

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS,
POWYS ON TUESDAY, 14 MAY 2019**

PRESENT

County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair), J Charlton, A Jenner, S McNicholas, G Morgan, K M Roberts-Jones, E Vaughan and J M Williams

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: County Councillors S M Hayes and R Powell, Children's Services

Officers: J Coles and Dylan Owen, Head of Commissioning (Adults and Children), Anne Marie Davies, Strategic Commissioning and Project Manager and Barry Kirwan, Improvement Consultant (Children's)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors H Hulme, E Jones and D Rowlands

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 as a correct record.

Arising thereon:

- Performance – previous minutes indicated that performance would be considered at every meeting. The Co-ordinating Committee has specified that finance and performance will be considered on a quarterly basis although performance reports will be circulated for Members information as soon as they are received.
- Sickness absence – further details were to be circulated regarding absence levels due to stress. There have been issues in extracting the appropriate information from the system but the details will be circulated when available.
- DToCS – it had been reported that a weekly meeting would be held between the the Chief Executives of the Authority and PtHB to resolve the DToCS issue. These meetings were continuing and progress will be reported.
- Task and Finish Group – Budget Reviews – one meeting of the Task and Finish Group had been held to consider the three budget review reports

into Mental Health, Physical Disability and Learning Disability. The work of this Group will be taken forward by the Adult Services Working Group.

5. EXTERNAL PLACEMENTS

Documents:

- Report of the Head of Children's Services

Discussion:

- The report provided an overview of External Placements for Members' information
- It was noted that where possible placements were made to ensure a child's education was not disturbed – the Committee asked how achievable this aim was? In the first instance, an in-house foster care placement is sought locally. If this is not possible, a wider search is made for an in-house foster carer but within one hour's travelling time. Ultimately, an Independent Foster Agency (IFA) will be used in the area or an in-house foster placement further away. If a child has been excluded from school, the service work with the schools service to find alternative provision that could be in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or online. Education is paramount and ensures stability.
- The issue of bilingualism was raised – there are a number of Welsh speaking foster carers and the service would like to recruit more. There are several foster families in Carmarthenshire who can offer Welsh needs. The service is not so well equipped to deal with other languages. The Head of Service reported that the service had could be better at analysing the needs of the LAC population. Although these needs are considered on an individual basis during a review, they are not easily extracted from the system. These issues will be identified at Resource Panel.
- Nine new foster carers had been recruited – how does this Authority compare with others? Benchmarking data is no longer available. More information is available through regional fostering arrangements
- There seemed to be a large group of children in the 10-15 years age bracket and Members questioned whether these children had been in care for some time or if this was the age at which they were accessing services. The Authority has a responsibility for children up to the age of 25 if they are in education. The Welsh government is proposing that this is for all young people up to the age of 25. Edge of Care and early intervention will help to manage risk within communities. Profiling is ongoing to move children to permanent arrangements such as adoption.
- There was concern that this age bracket may be vulnerable to targeting by County Lines. The Authority has developed a response to County Lines and a workshop will be held in June. It is not a major issue within LACs – exploitation is more likely to target those who are not LAC.
- The report shows 80 children are placed out of county, which raises issues about accessibility to education in Powys and Wales. It was noted that there were similar issues around accessing health services across borders but it was suggested that this was a political issue to be addressed.
- There could be delays in accessing education as those with SEN in Wales will have to be reassessed in England which can cause delays. The

service makes every attempt not to place in England due to the different schemes but this may not always be possible.

- Any placement that may cost over £2000 has to be considered by the Resource Panel to ensure financial oversight and whether other, innovative solutions can be found.
- A 'step down' approach is taken – for example moving a child from residential care to foster care or from 16+ to semi-independent living where this may be appropriate.
- All assessments are undertaken under the assessment framework which is not the same as impact assessments elsewhere across the Authority.
- It was confirmed that there is respite for Foster Carers – there are eight generic respite foster carers offering 12 placements and additional foster carers for children with disabilities.
- Officers were asked if there was a pattern of context to external placements as to why we could not cater for these children within Powys? The placing of children was dependent on matching to appropriate families and vacancies.
- The report states that there have been new foster carers – have any left and is the Authority addressing the reasons given for leaving? The service pays close attention to messages given and are aware of reasons. Any disruption (placement breakdown) is reviewed and an analysis undertaken to enable the service to improve.
- The Foster Panel have seen Mother and Baby placements and a question was asked whether this could be extended to help protect children in the longer term? Children and parents are currently assessed at an assessment centre which puts them under 24 hour scrutiny and could be deemed to be oppressive. Wrap around support has recently been provided for some parents and, despite some nervousness by professionals, is working well. The aim is to bring intervention as low as possible.
- It was confirmed that a Social Worker from Powys would complete a visit to another Authority. The minimum statutory visit could be between one week and three months depending on circumstances.
- Recruitment and retention was discussed. The Chair had been advised that the same grade of social worker in other areas were paid at a higher rate. The Head of Children's Services reminded Members that there were other factors considered in recruitment including whether the social worker felt supported, but agreed to look into the issue of pay rates. The number of agency staff was reducing. Two senior manager positions have recently been filled.

Outcomes:

- **The report was noted**

6.	EXEMPT ITEMS
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

7. EXTRA CARE HOUSING

Documents:

- Report of the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services

Discussion:

- Three extra care housing developments were proposed across the County
- Extra Care housing is preferable to residential care as it preserves the independence of the resident. In addition it meets the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. It would also be a better financial option for the Authority
- Strategies have been developed and the market position statements have been considered by scrutiny
- There is a general consensus that Extra Care Housing is the way forward and formal sign off by Cabinet is now sought

Outcome:

- **A comment regarding scrutiny supporting extra care housing in principle would be forwarded to Cabinet**

8. EXTRA CARE HOUSING - NEUADD MALDWYN

Documents:

- Report of the Portfolio Holders for Finance, Countryside and Transport, Highways, Recycling and Assets, Adult Social Services, and Corporate Governance, Housing and Public Protection

Discussion:

- The concept of Extra Care Housing was welcomed
- The area had been identified as one with one of the highest needs in the County
- A communications strategy will need to be implemented
- Local Members had been consulted and were positive about the scheme

Outcomes:

- **Scrutiny observations would be provided to Cabinet for consideration alongside the report in June 2019**

9. WORKING GROUPS

Members had been asked to express a preference for joining the Adult Services Working Group or Children's Services Working Group.

Outcomes:

Adult Services Working Group will comprise County Councillors J Charlton, H Hulme, G Morgan, K Roberts- Jones and A Williams

Children's Services Working Group will comprise County Councillors A Jenner, S McNicholas, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, J M Williams and R Williams

The Chair will attend meetings of both Groups. A Lead Member for each Group to be appointed at the first meetings of the Groups

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Documents:

- Scrutiny Work Programme

Outcomes:

- **The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted and work programmes for the individual working groups would be circulated to Members**

County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)