

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Wednesday, 30 November 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), T Higgins and R Sands.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** D Best (Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board) and E Craigie (Teesside Live).

**OFFICERS:** C Lunn, J Savage and E Scollay.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors D Davison, D Jones, 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 - 2 NOVEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 2 November 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**TEESWIDE SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (TSAB) ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 AND STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN 2022-25**

The Chair welcomed Darren Best, Independent Chair of the TSAB to the meeting, who was in attendance to update Members on the Board's Annual Report 2021/22 and its Strategic Business Plan 2022-25. The following matters were raised as part of the update:

- The role of the TSAB Chair and Mr. Best's experience to date.
- The implications of the Care Act 2014 in terms of safeguarding responsibilities and the requirement to produce an annual report; mention was made of the various Boards, Forums and Committees to which the information was delivered.
- The reasoning behind the establishment of a single TSAB for the four Tees Local Authorities, the unique approach this offered and the positive outcomes achieved, albeit with some challenge.
- The breadth of partnership work being undertaken across Tees: at present, for example, TSAB had an excellent mix of statutory and non-statutory partners and the number was growing (currently 21, however, HartlePower was to join in the near future). It was noted that all partners played a very active role.
- The main difference between adult safeguarding and children's safeguarding was that the emphasis within adults was on Local Authorities to coordinate and operate services, whereas within children's it was the joint responsibility of Local Authorities, the Police and Health organisations.
- Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) under the Care Act, i.e. how these were administered and the learning that local, regional and national reviews provided. It was highlighted that a SARs coordinator had recently been appointed and would commence in post on 1 December 2022.
- Priorities for 2021/22, which had been changed to 'I' statements: the purpose of this change was to remind of TSAB's service users by approaching from the perspective of the service user or carer.
- Performance Indicators – it was highlighted that all targets had been achieved this year.
- The challenges identified within the report, including:
  - The very complex environment that adult safeguarding operated in, and that expectations had grown significantly. Praise was offered to all those working in the sector.
  - Stages of transition (between child and adult services, for example) and how

these tended to be a common feature within SARs.

- There was a need to hear more from service users directly.
- Staffing and lifelong training needs. There were pressures within the system and around links within the system – the pandemic had helped to highlight these, but challenges did continue.
- Abuse - the four main areas of abuse related to neglect, physical, financial and domestic abuse. However, psychological abuse and self-neglect were not too far behind. It was indicated that, in terms of statistical data, the Tees Valley reflected the national picture. Consideration was given as to whether this was a consequence of increased reporting or an increase in cases – the Independent Chair felt it likely to lie somewhere in the middle. Reference was made to the work undertaken by TSAB's sub-groups in relation to this area of safeguarding work.
- In terms of the rising numbers, it was highlighted that this put increased pressure on an already struggling system.

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:

- In safeguarding terms, neglect and acts of omission included ignoring medical, physical or emotional care needs; failing to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services; and withholding such things as medication, adequate nutrition and heating. The difference between intentional and accidental occurrences was highlighted; it was indicated that overlooking matters provided a common basis.
- There had been a 40% increase in psychological abuse, which could occur alongside other forms of abuse, such as domestic and/or sexual abuse. Psychological abuse could involve daily berating behaviour and undermining a person's confidence.
- In terms of staffing and operation of the TSAB, a business unit that sat with Stockton Borough Council coordinated its work. Social Workers were based primarily in safeguarding within Adult Social Care and acted as care planners and investigators. The duties around safeguarding was Council-wide: training was provided during induction sessions and also regularly undertaken in directorates outside of Social Care. It was highlighted that staff in areas such as Public Protection, who interacted with the public daily, were fundamental in recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns. The TSAB was always looking for new ways to raise awareness beyond the Local Authority (for example: amongst neighbours, couriers and postal staff); recent initiatives carried out by the TSAB's Communication and Engagement Sub-Group had included advertisements in football programmes.
- Regarding domiciliary care, it was explained that, historically, these care services were operated by the Local Authority directly. However, like the vast majority of Local Authorities, Middlesbrough Council now commissioned independent providers. It was highlighted that the Local Authority had very positive working relationships with providers, with any issues immediately being raised, and that delays in domiciliary care currently being seen in other areas were not being experienced in Middlesbrough. It was acknowledged that the independent care provider market was as difficult now as it had ever been, and highlighted that salaries in Middlesbrough fared well in comparison to other Local Authorities in the area. Work was currently taking place to understand the impact around cost of living on staff, and to balance resources in reflection of costs, demand, etc., which was very difficult.
- It was highlighted that care staff performed a very complex role and required tact, empathy and flexibility to deliver support safely. There was an enormous reliance upon domiciliary care workers and it was felt that, as a society, the role was often overlooked and did not receive the same recognition awarded to other professions. Exploration work around recruitment and showcasing the role as a career choice was currently being undertaken.
- A lengthy discussion ensued in relation to residential care, domiciliary care, assessments and subsequent care packages. It was suggested that this topic be revisited at a future meeting, with a member of the Commissioning Team in attendance to explain the processes and work involved. Consideration was also given to domiciliary care staff and related appointment and travel time in caring for service users.
- The remit of Adult Social Care was service users aged 18-plus years.

- Regarding Roseberry Park and the Council's role in that facility, it was explained that it was controlled entirely by Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV); the Council worked closely with the Trust, but had no control over, or administration input into, it. In terms of admittance, it was explained that some individuals would be admitted on a voluntary basis, whereas others would be compulsory admissions decided upon by the hospital clinicians.
- The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration reiterated the strengths associated in having one single TSAB for the four Local Authorities. Amongst these were increased numbers from four areas around the table – which meant broader experience; vigorous and robust challenge; and shared knowledge. It was felt that there was an increased level of effectiveness in a much more complicated safeguarding arena than there ever had been before (reference was made to such matters as trafficking and modern slavery), with significant demands placed on staff in a world of stretched resources.
- In relation to suicide amongst younger men, it was explained that TEWV viewed addressing this as a strategic priority.

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

## **NOTED**

### **INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration provided an update to Members regarding the integration of health and social care; the following matters were raised:

- The extensive geography that the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) covered.
- The structure of the ICS and how the local Tees Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) fed into the overarching system.
- The first meeting of the Tees ICP had recently taken place. The main focus of the meeting was the establishment of the Terms of Reference; the key task would be to understand the needs of local communities and feed these up to the larger Board. A draft version of the Integrated Care Strategy, which the Board was required to put in place, was discussed. The document would be further refined prior to submission to the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The Tees ICP intended to meet on a quarterly basis; directors would meet monthly.
- The Autumn Statement and announcement of a review of the ICS; it was unclear at the present time as to what this would entail.

The Chair thanked the Director for the information provided.

## **NOTED**

### **\*\* SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5 - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**ORDERED** that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 5, the panel agreed to vary the order of business to consider the remaining agenda items as follows: 7, 6, 8 and 9.

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update on the matters that were considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 16 November 2022. Amongst those, and of significance to the panel, was the consideration of the final report regarding 'The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (With a Focus on Covid-19 and Recovery)'. The report was approved without any amendments and would next be considered by Executive on 24 January 2023.

## **NOTED**

**\*\*At this point in the meeting, the panel agreed to a brief adjournment for five minutes\*\***

## **THE IMPACT OF THE ENERGY AND COST OF LIVING CRISES ON CARING FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS - VERBAL UPDATE**

### **\*\*The panel reconvened and received information from the Head of Resident and Business Support\*\***

The Head of Resident and Business Support provided an update to Members; a copy of a report to be considered by the Executive on 6 December 2022 (entitled 'Cost of Living Crisis') had been circulated prior to this meeting for information. The following matters were raised as part of the presentation:

- Cost of living was a bigger issue than being only applicable to Adult Social Care – reference was made to other concerns, such as poverty, fuel, children, etc.
- The Head of Resident and Business Support had lead on the compilation of the comprehensive report, which focused on how the Council would respond to the crisis.
- The Financial Governance and Revenues team was working closely with other directorates and external partners to provide solutions. In addition to the Local Authority, partners including Thirteen Group and education providers offered direct support.
- A comprehensive response had been delivered through Burdens Funding (Household Support Fund). Additional funding (running in tandem with DWP initiatives) had been received and subsequently assigned to households with vulnerable people. A partnership approach was being undertaken to treat residents and respectfully assign support in the right place; this was a longer-term issue.
- Work in terms of the Council's response was being benchmarked against a number of Local Authorities – it was felt that the proposal being offered by Middlesbrough was a good one.

During discussion, a Member queried the provision of warm spaces and funding being provided by the Council to assist with this. In response, it was explained that £20,000 had been set aside to support the warm project. Warm space opportunities and what they offered were currently being reviewed, with an overview of what this entailed also being devised. It was indicated that usage levels needed to be understood and funding extended to other areas where possible. Reference was made to the Live Well Centre and the warm space that had been offered and not used; the importance of appropriate marketing was highlighted and work had been taking place with the Council's Communications Team in this regard. It was indicated that Library use had seen a recent increase, but it was unclear as to whether this was the consequence of the warm space initiative, or whether due to general access. It was acknowledged that providers' funding was limited, and therefore funding had been assigned as part of the Household Support Fund.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised the panel that all information regarding cost of living support was available on the Council's website. From an Adult Social Care perspective, it was indicated that the impact of the cost of living crisis was being seen. However, although a component, there was no clear evidence to suggest that the cost of living crisis was bringing more Social Care users to the front door. There were concerns as winter approached and a South Tees Cold Weather Plan had been published earlier in the week. A copy of the plan would be provided to the Panel Members after the meeting.

The Head of Resident and Business Support advised that a variety of activity was currently taking place to ensure that funding from both the Council and other organisations was distributed appropriately. The first point was to ascertain the current position; an overarching communications policy would then be produced to ensure that communication was undertaken effectively and efficiently, using the appropriate method(s).

A discussion ensued in respect of food bank use and access to vouchers for support with food or fuel. It was explained that a £60 voucher scheme for parents whose children qualified for free school meals would be taking place over the coming week. The Council would be using a new voucher system and not issuing the funding via Paypoint as it had done previously, as there were occasions when trade for such items as alcohol and cigarettes had occurred. However, it was highlighted that the vast majority of individuals would use the voucher for its intended purpose. It was explained that support for vulnerable adults would be dealt with after Christmas; the Household Support Fund had been extended for a further 12 months, though Middlesbrough's allocation was yet to be confirmed.

The Chair thanked the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration and the Head of Resident and Business Support for the information provided.

**AGREED that:**

- 1. A copy of the South Tees Cold Weather Plan would be forwarded to the Panel Members for information; and**
- 2. The information, as provided, be noted.**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 11 JANUARY 2023**

The next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for Wednesday, 11 January 2023 at 10.30 a.m.

**NOTED**