alexander

Officers: Alison Bulman, Corporate Director, M Gray, Head of Adult Services, D Owen, Head of Commissioning

Other Officers In Attendance: K Arthur, Contact and Safeguarding Senior Manager

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors A Jenner, E Jones and G Morgan

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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There were no declarations of interest.

3.	DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS
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There were no disclosures of party whips.

4.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 October 2019 as a correct record.

5.	ASSIST/CYMORTH
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Documents:

- Report of the Contact and Safeguarding Manager

Discussion:

- The initial point of contact with the service had been subject to criticism by the CIW Inspection
- Powys People Direct has since been relaunched as Assist
- This service is key in promoting early intervention by providing timely and appropriate information to enable good decisions to be made
- Forms and systems have been implemented to complement the strengths based approach now being used by the service

- Information is captured consistently across the service
- Robust quality assurance is in place
- A Social Worker is screening referrals to ensure only appropriate referrals are assigned to the relevant team
- An audit tool has been developed
- There had been an issue with call waiting times and abandoned calls but there had been a measurable improvement
- Contact Officers have been trained in the 'what matters' conversation and no longer make a presumption that a service is the answer
- The team are working closely with the Technology Enabled Care Team and Contact Officers can now prescribe low level TEC
- There has been an increase in the number of calls regarding assistive technology
- Funding has been identified to allow a Contact Officer to undertake Welsh language training which also addresses the Active Offer
- Members asked how performance of Assist was being measured – a monthly performance dashboard is maintained so that information can be supplied to Members. There was a significant improvement with 95% of calls being answered.
- Agile working could assist in recruiting a Welsh language speaking officer as they could be located at a site away from the centre. This role should also be flagged up at the next Careers Fair in February.
- Under the previous system too many calls had been routed to Social Workers. Calls are now dealt with by the most appropriate person freeing up social workers for more complex cases.
- A Community Connector is also located within the Assist Team. It may be that a person has a perceived social care need which could be due to social isolation. A care package may not be required but a quality conversation to determine the real need of the individual is required.
- A Member asked who was expected to respond to a call out on the Canary system. A point of reference should be listed, and that person be aware that they are a responder. The Home Support service can also be used. This service is being rolled out further. In the Ystradgynlais area, a domiciliary care response service is also being trialled.
- 3% of calls are not answered in 3 minutes. Abandoned calls have reduced significantly. Call waiting times are monitored but it is important that conversations are dealt with properly. Inevitably there will be fluctuations but generally the Team manage the calls well.
- The Portfolio Holder suggested that if a Member was aware of any difficulties contacting the Assist Team, they should report it to the service
- Although performance is improving, work is still ongoing to reduce abandoned calls further. New systems and digital options will be considered. TEC Training will continue for Community Connectors.
- Resilience has been built in to deal with additional winter demand with the routing of calls determined by the Corporate Plan
- A bespoke hospital team has also been set up to take referrals which will help in avoiding calls to Assist
- Funding from the Regional Partnership Board has been received to help with winter pressures
- The Committee questioned whether one social worker within the Team was enough. A prioritisation framework is in place and the social worker

is covered by the Team Manager. The Team is able to cope under normal circumstances.

- During a monitoring visit, CIW spoke to a sample of service users and noted an overwhelmingly positive response
- The Committee asked when the evidence from the audit tool would be available – this was currently in development and would be reported back to the Committee
- Members had started a programme of financial training with CIPFA and suggested that reports should always include details of costs or savings. Whilst this was accepted in principal, consideration would need to be given to how this was presented. For example, the cost of Assist would need to be offset against the savings of a reducing number of care packages.

Outcomes:

- **Further details of abandoned calls would be provided**
- **The committee would be provided with further information on the quality audit tool**

6.	ACTIVE OFFER
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Documents:

- Report of the Head of Commissioning

Discussion:

- The Strategic Framework for the Welsh Language in Health and Social Care 'More Than Just Words' incorporates European and national legislation
- The aim is to provide a service in Welsh without the client having to make a specific request
- This will be challenging to provide, and a plan is in place to increase availability and maximise use across more services
- The number of Welsh speakers varies across the County and also varies by age
- This is a large task to complete in the short term and so the focus will be on children and young people, older people, and those with dementia
- In the first instance this will be limited to assessments
- A new 'Ask Sarah' web page is being launched soon and this will be fully bilingual
- The Active Offer aligns staff to service users wherever possible
- Welsh language provision needs to be built into all services as a matter of course
- The figures relating to the number of Welsh speakers had been obtained from the Census
- Courses are available to social care staff and, whilst these are free, the cost of backfilling a post is not. During the previous year over 20 people applied to undertake training but there was funding for only 6.
- Not all types of training are suitable for all types of worker and there is a need to be flexible

- Wherever possible, the service tries to accommodate the language of choice of the client
- Welsh language champions are being sought within teams

Outcomes:

- **The report was noted**

7. CARERS' STEERING GROUP UPDATE

Documents:

- Care and Support in Powys
- Carers Memorandum of Understanding
- Carers Steering Group – Terms of Reference
- Taking a Break – Respite in Powys
- Carers Steering Group Minutes – 25 February, 30 April, 14 October 2019

Discussion:

- Informal Carers including family, friends and neighbours, provide 97% of support and care
- There is both a legal and moral duty to support carers
- Co-production has been very successful
- The Carers Steering Group has become more robust
- A Section 33 Agreement was in place but the group has asked the Joint Partnership Board for a Memorandum of Understanding – a decision is due in the next few weeks
- The Integrated Care Fund has provided support for members to attend groups and committees
- Credu is developing an app for carers
- Respite for carers is very challenging
- Credu is developing a project to co-produce bespoke respite care which may not necessarily take the form of residential care
- There is close co-operation between the Health Board and Education with respect to young carers
- Awareness raising in schools also continues
- There is a level of dissatisfaction amongst carers regarding the availability of respite
- One bed has been identified in each residential home for respite care. However, this may not always be the best solution.
- Although the Health Authority also has a duty towards carers, this responsibility falls mainly to Social Services. Funds are awarded by Welsh Government to both bodies for this purpose. The Health Authority also pay for emergency, short respite care.
- It is not always easy to meet needs in rural areas. A large number of families need respite and whilst every effort is made to meet needs, someone else's needs may take precedence. Difficult decisions sometimes have to be made.
- Honest discussions are needed, and the service will do all it can to meet needs, but resources are limited

- The model of respite care may meet the needs of the cared for rather than the carer
- It was also recognised that there would be an unknown level of unmet need. Every effort is made to ensure that carers are aware of their rights.
- There is little or no benchmarking amongst the 3rd Sector. The Welsh Government are unable to provide comparator data. It was suggested that the Chair write to the Welsh Government requesting that such information be collated and provided.
- A question was raised regarding aids and equipment for children and whether this was fair and accessible to everyone. The Head of Commissioning chairs the Board which awards aids – he was not aware of any refusal of a request for an aid for a child but questioned whether requests were being made. An adaptation takes on average 181 days, but this was the shortest time in Wales. Wheelchairs were not the responsibility of Social Services but of the Artificial Limb and Appliance Service which is a national body. There is a Section 33 Agreement for equipment services, supplemented by other funds such as the Intermediate Care Fund.

County Councillor J M Williams left the meeting at 12.25.

Outcomes:

- **The Chair would write to the Welsh Government regarding the provision of comparator data across the 3rd Sector**

8. WORKING GROUPS

Documents:

- Adult Services Working Group summary report
- Children's Services Working Group summary report

Discussion:

- Members question whether the Groups are scrutinizing the right areas
- Member Development sessions were good, but it was suggested that these should be directed at the wider council membership
- It was recognised that scrutiny groups needed to mature
- There was a further suggestion that working groups were no longer necessary and would be difficult to resource going forward. Much of the work could be done within the main committee.
- Members welcomed the Laming Visits as it gave an opportunity for more detailed questioning
- It was suggested that specific Task and Finish Groups should be set up rather than standing working groups
- Members wished to be more proactive in setting the work programme
- It may be helpful if reports and agendas could be written in a way that identified why a topic was being considered
- A significant amount of information was provided to the Improvement and Assurance Board and the Portfolio Holder thought that there should be opportunities for sharing this information. The Corporate Director informed the Committee that this information is usually brought to scrutiny for consideration. The Board had been put in place as scrutiny was not

thought to have been providing adequate governance. She went on to say that the work of the Committee need not be constrained by meetings and she would be happy to discuss working groups further.

9.	APPOINTMENT TO JOINT SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP
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This item was omitted.

10.	WORK PROGRAMME
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Documents:

- Health and Care work programme

Outcome:

- **Noted**

County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)