

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2018

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2
HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB
ON THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 09:30**

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

MC Clarke	SK Dendy	J Gebbie	MJ Kearns
JE Lewis	AA Pucella	KL Rowlands	G Thomas
T Thomas	DBF White	A Williams	

Apologies for Absence

M Jones and PJ White

Officers:

Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Andrew Rees	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Tracy Watson	Scrutiny Officer

Invitees:

Megan Davies	Independent Professional Advocate, Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Richard Jones	CEO – Mental Health Matters Wales
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Richard Thomas	
Jason Tynan	Chief Executive, People First Bridgend

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor DBF White declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 – Advocacy – Adults and Children's Services as he was involved in putting together a café for those with mental health issues at Westward Community Centre which they have free of charge.

51. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Subject Overview and scrutiny Committee 2 of 12 July 2018 be accepted as a true and accurate record subject to the name of Councillor J Gebbie being added to the list of Councillors present.

52. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer reported on items which had been prioritised by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included the next item delegated to this Committee to consider which is on the topic of Additional Learning Needs. She stated that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 at its meeting on 5 September 2018 had requested that they be invited to the meeting for completeness and to assist this Committee with its scrutiny of the topic.

The Scrutiny Officer presented a list of further potential items for comment and prioritisation and requested the Committee identify any further items for consideration using the pre-determined criteria form.

Conclusions

- (1) That the Committee approved the feedback from the previous meeting of this Committee and noted the list of responses including any still outstanding;
- (2) The Committee noted that it had been delegated an item on Additional Learning Needs for its next meeting and that members of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 be invited to attend;
- (3) Identified further detail required for other items in the overall FWP at Table B of Appendix B;
- (4) Considered the completed criteria forms at Appendix C and determined whether it wished to add these proposed items to the FWP.

53. ADVOCACY - ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Head of Adult Social Care reported that the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a requirement on local authorities to ensure access is given to advocacy services and support is available to engage and participate when local authorities are exercising their statutory duties in relation to them. Local authorities are also required to arrange an independent professional advocate to facilitate the involvement of individuals in certain circumstances. She stated that an advocate is defined as an appropriate individual who can speak on behalf of someone who is facing barriers to communicating, understanding, weighing-up, or deciding on information related to services that they receive.

The Head of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that the Council had secured the support of the Golden Thread Advocacy Programme (GTAP) to assist in establishing a pilot advocacy scheme for adults and. GTAP had also supported the Council in engaging with local stakeholders to co-produce a new and fully compliant service model for independent professional advocacy. This was tested in a pilot IPA scheme for Adult Social Care which operated a Hub & Spoke approach using two independent service providers, linking with a wide range of support agencies. The Head of Adult Social Care outlined the referral routes and the range of advocacy services in the Advocacy Hub which had been developed to enable service users to access the correct services for their needs. She stated that the pilot service had been taken up by 62 service users requiring independent professional advocacy.

The Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that advocacy for children and young people had been commissioned through Western Bay and the existing provider for those services in Bridgend is delivered by Tros Gynnal Plant. She stated that while all partners are working to increase referrals and service delivery, the Welsh Government prescribed level of service is 528 individuals receiving 6605 hours of Independent Professional Advocacy, which equated to 12.4 users per month. An improvement in the number of referrals is being seen. Discussions are taking place with Cwm Taf Health Board on the commissioning of advocacy services in advance of the new health board arrangements being implemented.

The Committee referred to the specific support available to children and young people requiring advocacy services who have had a diagnosis and questioned what advocacy support is available to people awaiting diagnosis. Ms Megan Davies of Tros Gynnal Plant informed the Committee that access to advocacy would be dependent on whether someone was unhappy with a diagnosis. Advocacy would be provided to a young person awaiting a diagnosis and not to the parents. The Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer informed the Committee that the Council provides support to parent carers and there is scope to provide advocacy to support families. He stated that the Community Health Council advocacy complaints service would deal with complaints if there were delays in an individual receiving a diagnosis. The Chief Executive of

Mental Health Matters Wales informed the Committee that the advocacy hub will take the initial call requesting advocacy and who will determine which organisation is the most appropriate to take forward the request. The Head of Adult Social Care explained that the notion of the hub would be for the individual to be directed to the correct service.

A member of the Committee referred to the legal advocacy / litigation friend service within the hub and outlined instances where individuals had experienced difficulties in accessing those services. The Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer informed the Committee that since the inception of the pilot there is a need to embed the availability of the various advocacy services into the thinking of officers. He stated that partners will hold Bridgend advocacy meetings to highlight the different providers and advocacy services that are available as people are unaware of the services available. The Chief Executive of Mental Health Matters Wales informed the Committee that his organisation signposts individuals to the various advocacy services on its website and social media platforms. He explained the value of advocacy in that a Judge had recently stated in a case which his organisation had supported, that the outcome in the case would have been different had advocacy not been used. Mr Jason Tynan of People First Bridgend commented that his organisation also signposts individuals to advocacy services via its website and social media platforms.

The Committee questioned on average how many hours of advocacy are made available in accordance with the Welsh Government prescribed level of service. The Head of Children's Social Care stated that the targets had been set based on looked after children numbers on Wales. She anticipated there would be some flexibility depending on the needs of children and young people requiring advocacy. The representative of Tros Gynnal Plant commented that advocacy is issue based and some advocacy referrals can be dealt with quickly. Cases for advocacy vary considerably and are dependent on individual preferences.

The Committee referred to the Revenue Support Grant to support advocacy and questioned the duration of the ring-fencing of the funding and whether the funding could be at risk due to the pressures in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Head of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that the responsibility for advocacy had been identified in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. The authority had developed an Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) service as part of core funding. The current contract for IPA was for 2 years, with the possibility of extending the contract for a further 2 years' duration. She stated that the future budget was difficult to predict but the provision of advocacy services is a statutory requirement and is part of core funding. The Chief Executive of Mental Health Matters Wales informed the Committee that grant funding for advocacy had to be provided and had been expanded by the Welsh Government. Independent Advocacy for adults is relatively and there was a risk that funding may not be forthcoming from the Welsh Government. He suggested that Councils lobby the Welsh Government to for the retention of funding to support advocacy services. The Head of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that advocacy has been prioritised and supported within the authority.

The Committee questioned the availability of advocacy services within the community. The Head of Adult Social Care stated that a tender process had recently been completed and part of the remit of the hub is to promote advocacy services. She stated that the Bridgend Advocacy Network described by the Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer is intended to signpost people to services and will be embedded into peoples' thinking. The representative of People First Bridgend commented that People First Bridgend work closely with community groups.

A member of the Committee questioned whether people requiring advocacy would be represented at a sufficiently senior level when being interviewed by the police. The

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Head of Children's Social Care informed the Committee that it would be ensured that advocacy would be offered through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and that 40 police officers are based in the MASH. The Head of Adult Social Care that is being undertaken nationally on advocacy within the Golden Thread project. The Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer commented that there are providers of both statutory and non-statutory advocacy services. He stated that ABMU commission mental health advocacy which is accessed through Social Services. Areas outside the Social Services remit are non-statutory services. He stated that a small number of people can fall through the gap. He informed the Committee that there is a great deal of advocacy provision available, but not everyone would be able to fit into provision.

The Chief Executive of Mental Health Matters Wales informed the Committee that that IPA has made a difference to people and positive feedback had been received from the Princess of Wales Hospital where someone under threat of committing suicide had received help from advocacy.

The Committee asked whether it could be provided with anonymised case studies. The Chief Executive of Mental Health Matters Wales confirmed that he was able to provide case studies. The Head of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that the Directorate collects quarterly performance reports of case studies.

The Committee thanked all invitees for their attendance, particularly the external invitees as the Committee felt their contributions gave them valuable insight of the advocacy provision in Bridgend County.

Conclusions

Further Information

- Members asked to be provided with some anonymised case studies from Mental Health Matters Wales (MHMW).

Members recommended:

- That the Leader to write a letter to Welsh Government to lobby for funding for the delivery of IPA Service.
- That a letter to be sent to Welsh Government from the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Lobby for funding also.
- Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care. - Huw Irranca-Davies AM

54. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 11:08