

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Wednesday 5 January 2022.

PRESENT: Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), D Coupe, D Davison, T Higgins, D Rooney and J Walker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: D Best, Independent Chair – Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB).

OFFICERS: S Bonner, C Lunn and E Scollay.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor D Jones.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

MINUTES - ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 8 DECEMBER 2021

The minutes of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 8 December 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 5 – ORDER OF BUSINESS

AGREED that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 5, the remaining agenda items would be considered in the following order: 5, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – VERBAL UPDATE

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration provided Members with an update regarding the integration of Health and Social Care; the following points were made:

- Reference was made to the demands of the pandemic, rising infection numbers and the focus of the NHS' efforts being towards managing this.
- With regards to the North East Integrated Care System (ICS), a Chief Executive had now been appointed to the role. It was explained that following a Government announcement, implementation of the Integrated Care Boards and the wider ICS had been delayed from 1 April 2022 to July 2022, which was felt to be reflective of the challenges currently facing the NHS.
- Details regarding the work that had been taking place in response to the pandemic were provided to Members; activities had included:
 - Maintaining flow in respect of hospital discharge, which had become increasingly difficult, yet undertaken with few exceptions to date.
 - Providing additional home care in the run-up to Christmas, which owing to staff challenges had been more expensive.
 - Responding to outbreaks of Covid within care homes. It was indicated that care home residents had largely been fully vaccinated (first two doses plus booster vaccination), but where there had been outbreaks, homes were temporarily closed to admissions. At present, half of the Council's care homes (15) were closed to admissions. It was explained that homes were closed on a rolling-basis for a period of 28 days before they could be reopened, however, discussions would be taking place regionally to determine whether this could be reduced to 14 days. This situation was not unique to Middlesbrough and was occurring both regionally and nationally.
 - Reviewing additional capacity within extra care to free up hospital beds.
 - Reviewing designated settings to allow for Covid-positive individuals to be discharged from hospital; a designated setting may be required in the future (location to be confirmed accordingly). It was indicated that one provider was

able to offer two units of 15 beds per unit if required, although this would need to be authorised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and commissioned by the Hospital Trust.

- The Director concluded by highlighting the dynamic nature of the current situation, which was being monitored on a daily basis.

During the discussion that followed, Members asked a number of queries of the Director. In response, the following information was provided:

- With regards to people being allowed to visit their relatives in care homes at the present time, it was indicated that this would depend upon the respective care home, e.g. whether there was currently an outbreak; whether visits could be facilitated, etc. Reference was made to the first lockdown period and the additional resources that had been allocated to assist with this during that time. It was explained that the priority at the moment was trying to ensure that admissions could continue, whilst keeping outbreaks down. Mention was made of several regional hospitals that had taken the decision to reduce visiting at the current time.
- Regarding hospital admissions and the availability of ambulances, the panel heard that in the days preceding Christmas and New Year, in-patient Covid figures had doubled, although increases in critical patient numbers were not being seen (potentially due to the effectiveness of the vaccination programme, or the Omicron variant affecting people differently). Conversely however, the full impact of socialising over the festive period had yet to be seen, and there were unvaccinated individuals in Middlesbrough. Reference was made to staffing issues currently being experienced as a consequence of isolation requirements, which had impacted service continuity.
- In relation to a shortage of lateral flow tests and the impact that this had had on care homes, Members heard that the Council was providing as much assistance with this as possible. It was indicated that Public Health had received a blanket allocation of test kits several months ago for working with vulnerable groups. A small stock of these were still available and currently being provided to care homes and domiciliary care providers to help ensure that work could continue.
- In terms of mandatory vaccinations for care home staff, it was explained that two vaccinations were mandatory; some staff had left the sector as a consequence of this. Consideration was now being given towards coverage of the booster for staff, with work continuing to take place this week.
- Regarding designated settings, it was explained that certain prescribed staffing levels were necessary in order for these to operate, with assessment and sign-off by the CQC. Staffing would be a combination of care home and agency staff; ongoing monitoring would be undertaken.

The Chair thanked the Director for the information presented.

NOTED

TEESWIDE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021 AND STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2021/2022

The Chair welcomed Darren Best, Independent Chair of the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) to the meeting, who was in attendance to update Members on the Board's Annual Report 2020/2021 and its Strategic Business Plan 2021/2022. The following matters were raised as part of the update:

- Implications of the Care Act 2014 with regards to safeguarding responsibilities.
- Differences between child and adult safeguarding legislation and practice.
- The responsibilities of Local Authorities within adult safeguarding and the publication of the annual report, as presented.
- The role of the TSAB Chair.
- The reasoning behind the establishment of a single TSAB for the four Teesside Local Authorities.
- The main considerations of the annual report and the positive outcomes identified within it, including:
 - The breadth of partnership work being undertaken;
 - The various agencies involved in safeguarding and the high levels of

- engagement achieved;
 - A genuine openness to learning and development;
 - The role of the TSAB Sub Boards and the work carried out; and
 - Serious case reviews and the partnership work and learning achieved.
- Priorities for 2021/2022, which had been changed to 'I' statements: the purpose of this change was to remind of TSAB's service recipients by approaching from the perspective of the service user or carer.
- Performance Indicators – four out of five had been met; only one had been missed by 2%. It was explained that in terms of the percentage of people satisfied with their enquiry outcome, 73% had been achieved. However, this did appear more promising for the current year.
- The challenges identified within the report, including:
 - The very complex environment that adult safeguarding operated in, which the pandemic had added to; praise was offered to all those working in the sector.
 - The breath of adult safeguarding, which had grown significantly since the 1990s, and now included such issues as homelessness and self-neglect.
 - How the voice of service users and carers could best be heard in terms of service delivery from the Local Authorities.
 - Work to be undertaken in respect of domestic abuse: the impact on families and links to areas such as children's safeguarding; homelessness; trafficking; and financial abuse.
 - Staffing and training – reference was made to the impact of the pandemic; a lack of both staff and resources; recruitment challenges in terms of competition from online retailers; consideration that will need to be given towards supporting staff and ensuring sufficient training.
- Data – reference was made to the general trajectory of the adult safeguarding reports that had been received and, from those, the percentage converted into formal Section 42 enquiries under the Care Act. Consideration was given to the scenario of a rise in the number of cases and enquiries, and whether this was positive or negative – i.e. positive in that there was increased awareness and reporting of issues, or negative in that it was a significant and increasing problem. It was felt that, due to the amount of good work taking place, an increase in the trajectory was a positive occurrence. In terms of the conversion rate from case to formal enquiry, this was circa. 50% nationally, which was reflected locally. It was highlighted that there were no concerns in terms of Middlesbrough's data / trajectory at the present time.

During the discussion that followed, Members asked a number of queries of the Independent Chair and the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration. In response, the following information was provided:

- Following the indication that 36% of safeguarding concerns had originated from care home settings, it was explained that there had been an increase in the numbers from care homes during the first 12 months of the pandemic, but which had decreased since 31 March 2021. It was explained that concerns arising from care homes had been at 50% a couple of years ago, prior to safeguarding training being rolled out to care homes. Concerns from care homes related from relatively minor to more serious matters; often it was the care home flagging issues to seek assistance with rectifying issues. The rates had been consistent with care homes in Middlesbrough and other areas. Reference was made to the reopening of care homes and the work that would be undertaken to determine how this had impacted the data. Concerns were expressed for people living independently in community settings in that some situations potentially giving rise for safeguarding concerns could remain unidentified.
- With regards to the processes involved in undertaking serious case reviews, particularly in terms of consultation with respective agencies, it was explained that cases were looked at from the perspective of the individual and then contact made with the agencies that the individual may have been involved with. The processes involved were outlined to Members, including the role of the TSAB; details around scope and timelines; and how agencies to be consulted were agreed. Reference was also made to the role of independent reviewers in undertaking such case reviews.
- In terms of potential gaps regarding organisations involved in TSAB activities, particularly third sector, it was explained that there were some organisations involved, but it would be unmanageable to involve every single one (e.g. meetings currently involved 35 different representatives). It was therefore important to keep those remaining organisations engaged through other means, as the connections and

resources available would benefit discussions. With reference to a case study example and the issue of domestic abuse, reference was made to heavy engagement work with SafeLives and the office of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner. Mention was also made of a domestic abuse strategic partnership and work being undertaken in that regard.

- Members were encouraged to share the 'See it, report it' contact telephone information that was provided, and to also direct people to the TSAB website for further information as required. Reference was made to work undertaken as part of Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week in November, together with other activities that had been completed to raise awareness. It was felt that this had accounted for the rise in the number of concerns being reported.
- In terms of the types of abuse being reported, it was explained that the annual report provided top-level information; a performance sub-group of the TSAB looked at this in further detail by breaking the data down into categories of abuse and looking for trends. The work carried-out annually resulted in the creation of Performance Indicators for the subsequent year.

The Chair thanked the Independent Chair for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

NOTED

DISCUSSION: SOCIAL HOUSING

Following a request by a Panel Member, a general discussion ensued in relation to social housing. The following matters were considered:

- The availability of bungalows and ground floor apartments.
- The operation of housing associations as private entities.
- The criteria, policies and processes in place for allocating social housing and how providers established these.
- Accessing grants and / or funding for housing adaptation work.
- The work of the Staying Put Agency and the possibility of receiving related information at a future meeting.
- Planning and Development policy and the Local Plan.

NOTED

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on the matters that were considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 7 December 2021.

NOTED

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 9 FEBRUARY 2022

The next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for 9 February 2022.

Regarding the outstanding items on the panel's work programme, following discussion it was agreed that the next review topic would be 'The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (with a focus on Covid-19 Recovery)'.

AGREED that 'The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (with a focus on Covid-19 Recovery)' review would commence at the next meeting.