

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Wednesday 10 February 2021.

PRESENT: Councillors J Platt (Chair), S Hill (Vice-Chair), G Purvis, D Rooney, J Walker and G Wilson

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors

OFFICERS: S Blood, E Scollay, Beevers, C Breheny and M Jackland

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors D Jones

20/38 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

20/39 **MINUTES- ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 9 DECEMBER 2020 AND 13 JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel held on 9 December 2020 and 13 January 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/40 **INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE- VERBAL UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration to the meeting to provide a verbal update on Integration of Health and Social Care.

The Director advised that since the last meeting there had been no significant organisational changes as in large these organisations have been focused on the Covid response and in particular the preparation around the vaccination programme.

The Director was pleased to report that Middlesbrough was on track on vaccinating the four first priority groups set out by Central Government. He applauded the work undertaken by the Contracts and Commissioning Team in supporting James Cook University Hospital (JCUH) by providing the lists of individuals who fit into the priority groups and the North East is at the forefront of vaccinations and the roll out has gone well.

The JCUH discharge team have been extremely busy, we saw for designated sites (care homes for those covid positive), initially these were quiet, however there has been an uptake on these. These beds are being occupied with those who are still covid positive who require the isolation period.

In terms of day care, the Director advised that during this lock down, with restrictions in place, they have continued to operate these. In the initial lockdown, all day care settings ceased to operate, however the Panel learnt that since, staff have become confident in undertaking the relevant safe guarding and risk assessments. We also considered the impact closing the centres would have on service users and carers, and concluded these could operate in a covid safe way.

In terms of social care, staff are managing the day to day business, as well as the demand and pressures put on the service due to the pandemic. The Director advised that staff are

tired and resilience levels are being effected, and we are therefore ensuring we look at the wellbeing of our staff and the longer term effects.

A Panel member queried whether there had been any developments since the last meeting in terms of providing vaccines to house bound patients. In response, the Director advised that this was a matter for the Primary Care Networks and they will be considering the priority groups and patients who fit into this category.

AGREED:

That the information be noted.

20/41

SETTING THE SCENE PRESENTATION- SUPPORT FOR CARERS

The Chair welcomed Lynn Beevers, Principle Social Worker for Adults to the meeting to provide some context in relation to the support the Council provide to Carers'.

In terms of background, the Principle officer advised that in terms of the impact of caring:

- The 2011 UK census showed that there were approximately 6.5 million people of all ages providing unpaid care. A 2019 poll published by Carers UK indicates that this number could now be closer to 8.8 million.
- The number of people aged 65yrs or over has also grown from 1.4million in 2011 to potentially over 2 million in 2019.
- The 2011 census information showed that there were 166,000 young carers between the ages of 5-17 providing support to a parent or sibling with illnesses or disabilities in the UK. The Children's Society estimate that this figure is closer to 800,000, largely due to the number of young carers who remain unidentified.
- Office of National Statistics (ONS) data shows that there are approximately 2,500 young or young adult carers across South Tees between the ages of 0-24.

The Panel were made aware that in 2019, 8000 formal and current carers shared their experiences and help shape the 'Shape of the Caring' report in 2019. Of those who responded:

- 39% responding to a national survey said they are 'struggling to make ends meet'.
- 68% reported regularly using their own income or savings to pay for care or support services, equipment or products for the person they care for.
- 12% of carers reported that they or those they support received less care or support services during the previous year due to a reduction in the amount of support from social services.
- 53% of carers said that they are not able to save for their retirement.
- 64% say that they have focussed on the care needs of the person they care for, and not on their own needs.

The Principle Officer further went on to discuss the impact of Covid 19 on Carers and to point out some of the key national findings.

From the findings, they indicated that:

- There has been an ongoing concern from carers that they would pass on virus onto loved ones, as many are shielding or choosing to shield.
- Every day of the pandemic, carers have been providing care worth £530 million.
- 81% of carers have taken on more care.

- 64% have not had a break during the pandemic.
- 64% of carers say their mental health has been impacted by Covid.
- Local authorities are seeing increasing numbers of carers asking for help because of breakdown.

The Principle officer explained that the Council have statutory responsibilities as set out by the Care Act 2014. The Care Act put in-place significant rights for Carers in England including:

- A focus on promoting Carers' wellbeing.
- A duty on local councils to prevent, reduce and delay the need for support, including the needs of Carers.
- A right to a Carers' Assessment based on the appearance of needs.
- A right for Carers' eligible services to be met.
- A duty on Local Authorities to provide information and advice to carers in relation to their Caring role and their own needs.

The Panel were advised that Middlesbrough Council work closely with Carers' Together, The Junction, Middlesbrough Voluntary and Development Agency (MVDA) Mind and other agencies to promote information and services for Carers.

Carers may choose to receive support from these agencies (e.g. advice, signposting, support groups, etc.) or may wish to approach Adult Social Care directly.

Adult Social Care also offers advice and guidance, signposting and links to local resources, as well as providing support directly, which often includes:

Practical Support for the Cared for Person.

Social Work Teams complete needs-led assessment of the cared-for person.

Talking with the carer, it may be appropriate to provide additional care and support for the cared for person, in order to better support the carer. This is good if people are worried about their wellbeing.

This may include domiciliary care, personal care, sitting services to give the carer a break, attendance at a Day Centre or Respite care.

Practical Support for Carers.

All carers are offered an Assessment in their own right to establish the effects that the caring role is having, and whether this is having a significant impact on their wellbeing.

The Council provide services, usually via a Direct Payment, to support the carer in their caring role. These direct Payments give Carers more choice and control over the support they receive, which may include, but is not limited to:

- Assistance with domestic routines (e.g. gardening or housework).
- Taxi-fares / transport.
- Gym membership / recreation / therapeutic interventions.
- Provision of equipment.

Middlesbrough Council do not ask Carers to contribute financially towards the cost of the services they receive in their own right.

The Principle Officer outlined that in the first 9 months of this financial year (2020-21) 2,780 Carers Assessments were offered to Carers in Middlesbrough. This was a significant increase on the previous year (19/20) when 1,900 carers Assessments were offered.

Wednesday 10th February, 2021

In terms of future plans, the Principle Officer advised that Redcar and Cleveland Council, Middlesbrough Council and South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were working on developing an integrated commissioning model to develop a South Tees Carers Offer. The Model was scheduled to be tendered in June 2021 with a start date of 1 October 2021.

The Panel learnt that in terms of going forward, a Commissioning sub group comprising of statutory sector colleagues from health and social care will help shape the pending specification(s). It was anticipated that a collaborative model would be developed to encourage organisations to work together to provide a holistic offer across South Tees.

The Principle officer also discussed the South Tees Carers Forum and Strategy, outlining that the forum covering Middlesbrough Council and Redcar and Cleveland council areas consists of over 120 members with 5 focus groups examining the key themes in the National Carers Action Plan 2018-20. The work of the forum was helping shape the pending commission.

These key themes form the basis of the draft South Tees Carers Strategy that would outline the strategic direction over the next 3-5 years.

A panel member queried whether it would be possible to have further information on the South Tees Carers Offer and South Tees Carers Strategy. In response, the officer advised that the offer, the tender process has recently begun, however she would contact key officers and ask for an update on the progress to date, which would be reported to the panel.

The core commissioned support services for carers include:

- Adult Carers Outreach Service delivered by Carers Together
- Young Carers Service delivered by The Junction Foundation
- Young Carers Schools Project delivered by The Junction Foundation
- We Care You Care Communication and Campaigns delivered by MVDA
- MBC & RCBC South Tees Hospital Project delivered by Carers Together- which aims to identify hidden carers when they are admitted to hospital
- Mental Health Project delivered by Middlesbrough & Stockton Mind

The Principle officer lastly advised that in terms of moving forward and development there had been three key projects:

Developments

Young Adult Carers – The Junction Foundation in partnership with Carers Together were successful in securing short term funding from Commitment to Carers Mind the Gap Project funded by NHS England & NHS Improvement

Active Minds Bags – 3-6 month pilot to provide memory bags through and managed by Middlesbrough Library Service to people with dementia, their carers and family including those from BME groups. .

Dementia Advisor Service – the current service will be relocated to the newly developed Dementia Hub at Woodside. The service will be recommissioned in line with the South Tees commission.

Following the presentation, the Principle officer was posed the following questions:

1. What is it that the Council has do for social workers and how are carers identified?

The Principle Officer outlined that as social workers, they accommodate carers as part of their routine role. However anything the Council could do to raise the profile of

carers and give them the recognition they deserve would add value. She advised that Newcastle City Council had recently written to their local MP to lobby increasing carers allowance to provide recognition to their carer, and although this was more a national issue, this was an example.

The Principle offer also outlined that we must never forget carers are there, as they play such an important role to pay and the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration further added that we must never underestimate hidden carers, as if we tried to resource them, the deficient would be crippling.

Since moving to the Care Act 2014, the needs of carers was on par with those of the service user and there is a responsibility of the Council to see triggers of hidden carers and to change the mindset that they are a carer, not just 'a husband' 'a daughter' etc.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration also outlined adult social care is yet to see the full impact of pandemic on carers coming forward for support, and there could potentially be a gap in resource to deal with the demand for support for carers.

2. Are services means tested?

In response, the Panel were made aware that services to support carers are not means tested, however if the support were for the service user (those being cared for), these are, and this can have an impact on other means tested benefits that they may be in receipt of.

3. How do direct payments work?

Direct payments for carers tend to be for more therapeutic aspects or to assist with their carers role e.g. driving lessons. The purchasing of these services can be done individually and direct payment would be given on presentation of receipts.

4. Is there support in place for a carer or needs support/ care whilst they are caring?

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration responded by advising that the Local Authority is not the only organisation who has statutory responsibility for carers, and there is potential for more partnership working to be done through the NHS to identify carers and raise their profile.

In terms of the needs of the carer, there is a degree of empathy involved when carrying out assessments and gaining trust to ask whether the carer needs support. Each circumstance is considered on a case by case basis and it is about considering the situation and offering need where you see fit.

The Principle Social Worker and Director were thanked for their contributions to the meeting.

Following on from the presentation, the panel discussed the next steps and it was agreed that the officers would be asked to attend the next meeting to provide some further background to carers. The Democratic Services officer would also work directly with the Chair to comprise some draft terms of reference.

Agreed

- 1. That the information provided on carers be noted.**
- 2. That officers be invited to the next meeting to provide further background information on carers**
- 3. That the draft terms of reference would be brought back to the next meeting.**

The Chair provided a verbal update from information received at the last Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting.

20/43 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

No items.