

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

<p>Date: Wednesday, 29 March 2023 Time: 10.30 a.m. Venue: Mandela Room, Town Hall</p>
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AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest.
3. Minutes - Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel – 8 February 2023 3 - 6
4. Integration of Health and Social Care - Verbal Update

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration will provide the panel with a verbal update regarding the integration of health and social care.
5. Cost of Living Impacts - Adult Social Care 7 - 16

The Acting Head of Adults Commissioning will be in attendance to provide an update on previously reported issues and their impact on home care, residential care and supported living / extra care. Sector-wide challenges will also be addressed as part of the update to Members.
6. Overview and Scrutiny Board Update

The Chair will present a verbal update on the matters that were considered at the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 8 February 2023 and 22 February 2023.
7. Any other urgent items which in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered.

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Tuesday, 21 March 2023

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), D Davison, T Higgins, D Jones, G Purvis, D Rooney, R Sands and J Walker.

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Chris Lunn, 01642 729742, chris_lunn@middlesbrough.gov.uk

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Wednesday, 8 February 2023.

PRESENT: Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), D Davison, D Jones and R Sands.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: E Craigie (Teesside Live).

OFFICERS: C Lunn and E Scollay.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors T Higgins, G Purvis, D Rooney and J Walker.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

MINUTES - ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 30 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 30 November 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE - VERBAL UPDATE

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised Members that, to enable staff to focus on winter pressure issues being experienced at hospitals over the Christmas period, integration work had recently been paused.

Details were provided in relation to two financial packages that had been provided to the NHS prior to Christmas, which would help facilitate hospital discharge arrangements in Middlesbrough.

The first fund provided the NHS with £500m, of which Middlesbrough would receive circa. £600,000. This would provide additional capacity around hospital discharge over the period, of which previous concerns had been raised. Following agreement with the ICS, a scheme had been implemented and continued to operate currently. Related performance was reported to the Department of Public Health on a fortnightly basis. In terms of the second fund, Middlesbrough would receive a share of £200m allocated nationally, which would assist with the purchase of additional bed spaces within care homes and other provider space. It was indicated that both funds were to be fully utilised by the end of March 2023, which was felt to be particularly unrealistic in terms of resolving any deeper issues.

The Director highly commended the work that the teams had carried out over the Christmas period. A seven-day presence was provided, with discharge being driven on those days. Flow from hospital to domiciliary care had been maintained and managers very happy with performance. It was indicated that an end to activity was being approached, though there was awareness of industrial action taking place within the NHS.

In terms of continuing with integration work, the Director would be meeting with ICS colleagues on 9 February 2023 to discuss progress and next steps. It was felt that the operational stage would commence shortly.

During discussion, Members discussed the £600,000 of funding awarded to Middlesbrough and the potential to spend this effectively within the required four-month period. It was felt that if this could have been extended to cover the longer term, it may have provided longer term sustainability.

Consideration was given to discharge arrangements from hospital to both care home and own home environments, and how the additional funding from both funds was able to assist with this. The Director explained that the second block of funding was effectively concerned with locating beds for individuals, whereas the first block was a little more open. For example, a small number of beds were reserved specifically for end-of-life care. A specific amount of money was also reserved for reablement to enable individuals to return to their own homes and receive support. Details around expenditure and regular monitoring of it were required by the Government.

A Member queried the development of a hospital in Stockton-on-Tees and whether this laid within the ICS arrangements. In response, the Director explained that a diagnostic centre was being planned, but no further details were available at present. It was felt that the relationship between North and South Tees would become closer, with a local dimension being developed through partnership. It was anticipated that the hospital would cover both Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough.

The Chair thanked the Director for the information provided.

NOTED

THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF WITHIN ADULT SOCIAL CARE - AN UPDATE

In respect of the scrutiny panel's 2022 review of The Recruitment and Retention of Staff Within Adult Social Care, the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration provided an update on the progress made with the implementation of the agreed recommendations / actions. The following points were made:

- Work in the department had progressed quite significantly since the investigation had taken place, and things had changed.
- Following preliminary work and a paper being considered by the Leadership Management Team (LMT) around recruitment and retention support for staff, a change of direction followed to avoid the situation of a total loss of experience and only new experienced staff being in situ. This involved changing the way in which Social Workers were able to progress through the ranks, and allowed more Social Workers to progress to more complex case handling without them needing to wait until such respective staff had left the organisation and effectively provided a vacancy. This provided stability around core of workers.
- Recruitment issues did continue to present themselves as work became increasingly complex, preparing for CQC inspections, etc.
- In reflection of Children's Services and work being undertaken in that area to reduce the use of agency staff, including the introduction of a recruitment and retention payment, a report would be submitted to LMT later this month with a proposal to incentivise potential staff to join Middlesbrough Council and remain for their career. It was acknowledged that this incurred cost and therefore all recommendations would be scrutinised vigorously, with funding being provided through the budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan. The service still operated with too many gaps in Social Worker complement and required a medium-term plan to fund it. An update would be provided at a future meeting.
- In terms of awareness raising, a fair amount had been undertaken, with Teesside University for example. It was anticipated that the online learning module would be progressed in the coming months; this had been delayed due to staff being involved with CQC work and assessments.

During the discussion that followed, Members considered the role of agency staff, of which Adult Social Care did not currently use. It was explained that a small team had been employed in the latter stages of the pandemic to assist with completing a small piece of work, but these had since left. The market for Adult Social Care Social Workers was not the same as it was for Children's Social Workers, therefore the supply was not comparable. In addition, when agency staff were appointed, this often increased pressure on existing permanent team members because agency staff needed training up. The Director explained that it had been a calculated position to not require agency staff. Further, the service wanted to avoid the situation of not being able to deliver duties solely by permanent staff because, if this could not be achieved, CQC direction towards agency support would impact budgets.

The panel discussed the available routes into the social work profession, with reference being made to apprenticeships and University degree courses. The importance of developing solid links with universities was highlighted, together with the significant impact that Social Work apprenticeships could have if worked as effectively as possible. It was indicated that a small number of staff were currently training through the apprenticeship route.

The Chair thanked the Director for the information provided.

NOTED

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on the matters that were considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 13 December 2022 and 12 January 2023.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 29 MARCH 2023

The next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 10.30 a.m.

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Cost of Living Impacts – Adult Social care

Updated March 2023

Previously Reported Issues

- Home care – fuel
- Residential care – Energy Costs / Food / Insurance Premiums
- Supported Living / extra care – increased bills for tenants – energy

Home care – Fuel

Fuel cost at the pumps has now broadly returned to the process seen in December 2021, therefore the pressure specifically in relation to the fuel costs borne by the home care workforce isn't as critical as it was in Summer/Autumn 2022.

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Previously reported data:

	Diesel PPL	Unleaded PPL	Average PPL
Dec-21	149.31	145.61	147.46
Aug-22	196.94	187.07	192.00

Residential - Energy

- Providers continue to report pressures in the subject area of energy
- Recent change to eligibility of the Energy Bills Support Scheme, allowing some care home residents to apply

Residential Care - Insurance

- Insurance premium increases due to covid aftermath
- Providers having to undertaken individual risk assessment for covid positive residents
- Some Providers have to refuse whilst resident remains covid positive, leading to potential delays in discharges

Sector-wide Challenges

- Workforce recruitment and retention
- Market sustainability - finances

Workforce – Recruitment and Retention

- One of the main issues facing the entire care market is the security and stability of its workforce.
- General cost of living crisis facing almost all of us
- Alternative competing employment sectors
- Skills for Care State of Care Report October 2022 reports that on any one given day, there are around 165,000 vacancies

Market Sustainability

- DHSC Cost of Care exercise
- Significant cost differential for 65+ care homes
- Less differential for home care
- LA has to develop and submit a Market Sustainability Plan to DHSC
- Continuing work with the provider market regarding sustainability
- Further detailed dialogue regarding dual registration
- LAs only being awarded 1 year (2023/24) of Fair Cost of Care and Market Sustainability Grant

Market Sustainability - Finances

- Budget setting 27th February
- ASC fee setting
- Annual uplifts awarded to providers - the need to consider Council affordability and ensuring support of legislative requirements (NLW)
- Uplift awarded is 10% for 65+ care homes - significant uplift for the second year running

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