

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT ON FRIDAY, 15 MAY 2020**

PRESENT

County Councillors G I S Williams (Chair), J Charlton, S M Hayes, L Rijnenberg, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, A Williams, J M Williams and R Williams

Cabinet Portfolio Holders In Attendance: R Powell and MC Alexander

Officers: Alison Bulman

Other Officers In Attendance: Caroline Turner, Chief Executive

1.	APOLOGIES
-----------	------------------

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors A Jenner.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
-----------	---------------------------------

There were no declarations of interest.

3.	DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS
-----------	----------------------------------

There were no disclosures of party whips.

4.	SCRUTINY OF BUSINESS-CRITICAL ACTIVITIES
-----------	---

Documents:

- Scrutiny of business-critical activities

Discussion:

- The Committee was provided with a list of business-critical activities across the County Council

Outcome:

- **Noted**

5.	SCRUTINY OF BUSINESS-CRITICAL ACTIVITIES - HEALTH AND CARE COMMITTEE
-----------	---

5.1. PPE Decision Making Tree and Risk Assessment

Documents:

- PPE Decision Making Tree and Risk Assessment

Discussion:

- Members noted that the flow chart did not indicate how PPE items were to be disposed of. The Corporate Director indicated that the guidance was clear although this was not referenced in the decision-making tree.
- The Portfolio Holder assured the Committee that there were sufficient stocks of PPE within the Authority, despite reports to the contrary in the media. The Welsh Government had taken control of stocks to ensure that these were distributed where they were needed.
- A Member questioned whether PPE was available for volunteers. It was noted that PPE was distributed based on risk to our own staff, the third sector, volunteers, council staff generally and for Personal Assistants for those in receipt of direct payments.
- There had been concerns with some goggles, but these had been withdrawn and replaced with visors
- The Portfolio Holder reminded Members that some homemade PPE may not qualify for use at the highest level however these may be perfectly adequate for community use
- Members were aware that staff had been redeployed throughout the council and questioned how the staff within adult services were being trained, their effectiveness and how long they would remain in their new posts. The Corporate Director indicated that 194 members of staff had been redeployed to maintain business continuity and that their goodwill was to be applauded. All staff have had training. The Service is reliant on these staff during this period and it is unlikely that they will return to their substantive posts for six weeks. However, this is constantly under review. Planning is ongoing to manage any future surge and maintain capacity if there were to be a surge in demand in other areas.

5.2. Children's Services

Documents:

- Children's Services updates 16,22 and 30 April 2020
- Portfolio Holder report
- Child Protection Arrangements
- Risk to Children During Covid-19 Pandemic

Discussion:

- The Committee welcomed the detailed briefing papers provided, some of which had been circulated previously
- All statutory duties were being met
- Front facing business continuity arrangements are continually under review
- Early Help has been strengthened
- The Integrated Family Support Team has also been strengthened
- Members raised queries regarding school meals vouchers for vulnerable children – this had been discussed at the Learning and Skills Committee. A briefing for that Committee is being prepared and will be circulated to this Committee for information.
- Children's Services and Education are collaborating
- Vulnerable children are being encouraged to attend the child-care hubs
- Pupils within the Pupil Referral Units have been risk assessed and are telephoned at least weekly and, in some cases, daily
- Awareness is being raised in communities regarding accessing help or advice for those with concerns

- Home visits are still taking place where appropriate and with social distancing measures in place
- Statutory visits to children on the Child Protection Register are at 97% and to Children Looked After at 92%

6.	BUSINESS CRITICAL ACTIVITY - BRIEFING PAPERS
-----------	---

Documents:

- Guidance for workers providing home care
- Guidance for workers in residential settings
- Social care surge modelling (confidential)

Discussion:

- The Corporate Director was asked if there were specific reporting measures for members of staff who were absent due to Covid-19. All absences were tracked corporately for those with Covid-19. There was also a record of who was shielding or socially isolating. This data was presented daily to Gold Command. Any staff within Health and Care who were symptomatic are referred for testing. Front line staff in home care and reablement are referred for testing regardless of whether or not they are symptomatic. Staff who are socially isolating are working from home. The percentage of absence is lower than in other authorities.
- Test, trace and track is set up in Powys and staff are being trained to support this service
- The Service is learning from new ways of working during the crisis and work has already started on lessons learned although it is recognised that work cannot continue with the current level of pressure. There has been a move away from boundaries within the Authority and collaboration has improved.
- The financial implications of the crisis will need to be considered but the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People confirmed that Children's Services was working within budget although demand has shifted with some areas being strengthened. There may also be an increase in Children Looked After following lockdown. Numbers had already increased to 244 from 237. The overall level of support is not yet known. The Welsh Government have allocated £40M for Adult Services for the period March to May 2020 and bids are being submitted to claim against this sum. Virtual meetings are held weekly with providers to enable collaboration. The Service have bought beds within residential homes to deal with anticipated pressures and to provide some stability to the market. It is key to ensure that there is a financially sustainable care market in the future.
- The Chair asked if a policy was in place if a family wished to remove a resident from a care home. The Corporate Director informed the Committee that this would very much depend on what the resident's wishes were and whether they had the capacity to make decisions. There was no legal duty to hold nor any power to prevent someone leaving a care home. However, this is not straightforward and there are other measures in place which would need to be considered if there was any kind of infection in an establishment. The Corporate Director suggested that anyone considering such a move should contact ASSIST in the first instance for advice.

7.	WORK PROGRAMME
-----------	-----------------------

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 28 May 2020, 11 am to 12 noon.

- Members suggested that they have a pre meeting from 10.30am
- Members were invited to submit questions prior to the meeting
- Further information would be provided in due course regarding the sustainability of the care market. The Association of Directors of Social Services was also considering this issue.

County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)