

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 - MONDAY, 27 MARCH 2023

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2
HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET,
BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 27 MARCH 2023 AT 10:00**

Present

Councillor F D Bletsoe – Chairperson

S Aspey

D M Hughes

M Lewis

AJ Williams

Apologies for Absence

P Davies, P Ford, RL Penhale-Thomas, A Wathan and R Williams

Officers:

Lucy Beard	Scrutiny Officer
Jackie Davies	Head of Adult Social Care
Raeanna Grainger	Independent Reviewing Service Manager
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Jessica Mclellan	Scrutiny Officer
Iain McMillan	Group Manager - Case Management & Transition
Martin Morgans	Head of Performance and Partnership Services
Kathy Proudfoot	Carers Development Officer
Andrew Thomas	Group Manager Sports & Physical Activity

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Della Hughes and Jane Gebbie declared personal interests in Agenda item 4 as unpaid carers.

31. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of meetings of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 dated 3 November 2022 and 20 January 2023 be approved as a true and accurate record.

32. SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS AND ADULT CARERS

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing presented the report, the purpose of which was to inform the Committee of the requirements of the Carers Charter in Wales and the related areas of focus that can support unpaid carers to maintain their well-being and to describe the work taking place within Bridgend County Borough to support unpaid carers, to enable the Committee to consider how well the Council, and partners, support young carers and adult carers.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing and Members discussed the following:

- Support available to allow young carers to continue their education alongside their caring responsibilities.

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- Schools' Young Carer Policies and practical support in schools including help with work and applications for extra time for exams.
- The challenges faced by young carers during the pandemic, staying home with all family members without any respite care.
- The young carer advised Members that she found keeping in a routine, going for walks and partaking in online lessons helpful. She also felt that, since the pandemic, the benefits of the Young Carers Card had really improved matters and that she found real value in the Network.
- Any necessary improvements to support young carers highlighting the importance of identification and input from the Young Carers Steering Group.
- Members heard from a participant to Halo's six-week Carers Respite Programme who cares for her husband with Alzheimer's. She discussed the content of the Programme and that she had found it respectful, understanding and informative. She advised that organisation of care for her husband enabling her to attend the Programme was invaluable but asked that consideration be given to providing transport for participants who do not drive.
- The development of dementia support and engagement work by the Regional Partnership Board with input from a Dementia Coordinator to inform local and regional plans and services.
- The number and source of referrals to Adult Social Care, the percentage of carers who received advice and assistance and the number and outcomes of full carer needs assessments.
- The number of young carers assessments and how many were already known to the Authority.
- Funding for the support operated through Whitehead Ross and its focus on the individual needs of young carers.
- The availability of Carers Cards for adults through the new commissioned service from 1 April 2023, TuVida.
- The numbers and variety of carers providing positive comments regarding the Carers Wellbeing and Respite and Feel Good for Life programmes.
- An update on the successful Warm Welcome initiative and the wide range of resources and activities on offer.
- Identification of more carers and the role of communities and Community Coordinators.
- The extent of community support during the pandemic and importance of preventative services and timely statutory services, when needed.

The Chairperson advised that Members of the Committee who wanted to ask questions had all spoken, so as there were no further questions for the Invitees, thanked them for their attendance and advised that if they were not required for the next Item, that they may leave the meeting.

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee requested:

1. An overview of the support available to young carers in school and college and the support available to allow them to continue with their education alongside caring.

2. The DigiStory and case study referred to by Halo Leisure, which describes some of the challenges and experiences of unpaid carers.
3. A breakdown (represented in numbers rather than percentages) of the actions taken/results of the 362 contacts made to adult social care services on behalf of carers in 2021-22.
4. Of the 96 young carers assessments conducted since April 2022, a breakdown demonstrating how many were assessments of new carers and how many of the cases were already known to the service.

33. **CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) IMPROVEMENT CHECK VISIT TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES - 21 - 24 NOVEMBER 2022**

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing presented the report, the purpose of which was to present the Committee with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) report of their improvement check visit to Bridgend County Borough Council Children's Services during November 2022 and the associated updated Action Plan.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing and Members discussed the following:

- Thanks to the Deputy Head of Children's Services for his dedication and commitment during his time with the Authority.
- The number of areas identified as requiring further action and the budget necessary to support the improvements highlighting the cost of agency staff and the ongoing implementation of the Signs of Safety model.
- That announced and unannounced visits from CIW could be expected to monitor progress and that practice should be of a preferred standard regardless of whether or not the Service was under inspection.
- The Service improvement journey requiring focussed and strategic leadership and sustainable investment over time and the need to get the practice model right.
- Areas of pressure which are typical across all authorities such as recruitment challenges and areas which are atypical, such as the increase in referrals, particularly in children's social care, at a level which an analysis by the Institute of Public Care indicated would likely continue for at least 2 years.
- Numbers and management of open cases within each of the locality hubs and recording of referrals into the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service.
- Initiatives to improve recruitment including apprenticeships, international recruitment, investment in Grow Our Own and implementation of Social Work Support Officer roles and concerns regarding gaps in some services and reliance on agency staff requiring sustained action.
- Context around the blue, red, amber, green (BRAG) status' attributed to each 'area for improvement' in the Directorate's Action Plan.
- Placement sufficiency including the eliminating profit agenda and use of unregistered and out of county placements.
- Steps being taken to address the priority issue of child exploitation, including regional and partnership working.

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- The rapid review and measures to improve supervised contact between care experienced children and their families.

The Committee thanked the Deputy Head of Children's Services for his dedication and commitment during his time with the Authority and wished him well for the future.

The Chairperson advised that Members of the Committee who wanted to ask questions had all spoken, so as there were no further questions for the Invitees, thanked them for their attendance and advised that they may leave the meeting.

Following detailed consideration and discussions with Officers and Cabinet Members, the Committee made the following Recommendations:

1. Concern was expressed regarding the sustainability of the budget to support the budget pressures in the Social Services Directorate and the Committee recommended that the budget setting process be started at an earlier stage to enable cross party input to assist Cabinet in what could be a potentially challenging Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. That advice be issued to all Directorates regarding a standardisation of the BRAG Status' used in Reports and Action Plans to ensure a consistent approach and meaning.

and the Committee requested:

3. In relation to the 32% increase in contacts/referrals during the period of April to August 2022, the number of contacts to which it refers.
4. A copy of the Exploitation Screening Tool being trialled in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, a copy of the presentation that was provided to headteachers regarding exploitation and any update from the Cwm Taf Task and Finish Group relating to best practice in the approach to exploitation.
5. A summary of the recommendations and the short-term mechanisms which were initiated following the rapid review of supervised contact.

34. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Committee with the Forward Work Programme (FWP) in Appendix A for discussion and consideration, requested any specific information the Committee identified to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wished to attend, requested the Committee to identify any further items for consideration on the FWP having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3, asked the Committee to note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meeting in Appendix B and asked the Committee to note that the FWP and Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members requested that the report regarding Early Intervention to Reduce Care Experienced Children and Key Pressures including IAA be scheduled as soon as

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possible and welcomed a Members briefing session on the recent Child Practice Review.

There were no further items identified for consideration on the FWP having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 4.3, and this could be revisited at the next meeting.

There were no requests to include specific information in the item for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approved the FWP in Appendix A, subject to the incorporation of the above requests, noted the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in Appendix B and noted that the FWP, Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet and any updates from the Committee would be reported to the next meeting of COSC.

35. **URGENT ITEMS**

None.

The meeting closed at 13:09