

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 29 July 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors S Hill, J Platt, G Purvis, D Rooney, J A Walker and G Wilson

OFFICERS: S Blood, B Carr, C Lunn and E Scollay

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillor J Goodchild, Councillor D Jones.

1 **MINUTES FROM THE MEETINGS HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2020 AND 18 MARCH 2020**

The minutes from the meeting held on 22 January 2020 and 18 March 2020 were read and agreed as a true record.

AGREED- That the minutes be approved.

2 **OVERVIEW OF SERVICE AREA**

The Chair welcomed the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration to the meeting. This was a standard item at the beginning of each municipal year, for the Director to provide an overview of the service areas priorities and key challenges.

The Director, outlined that due to Covid-19, the main priorities within the service area were primarily focused on local recovery and it was likely that Covid -19 would dominate adult social care for some time and shape the running of business.

The key service priorities within Adult Social Care were as follows:

1. Effect of delivery of social care and occupational therapy

The Panel were advised that pre covid, the process for referrals to occupational therapy, would be a face to face introduction to an individual who required assistance. This introduction would look at the health needs and an in-depth assessment would be carried out and recommendations would be made as to what support was required. The Panel were made aware that the word 'Social' in Social Worker was an important one, as it meant using interpersonal skills to work with individuals to

Since the end of March, the face to face assessments ceased and have been conducted via telephone. In instances of safe guarding, face to face assessments have continued, with social workers using correct PPE, however it was outlined that this has had consequences, with some social workers having to self- isolate after visits.

In terms of recovery, the face to face assessments have begun to commence, however these are limited and in consent with the service user. Some service users are vulnerable and therefore have outlined they would like to be seen but not immediately. For those long standing service users, telephone assessments will continue, however new service users will be assessed face to face, wherever possible.

The Director advised that during the Covid period, Adult Social Care has been able to streamline some services, and it will continue to adopt these if they have been successful.

As winter approaches, there is a growing concern about what will happen in terms of assessments, however the Panel were assured that this is being addressed and is a standard item at the Directorate group.

A panel member raised a question as to whether assessments were up to date? In response, although he did not have exact numbers to hand, outlined that the numbers of assessments completed were not causing alarm. The Staying Put agency were now back delivering services and working to address those assessments.

2. Residential Care

The Panel were advised that residential care has been a key theme in the Council's wider recovery work and has been discussed at length at a recent Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact of care homes, and some at present are running on only 50% bed capacity.

In one sense, Care homes are a business, but on the other, the homes provide a 'home' for some of Middlesbrough's service users, as the Council have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to support the Care home market.

The Director outlined that the Council is looking at how Care Homes can be made financially sustainable. There has been National financial support for care homes and Middlesbrough has continued to provide support as a temporary compensation through the Covid period.

As recovery is underway, the Council is now looking at the medium and longer term solutions as they need to develop a support package for care homes which is realistic and within the Council's current financial constraints.

3. Day Care

In terms of Day care, all services were suspended during the covid period, these included:

- North Ormesby Resource Centre
- Autism Day Centre
- Orchard- shared facility with Tees Esk and Wear Valley

The Director also outlined that all day care commissioned from the independent sector also ceased.

During the Covid period, it was apparent that there was risk that some families would break down due to the added pressure placed by Covid. The Council did not want a situation where those individuals were placed in residential care and therefore the Autism day centre did reopen for some service users. This was done in a controlled way, which users assessing different parts of the building on different days, which different support staff for these sessions.

In terms of recovery, it is evident that day centres are a life line for service users and their families. The Head of Prevention, Assess and provider services was currently undertaken a consultation with service users of day care and the results would be used to shape how these services would be delivered.

It was anticipated that service users would be returning to using day centres by October, however this would be Covid dependant. The centres would be designed to meet the needs of the service users, whilst wherever possible (depending on individual needs) complying with social distancing measures. The way that the staff would work with individuals with complex needs was also a concern raised by panel members.

A panel member queried whether the Panel would view the results of the consultation, in response the Director outlined he would ensure this was made available when completed.

The Panel were made aware that pre covid there had been discussions regarding the opening of an Autism Centre of Excellence, however plans were now on hold.

4. Domiciliary Care

The Director commended Domiciliary Care agencies, and whilst this was not a direct service priority, the Director felt this was worth mentioning due to their exceptional support within care homes during the Covid period.

5. Mental Health

The Panel were mindful that during the Covid period, mental health issues have increased. The Director outlined that it was a service priority and as we move into recovery, we are now seeing the extent of mental health amongst individuals.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) are putting services in place to support the increasing referrals of mental health. It has been reported that they are seeing more individuals presenting themselves at crisis point, as there has been a misconception that services were closed. There have been discussions that the legacy of the impact of Covid -19 will last a number of years.

Mental health counsellors' are being faced with individuals who are suffering from trauma, as a consequence of them being unwell or a family member. For those who have suffered Covid and recovered, there are large numbers of post-traumatic stress disorder, many have neurological disorders (due to oxygen starvation) and some have suffered other health issues due to Covid.

It was therefore vitally important to look to how we support mental health but also looking at the preventative aspect, for individuals but also for staff. The Director outlined that there were plans to discuss this at a future Joint Health and Wellbeing Board.

In response, a panel member questioned whether suicide rates had increased during Covid. The Director was aware that the rate of suicide had increased but would seek clarification from the Director of Public Health on the actual numbers.

6. Forensic Mental Health Provision

The Panel were advised that in previous years, Middlesbrough had provided the hospital discharge for those individuals who had been hospitalised but also convicted of criminality. However this partnership would come to an end, which was seen as a positive step. The end of the partnership meant that there was resource to focus on support for when individuals resettle into the community. These cases had to be managed carefully due to the risk individuals might have to themselves as well as members of the community.

7. Carers

Carers was a key theme of the recovery group for Adult Social Care. There has undoubtedly been increased pressure and stress put on carers during the Covid period and there needs to be an understanding of the pressures. To help with this understanding, a piece of research was being undertaken and would be shared in due course.

8. Homelessness and Local Authority asylum support liaison officer (LAASLO)

The Director stated during the Covid period, the Council has provided a larger number of temporary accommodation for asylum seeker families. One of the main priorities has been to ensure those families arriving into the North East/ Middlesbrough do not contract Covid due to their health conditions and living arrangements.

Middlesbrough currently have 2 Local Authority asylum support liaison officer (LAASLO) who work with those who have granted refugee status and provide them with information and support as they move into the community.

The 2 officers were on temporary contracts, however their skills, especially linguistic have proved invaluable during the Covid period, and as a consequence, further funding has been found to employ them for a further year. The service is however vital and therefore work will be undertaken to look at how funding can be made sustainable to maintain this service.

A panel member asked for the contact details of the officers and these would be provided.

9. Palliative Care

The Director outlined that he has recently had a conversation with the Chief Executive of the Hospice, who had advised the Transformation Team had been developing plans of how they reshape hospice services.

In the main, hospices survive on the basis of charitable donations, and understandably Covid has had a significant impact on their charitable input.

Palliative Care provides a resource but provides specialist advice when required. The way palliative care is supported is a key priority.

A number of the panel members echoed the Directors concerns regarding palliative care, outlining that they provide quality of care and should be supported.

10. Winter

Lastly, the Director outlined that plans for winter would be a key priority for the service area. There was clearly anxiety in relation to winter flu and a second spike of Covid, and therefore Middlesbrough was looking into measures as they approach the winter months, especially surrounding the roll out of the flu vaccine.

The Chair and Panel thanked the Director for his informative presentation.

AGREED- That the presentation be noted.

3

SETTING THE SCRUTINY PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Democratic Services Officer presented a report that invited the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for 2020/21.

The scrutiny panel was encouraged to select two topics where scrutiny could make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development. To assist with in determining possible Work Programme topics, the Director for Adult Social Care and Health Integration had been in attendance to provide an overview of the main services within the panel's remit and an outline of priorities, key issues and challenges for the year ahead.

A list of potential topics, which were anticipated to be of particular interest to the scrutiny panel, and the suggestions received in respect of the scrutiny panel's remit were contained in the submitted report. The suggestions within the report were merely proposals and the content of the work programme was entirely a decision for the panel to make.

The Panel had begun a topic on Physical Activity for Older People (aged 65-plus), however due to Covid- 19 the report was placed on hold. The panel felt that they would like to understand the position since Covid and therefore agreed to continue to this topic.

After the Directors presentation, the Panel also agreed that they would like to examine Palliative and End of Life Care, which would be investigated with the Health Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel also agreed that they would like to have one off meetings to examine:

- Support for Carers, and
- Impact of Covid -19 on Vulnerable adults

AGREED as follows:

That the topics listed below be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for approval and inclusion in the scrutiny work programme of the Culture and Communities Panel for

2020/2021:

- Physical Activity for Older People (aged 65-plus)
- Palliative and End of Life Care

4 **PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2020/21**

The proposed meeting schedule for 2020/21 was submitted to the panel.

AGREED- that the proposed meeting schedule for 2020/21 be approved.

5 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD- UPDATE**

The Chair provided the Board with a verbal update on matters which took place at the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 21 May 2020, 11 June 2020 and 2 July 2020.

AGREED- That the updates be noted.