

SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 21 March 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors McGee (Chair), Dryden, McGloin, Uddin and J Walker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: M Davis - Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Association (MVDA).

OFFICERS: C Lunn, J Pearce and E Scollay.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Coupe, Davison, Higgins and Walters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest.

1 MINUTES - SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL – 12 FEBRUARY 2018

The minutes of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 12 February 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

The Panel was directed to the agreed action points on page five of the minutes.

In respect of action point one, the Neighbourhood Safety Officer was present at the meeting to provide the information requested.

As a preliminary, it was explained to Members that the figures and statistics around victims/complainants who had been identified through the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) route (via such means as Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings, and who may have been vulnerable to other issues), had been very difficult to attain. The system that the Neighbourhood Safety Team currently utilised did not have a vulnerability criteria within it, and therefore exact numbers could not be extracted. In light of this, qualitative activity had been undertaken, but it was recognised that there could be an under-representation of the actual case numbers involved.

It was indicated that from April 2017 to the current date:

- There were 45 cases of victims/complainants of ASB who had been further identified by the Neighbourhood Safety Team as being additionally vulnerable in some capacity;
- 16 of these 45 cases involved elderly, lonely and/or socially isolated individuals; six of those 16 individuals were identified as being exploited by other parties;
- Eight of these 45 cases had some form of mental health concern;
- 18 of these 45 cases were hate crime or hate incident related - two related to sexual orientation; three related to disability; and 13 were racial/religiously motivated;
- Three of the 45 cases were domestic violence related; and
- There were 28 referrals made to the following external services (seven of the 45 cases refused extra support): Age UK Teesside; Cleveland Police; Compass (the Single Point of Contact for housing); Harbour; MIND; My Sister's Place; Social Services; and the Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS).

With regards to 'underlying issues' and 'other behaviours being displayed', Members heard that approximately half of the victims/complainants scored high on a Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM), but when the ASB was investigated, it was assessed as being low level. Officers believed that due to 'other' vulnerabilities that these victims/complainants were being exposed

to at the time, these individuals perceived the ASB to be higher than normal. It was explained that when a person reported ASB as a victim/complainant and was identified as being vulnerable, the RAM was always completed. This was a generic matrix that the Police, Registered Social Landlords and the Local Authority used.

A discussion ensued in relation to the systems currently being utilised and their effectiveness in capturing the required data. The Panel heard that the Head of Stronger Communities was currently undertaking an extensive piece of work reviewing all of the IT databases and processes that the service area used, which incorporated examination of how data and information was being transferred into and out of the service. It was felt that the principal system currently being used was not wholly appropriate for the management of ASB casework. The team was piloting the E-CINS cloud-based information sharing system on a double-entry basis at the moment, with high-level cases being added.

In response to an enquiry regarding provision of support to victims of exploitation, it was explained that, initially, a conversation with the victim, or perceived victim, would be undertaken. If it transpired that the person was unwilling to accept support or was happy with their situation, further action was limited. Without consent to share information; without that person identifying themselves as a victim, or if that individual had capacity or was deemed to have capacity, a referral to Adult Social Care or the Police could not take place. However, it was highlighted that if a clear and significant safeguarding issue was apparent, and that individual required protection, information would be shared immediately.

A Member queried the provision of support being offered to individuals reporting crimes and how this was arranged. In response, it was explained that support was offered from VCAS, which was a substantive programme managed by 'Safe in Tees Valley'. Referrals to VCAS were not automatic - consent would need to be given to the professional who was dealing with that vulnerable or high-risk ASB victim.

From an Adult Social Care perspective, the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration explained that concerns had been raised in relation to current systems and the successful capturing of all Section 42 enquiries, the duty around which applied to all areas of the Local Authority. It was indicated that work would continue in this regard. Consideration was given to vulnerable individuals seen as being 'on the fringes', who may have perceived ASB to be greater than it was, and how these individuals could be managed in a preventative way.

In relation to the issue of consent, it was felt that this was a particularly complex area. Consideration was given to individuals who actively rejected support and continued to live in negative situations, perhaps for fear of losing more than would be gained. Reference was made to legislative changes in respect of coercion and how this could potentially impact future casework. In terms of staff training, the Neighbourhood Safety Officer requested that operational staff receive training in respect of this legislation, together with refresher training around the identification of vulnerable individuals. The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration agreed to this.

The Neighbourhood Safety Officer highlighted to the Panel that, quite often, perpetrators were vulnerable victims themselves. It was explained that when dealing with perpetrators, the principal course of action was to complete an assessment of their needs, as they could have a drug or alcohol addiction, mental health issue, be experiencing homelessness, etc. It was important that these too were recognised and appropriate referrals made.

In response to an enquiry regarding provision of support to those individuals not giving consent for fear of reprisals, cultural difficulties, etc., Members were informed that if an individual with unmet needs had been identified, and they did not accept support, the situation would be monitored for a period of time. The Neighbourhood Safety Team would aim to re-visit and re-address the issue of support, but a cut-off point was required at some stage due to resources being limited. Information was shared with partners if there was a risk of harm to that person, even if they did not accept any support. It was highlighted that there were smaller activities that could be undertaken to aim to ensure a person's safety, such as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) or Street Wardens undertaking regular patrols.

A discussion ensued in relation to the provision of support, mental capacity and the acceptance of support. Reference was made to the difficulties encountered by Adult Social Care professionals in supporting some individuals that held mental capacity. It was highlighted that impending legislation pertaining to coercion may assist in this regard. It was felt that information-sharing between partner organisations was vital in building up a network around vulnerable people in order to provide as much support as possible. Members considered the impact of loneliness and/or social isolation upon vulnerable individuals and the recognition of such cases in terms of partnership-working and recording/sharing of information. The Panel discussed the risks of vulnerability that may be faced by individuals, such as those that had experienced difficult childhoods and issues with drug and/or alcohol addiction, the intervention services available and how awareness of these could be raised.

The importance of ensuring that safe systems were in place and the availability of appropriate support for vulnerable individuals was highlighted to Members. It was felt that, in instances where individuals knowingly carried out risky behaviour(s), but did not wish to change their situation, it was important to have a system in place that offered support to that individual, to ensure that they were known to Adult Social Care Services and could be offered appropriate intervention opportunities. It was felt that support could be offered to assist individuals in managing their situations safely; reference was made to the 'C Card' and other similar initiatives that had been undertaken previously as an example of this.

Members heard that the Local Authority, its partners and third sector agencies offered and re-offered support on a daily basis, signposting constantly with high priority cases. In addition, two groups had been established that looked at complex cases and vulnerable women with regards to the sex industry. It was felt that high case support in terms of identification, intervention and information sharing had developed particularly well. Services were always being reviewed in terms of how they could be improved, but it was felt that they were relatively robust.

Members were directed to the second action point on page five of the minutes. In response to the agreed actions, the representative of Cleveland Police, who was present at the 12 February 2018 meeting, had submitted a written response to the Panel. This indicated:

- a) The approximate number of Vulnerable Adult referrals that were made in Middlesbrough, as follows:
 - 2015 - 398;
 - 2016 - 601; and
 - 2017 - 769.
- b) The referrals process and the involvement of Adult Social Care; and
- c) An anonymised example in relation to the monitoring, recording and action taken, where necessary, upon repeat callers. It was highlighted that this data was not specific to elderly people, and included: Repeat ASB; Violence; Callers; and Domestic Abuse. The example provided concerned one individual who appeared on the list as a repeat caller and a repeat ASB victim, after making ten calls to Cleveland Police.

During discussion, the Panel considered the information provided; the role and responsibilities of Adult Social Care and Cleveland Police in responding to safeguarding alerts; the utilisation of database recording systems and the capturing of information; and criminal cases and prosecution activity. Members felt assured that there was a system in place that led to triggers to colleagues in Social Care, and the quality assurance of this was built into Police and Social Care systems.

The Chair thanked the officers for the information conveyed.

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**REDUCING LONELINESS AND/OR SOCIAL ISOLATION IN LATER LIFE –
DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

The Chair welcomed the Chief Executive of MVDA to the meeting and invited him to provide any feedback in respect of the draft report. Following subsequent discussion, the Panel agreed that the following amendments/additions would be made to the draft report:

- For clarity, references to the 'Older Persons' Action Group', made throughout the report, would be amended to read: '*Ageing Better Middlesbrough Action Group (ABMAG)*'.
- Paragraph 46 - first sentence to be amended to read: '*The work of wider voluntary organisations is fundamental to the reduction of loneliness and/or social isolation in later life.*'
- Paragraph 55 - in light of updated information, paragraph to be amended to read: '*Befriending services are currently being undertaken by Age UK Teesside in Stockton, Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland. Owing to ABM previously providing peer friendship support, Age UK Teesside had not progressed this in Middlesbrough (so as to avoid duplication). However, following the changes around this, as outlined in paragraph 54, the Panel notes that Age UK Teesside is currently out to advert for a post to co-ordinate a befriending service in Middlesbrough, to complement the established work they already facilitate in Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees and Redcar and Cleveland.*'
- Paragraph 56 - to be amended to incorporate the issue of wider practical support, such as assistance with shopping. Paragraph to be amended to read: '*The Panel heard that, through the Community Connect Service model, the two gaps in service provision that MVDA is currently aware of relate to befriending and practical support such as assistance with shopping, the latter of which could be viewed as being part of a wide-ranging befriending offer. The Panel understands that some early work has started to form in terms of an improved befriending model, which may not necessarily need to be funded solely by the public sector (if inward investment can be attracted). The Panel looks forward to receiving an update in respect of this work in due course.*'
- Paragraph 95 - to be amended to read: '*Voluntary organisations are fundamental to the support offered to individuals feeling lonely and/or socially isolated.*'
- Section entitled 'funding' - paragraphs 19-21: In light of the ABM programme, an additional paragraph would be inserted into this section to highlight that the total length of the programme was six years in duration, and £6m in funding would be received. In terms of evaluating the success of the programme (which was currently half-way through), it was agreed that one of the Panel's final recommendations would read: '*That the early evaluation reports of ABM be submitted to the SCASSP, for information.*'

The Panel received details regarding funding processes/arrangements for ABM and other strategic programmes, how performance was monitored and outcomes determined, with consideration being made towards changes in funding streams over time and how 'Test and Learn' frameworks were being utilised. Reference was made to a recent announcement regarding the Dorman Bank Account and how stakeholders could be affected.

Members were directed to the conclusions set out in paragraphs 89-100 of the report.

Following consideration, the Panel agreed the conclusions, subject to the following amendment:

- Paragraph 92 - to be amended to read: '*Feelings of loneliness and/or social isolation can occur at any time of the year, although there are times of the year that can be particularly acute.*'

With regards to the Panel's recommendations arising from the investigation, a number of potential suggestions were tabled. Following consideration, Members agreed that the following recommendations would be inserted into the report:

1. *'That the Local Authority engages with as many different agencies and businesses as possible in order to play an active role in further developing and promoting support for those experiencing loneliness and/or social isolation. An example of such an initiative is Marks and Spencer's Community Transformation Programme as part of the organisation's 'Plan A 2025.'*
2. *'That the Local Authority works in partnership with MVDA and other appropriate voluntary sector organisations to further develop befriending support provision.'*
3. *'That an awareness-raising campaign for members of the public be developed in conjunction with the Marketing and Communications Team. This should determine the most effective publicity methods in order to improve access to support services and/or referral routes. Publicity methods should encompass as many marketing outlets as possible, including: Local media/radio such as 'Love Middlesbrough' Magazine and Community Voice FM; Physical stalls in the Town Centre and at public events; the Council's website; Public service/utility vehicles; Community Hubs; Voluntary organisations; Private sector businesses, etc).'*
4. *'That training and awareness sessions, dedicated to the issue(s) of loneliness and/or social isolation, be implemented for all staff. This could include: Online training via 'Middlesbrough Learns'; Staff briefings; and Advice and information on the intranet.'*
5. *'That an awareness-raising briefing be scheduled for all Elected Members in respect of the issues surrounding loneliness and/or social isolation.'*

Members felt that input from other organisations, such as MVDA, would be particularly beneficial to this activity.

6. *'That, to facilitate engagement in support activities, the Local Authority works with partners to improve transport provision for Service Users, including bus and taxi operators.'*
7. *'That a wider piece of work be undertaken to encompass other demographics, such as young people, when discussing loneliness and/or social isolation. For example: further Scrutiny investigation(s) by the appropriate Panel(s).'*
8. *'That the early evaluation reports of ABM be submitted to the SCASSP, for information.'*

With regards to the work currently being undertaken by officers in Stronger Communities, Members appreciated that although pertinent to this topic, it was a wide remit of work that would not be completed for a significant period of time (the anticipated duration was 12 months). Consequently, it was felt that a request for a progress update would be sufficient for the Panel, as opposed to listing it as a formal recommendation of this report.

A discussion ensued in respect of preparing service-specific recommendations that may prove difficult to implement. Consideration was given to such matters as existing schedules and practicality of tasks. In recognition of this, Members agreed that the following recommendation be made:

9. *'That each service directorate considers how support can be provided to the reducing loneliness and/or social isolation agenda.'*

Members agreed that following the amendments/additions being made to the report, final approval would be made by the Chair and Vice-Chair before submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

AGREED that:

1. **The report would be amended, as detailed in the preamble, and forwarded to the Chair and Vice-Chair for approval.**
2. **Following approval from the Chair and Vice-Chair, the final report would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.**
3. **The information, as presented, be noted.**

3 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - MONDAY, 16 APRIL 2018

The next meeting of the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for Monday, 16 April 2018.

NOTED**4 ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.****REVIEW OF LEARNING DISABILITY RESPITE SERVICES - TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Chair provided an update regarding the current reviews being undertaken by the Respite Opportunities and Short Breaks Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Middlesbrough Council's Health Scrutiny Panel, in respect of learning disability respite services.

The outcome of the discussions held at meetings of the aforementioned bodies was that Middlesbrough, as a Local Authority, and Redcar and Cleveland, as a Local Authority, wished to make representations to the Secretary of State.

As part of this process, and further to agreement by the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel Members at the meeting on 20 December 2017, the Chair explained that Task and Finish Group activity (to review the assessment processes surrounding the provision of learning disability respite services) would commence shortly.

All Panel Members were welcome to participate in the Task and Finish Group work; further details regarding the arrangements for the first meeting would be forwarded to Members in due course.

NOTED