

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD AT BY ZOOM ON THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2024**

**PRESENT**

County Councillor A Jenner (Chair)

County Councillors G E Jones, B Breeze, C Robinson, C Walsh, L Brighthouse,  
A Williams, D Edwards, S Cox and S C Davies

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors J Ewing and G Preston

<b>1. APOLOGIES</b>
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Apologies for absence were received from Nina Davies, Director of Social Services and Wellbeing and Steve Holcroft, Policy and Customer Care Manager.

<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
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There were no Declarations of Interest from Members relating to items to be considered on the agenda.

<b>3. DISCLOSURE OF PARTY WHIPS</b>
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The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member had been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

<b>4. MINUTES</b>
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The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 were not available and would be brought to the next meeting of the committee.

<b>5. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ACADEMY UPDATE</b>
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**Background:**

- The Strategic Workforce Lead for Health Care and Partnership gave a presentation to update the Committee on the Health, Care and Social Care Academy (slides would be shared with the committee following the meeting).
- The Workforce Futures Partnership was established as an enabler to the Health and Care Strategy and the Health Care and Social Care Academy was one of the key pieces of work sitting under the Workforce Futures Partnership.
- The leading focus identified was around how the academy worked with schools and colleges to link apprenticeships 'grow our own future'

workforce in Powys, which stemmed from a pilot project with two secondary schools.

- In the 2023-2024 academic year, the pilot was scaled up to become the Academy Careers Education Enterprise to gain more understanding on what a whole school approach for secondary aged learners could look like. The aim was to expand understanding with four pilot schools but actual reach was 10 secondary schools and two college campuses.
- Over 3,800 learners engaged with the Academy in 2023-2024.
- A further phase of learning was conducted for those pupils enrolled in health and social care courses who benefitted from an enhanced programme of work, more frequent contact with the Academy team, including scenario-based and practical learning experiences.
- Evaluation figures for the enhanced programme of work showed that 90% of learners reaffirmed that they would be interested in learning about health and social care.
- The evaluation had concluded for the 2023-2024 academic year. Going forward, all 13 secondary schools have engaged with the programme. Next year there would be an improved online presence with resources to supplement learning. The Academy were working with the Powys County Council Business Intelligence Team to strengthen the approach towards evaluation and monitoring learners over time for scheme impacts to be compiled.

Issues Raised by the Committee:	Responses Received from Officers and Cabinet Members:
A breakdown of funding was requested and if any funding was provided directly from the Council.	<p>Most of the funding for the Academy team came through the Regional Integration Fund.</p> <p>Two registrant posts within the team were funded by Health Education Improvement Wales.</p>
It was questioned how the regional partnership worked.	The Regional Integration Fund was managed by the Regional Partnership Board and was managed at an executive level.
It was asked whether Powys provided bursaries to people studying health and social care degrees who intended to work in Powys.	<p>The role of the Academy was to raise awareness of health and social care learning opportunities and direct learners to partner organisations who manage recruitment. Bursaries were dependant on the offer of the Local Authority.</p> <p>Due to a relevant officer not being present, a definitive answer was unable to be provided regarding Powys bursaries.</p>
It was asked if Powys could be included in the list of suggested counties for health and social care placements in Wales.	<b>ACTION</b> This was noted and planned to be picked up with the Health Board and Council colleagues.

<p>It was asked how the Health and Social Care Academy worked together with Powys Learning &amp; Development Team?</p>	<p>It was explained that the Academy colleagues linked up with the Council's Social Care Teams and the Strategic Workforce Lead for Health Care and Partnership NHS was also the Chair of the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Group (SCWWDG), which met on a quarterly basis to discuss social care and workforce development.</p> <p>Under the Workforce Futures Programme there were several Theme Coordinating Groups that drove forward elements of the programme in addition to the work with schools and colleges which included officer from the Learning and Development Service.</p> <p>Local Authority colleagues from Learning and Development were part of those groups.</p>
<p>Was there a crossover of the work between the Health and Social Care Academy and Powys Learning &amp; Development Team? If so, did they cross reference and signpost to each other?</p>	<p>They worked collaboratively. There were items that the sovereign bodies were responsible for, and the academy added value exploration to find shared solutions.</p> <p>Collaboration working was key to develop and work on shared solutions.</p>

**Resolved:** The Committee noted the update.

<b>6.</b>	<b>ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT</b>
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**Background:**

- The Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2023-2024 provided information around the number, type, activity and improvements undertaken.
- The sector continued to see a general reduction in the number of complaints received and an increase in the number being resolved informally. Believed to be due to increased learning and improvement in system usage.
- A new customer service feedback system had been implemented and data would be provided in the next report.
- Learning had been taken from the complaints process and a review had been undertaken to provide more understanding.
- These examples of good practice had been being used in the induction system and a new eBook had been produced for Adult Services.

- Communication would be a key focus for the near future to improve how Teams respond to queries.
- There was a general increase in the number of compliments received.
  - The Committee were pleased that compliments were being captured and disseminated as previously recommended.

Issues Raised by the Committee:	Responses Received from Officers and Cabinet Members:
More trend analysis around the number of days taken to respond to a complaint and whether the figures shown for the year 2023-2024 were an improvement on the year 2022-2023 was requested.	<b>ACTION</b> officers would provide the information to Committee.
It was noted that an improvement in the number of compliments received was only true when comparing data of the last two years. However, over the last five years, the actual number of compliments had decreased.	The officer agreed that there was an improvement in the number of compliments received when compared to the last year.
Was benchmarking being conducted regarding the number and themes of complaints?	Assurance was given that benchmarking was undertaken, and Powys County Council was in line with other Local Authorities across Wales regarding timeliness for completing the complaints process.  <b>ACTION</b> More information would be provided to the Committee regarding benchmarking figures for complaints.
As communication was a theme in the complaints received, the Committee suggested that the theme was broken down further, to improve understanding.  The Committee asked to see examples of complaints received, in the same way examples of compliments had been presented.	<b>ACTION</b> It was agreed that this would be a valuable addition to the report.
Did staff receive training around communication skills and how were skills being improved?	Communication training was being given to staff. Reviews were taking place around the accessibility of information and how feedback was given around processes and agreed actions.  A new letter had been designed by the Assist Team that would feedback outcomes from conversations that were had at the front door.

<p>Clarification was sought around the target of 15 days to respond to a first level complaint taking 22 days.</p> <p>And an explanation was sought regarding the increase in response time for stage two complaints.</p>	<p>The response times on the report had been checked and were accurate.</p> <p>The reasoning response times increased for stage two complaints was due to the complexity of the issues and the processes involving numerous Council Services.</p>
<p>Was the 25-day response for stage two complaints realistic?</p>	<p>Assurance was given that management staff attended a national group, where regular conversations were held regarding this gap between the target and the actual performance achieved. It was reported that other Local Authorities were in the same position and the target was known to be unrealistic.</p>
<p>What was the process involving officers for those wishing to make a grievance?</p>	<p>Discussions had been undertaken to understand how conversations were approached and how the complaints process worked to ensure the right outcome.</p> <p>It had been discussed with Policy and Customer Care Manager (Social Services and Wellbeing) and Complaints Officer (Social Services and Wellbeing), and staff would encourage people to use the complaints process as it was a protective process that allowed for transparency and rigorous investigation of issues raised. Assurance was given that issues raised would be investigated with equal rigour to formal complaints.</p>
<p>What would be the consequences of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld?</p> <p>Would additional learning be provided, or disciplinary action taken?</p>	<p>It was explained that each case was considered individually and could include changes to operations, processes, or further investigation.</p>
<p>More detailed information around the '<i>Failure to carry out agreed action</i>' was requested by Committee to ensure lessons learned.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b> – Officers would provide information to Committee.</p>

<p>Regarding the breakdown of complaints received, was the theme of 'Provider Complaint' in adult services due to a shortage of care providers, or was it more of a personal complaint?</p>	<p>It could be a variety of things, including the unavailability of care, the performance of a provider, timeliness etc.</p>
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**Resolved:** Subject to the provision of the additional data requested, the Committee noted the report.

7.	<b>RESPIRE PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES</b>
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**Background:**

- Short breaks offered a spectrum of services from universal services including theatre groups, holiday clubs, after school clubs and sports clubs, to targeted support including hospice services, Powys childcare team, Credu support and charitable support for holidays. Specialist assessed support was open to the Children Integrated Disability Service, and would be looking at direct payments, foster care, respite, care agency support, residential day support and overnight stays.
- The focus for development was to create the best outcomes for the child and family as well as offer a more cost-effective approach than overnight stays. Foster care respite was an underdeveloped aspect of the work, which was cost effective and allowed a child to stay in a family setting.
- Budget was overspent for 2023-2024, with a total spend of £1.2million. In addition to the budget there was also the commissioned PCAN (Powys Can) Project via Action for Children.
- The Short Breaks budget for the year 2024 - 2025 was just over £1million. The project was projected to be within budget, demonstrating the work that had been done to evaluate spending, setting targets and ensuring identified needs could be met.
- A fortnightly review mechanism was in place with senior management oversight, to ensure cost effectiveness.
- The Service was linked into the fostering business case. Which helped to support the fostering service to understand what was needed around short breaks and inputting into carer training.
- The Integrated Disability Service (IDS) criteria had been reviewed to make it more specific and easier to understand.
- A project would be conducted to consult with parents and stakeholders around the PCAN Project to consider the next steps.
- This consultation would finish in September 2024 and hoped to develop a new pathway forward by April 2025.
- The Service reviewed the Disability Service Triage, and a new funding panel was developed. Every child's care package was to be assessed every six /seven months as a minimum, to ensure reviews were in line with policy and law.
- The service was continuing to project the need and best value alongside transition planning into adulthood and beginning to link up to Adult Services around mental health pathways for children.

- It was commented that there had been an increase of children moving into the area over the last 12 months, which was being monitored.

Issues Raised by the Committee:	Responses Received from Officers and Cabinet Members:
What was PCAN?	PCAN 'Powys Can' was a commissioned service by Powys County Council through which Action for Children provided one-to-one support for young people within the community with profound disability.
The Committee asked for clarification regarding the acronym IDS.	IDS was the abbreviation given to the Integrated Disability Service; it was the name of the social work team that supported children with disabilities and additional needs.
Was the service reliant upon grants?	<p>The service utilised charitable organisations and had accessed some support from health colleagues with specific training for some staff.</p> <p>All the money for the project came out of the base budget. Grants previously used were additional grants that related to specific families.</p>
It was asked who applied for the grants?	Families were encouraged to apply for the grants themselves, but IDS could provide support.
Did the Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) contribute towards costs?	The PTHB did not generally contribute towards costs.
Was the funding and work relationship monitored to ensure it was effective for continuing care?	<p>Assurance was given that there was a fortnightly triage where teams met and discussed individual cases.</p> <p>As well as a bimonthly meeting held for senior managers to discuss further cases with teams.</p>
The financial statement was requested.	<b>ACTION</b>
It was mentioned that over the last 12 months there had been an increase in children moving into the county. A graph from previous years was requested to provide more detailed information.	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p>Officers would provide information and acknowledged that the cost impact could be significant.</p> <p>The cost analysis data could be provided after a consultation period in autumn, subject to confidentiality.</p> <p>This data could be shared with education colleagues as it would also</p>

	impact schools.
Had the number of children moving into the county previously discussed included unaccompanied child refugees? Were their costs included in this figure?	The data provided did not include unaccompanied child refugees.
In the presentation slides, where it says, 'Not good value', does that mean the past provision was not good value? How long had that contract been in place and what scrutiny of that contract had taken place during the contractual period?	It was explained that it was the new proposal which was considered 'not good value'. It was a very different model that did not fit the needs of the children.
Changes to delivery models could be disruptive to families, how much notice would be given and what were the concerns regarding the transition to a new provision.	A consultation period provided awareness to families regarding the contract renewal. Every family was spoken to, and letters were sent out for assessments to be made in advance. Plans were put in place to support families, and the next steps of provision were available for those who had difficulty with the transition.
	<b>ACTION</b> – Officers would provide a written update on the consultation later in the year.
It was suggested that if the project rolled over into cost efficiency for the next year's budget, the creativity explored in this project could be showcased in further impact assessments.	

**Resolved:** The Committee noted the presentation and the responses provided by officers to the questions raised.

<b>8.</b>	<b>EXTRA CARE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE</b>
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**Background:**

- Presentation was provided to the Committee (slides would be shared with all councillors in the council).
- Learning from existing Extra Care Arrangements were built into the new developments.
- The project put Powys County Council in line with other Local Authorities.
- This project was built upon a Market Position Statement which was undertaken in 2018.
- Work had been conducted to refresh the statement to ensure that the data and trajectory for the demand for extra care was in place with a strong evidence base.

- It was noted that Extra Care demands were high around Brecon and Welshpool, which was where it was planned that future developments would be focussed.
- The Cabinet Report in May 2019 allowed mandate authorisation to develop five new Extra Care Housing Schemes in Powys.
- It was an integral part of the Health and Care Strategy, the Regional Partnership Board and the Corporate Improvement Plan.

**Neuadd Maldwyn, Welshpool**

- Building work had progressed but was slightly delayed due to the finalisation of the fire strategy, which was awaiting final sign off.
- The care provider had been commissioned and appointed in February 2024 and beginning to recruit.
- Due to open in late autumn 2024, the Senior Strategic Commissioning Manager was confident this date could be met.

**Pont Aur, Ystradgynlais**

- Pobl owned existing sheltered housing provision.
- Significant delays were experienced due to the liquidation of the original contractor.
- Phase one was nearing completion and the full care scheme was expected to be opened in November 2025.

**Brecon**

- Planning approved by Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA). However, the conservation planning application was under consideration and a further meeting would be held in August 2024.
- If everything remained on track and was approved, it would be expected to open in early 2027.

**Machynlleth**

- Not yet in the formal development stage.

**Extra Care Potential**

- Potential options in Builth Wells, Llanfyllin and Presteigne.
- Options were being explored, these were in the very early stages and formed part of the options appraisal around the Powys own Care Homes; all of which would be coming to scrutiny.

Issues Raised by the Committee:	Responses Received from Officers and Cabinet Members:
	<b>ACTION</b> – Arrangements would be made for the Committee to visit Neuadd Maldwyn in early autumn upon completion.

**Resolved:** The Committee noted the presentation and welcomed the update on the various schemes.

**Background:**

- Children’s Services were utilising grant funding to support the budget.
- Head of Adult Services commented on the income that came in at the end of the quarter.

Issues Raised by the Committee:	Responses Received from Officers and Cabinet Members:
The Committee thanked the officers for presenting a balanced budget outcome for the year ending 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024.	
How likely was it that the reassessed figure could be achieved in the current financial year?	<p>It would be a challenge due to increased demand.</p> <p>A new fostering framework had been agreed, which would help to develop a new costing framework. The demand and cost of the placements was being monitored monthly.</p> <p>And assurance was given that the reassessed figure could be achieved.</p>

**Resolved:** The Committee noted the report.

<b>10.</b>	<b>WORK PROGRAMME</b>
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Resolved: The dates of upcoming meetings were noted and the Chair and Vice Chair would meet with officers to determine the ongoing forward work programme - items subject to change.

<b>11.</b>	<b>EXEMPT ITEM</b>
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The Monitoring Officer has determined that category 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following items. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information. Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

<b>12.</b>	<b>CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE</b>
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**Resolved:** The Committee noted the presentation

**County Councillor A Jenner (Chair)**