

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 6 APRIL 2016 AT 10.00 AM

Present

Councillor D Sage – Chairperson

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| M Butcher | N Clarke | HJ David | PA Davies |
| EM Hughes | RC Jones | LC Morgan | M Thomas |

Officers:

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| Kym Barker | Scrutiny Officer |
| Sarah Daniel | Democratic Services Officer - Committees |

Officers:

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| Councillor HJ David | Deputy Leader |
| Susan Cooper | Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing |
| Jackie Davies | Head of Adult Social Care |
| Mark Wilkinson | Group Manager – Learning Disability |

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:

Councillor P John
Councillor B Jones

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were received from the following Members

Councillor N Clarke – Personal Interest in item 5 as a volunteer for Guide Dogs Cymru

Councillor D Sage – Prejudicial Interest in Item 6 as he was in receipt of Direct Payments

Councillor P Davies was nominated by Members to Chair the meeting for Item 6

38. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 11 February 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

39. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report to the Committee on the items due to be considered at the Committee's next meeting to be held following the Annual General Meeting of Council

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Noted the topics due to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be scheduled at the Annual General Meeting of Council
2. Determined the invitees to be invited to attend, any specific information they would like the invitees to provide and any research that it would like the Overview and Scrutiny Unit to undertake in relation to the meeting.

40. PREVENTION, WELLBEING AND LOCAL COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATION

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing provided the Committee with an update on the development of preventative services and local community coordination in line with the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

She explained to Members that the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force on 6 April 2016. The Act places a strong emphasis on the development of services that prevent or delay the need for formal care and support services. She added that the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 has been coordinated by a project team in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and included work on:

- Awareness raising sessions
- Provision of information about the Act and the Codes of Practice
- Provision of Information on the BCBC Website and Intranet
- Training Events
- Development of Policies and Procedures

Members commended the work of the Local Community Coordinator for Bridgend. A Member asked where the Local Community Coordinators were based and if any were based South of the M4. The Deputy Leader stated that there were currently three based in the Llynfi Valley which was part of a pilot carried out in that particular area. He added that this was now planned to be rolled out to the whole of BCBC.

A Member asked if the current savings set aside for the project was enough or if this would diminish over the coming years. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that the Authority would need to work hard with the third sector to ensure that it becomes a core service. She added that the Directorate would be working across the Authority to ensure that Wellbeing and Prevention was understood by all staff. The Deputy Leader added that it would be informative if a representative from the health services could be invited to future Scrutiny Committee meetings to discuss the subject.

A Member referred to the registers of sight and hearing impaired and other disabled people and asked who owned and who was able to access the information. The Head of Adult Social Care advised the Committee that this was a new responsibility and the register would form part of a new IT system that had been developed. She added that the Authority is signed up to a data sharing protocol that all individuals on the register would have given their consent for their information to be held. She confirmed that the information held on the registers was protected. A Member further queried how accurate the registers were if consent for their information to be held on the registers was not given from all individuals. The Head of Adult Social Care advised that whilst it was down to individual consent whether they wanted their information to be included on the registers, they had not yet had anyone not give their consent.

A Member queried the accuracy of an accessibility guide that provided details of accessibility information for venues such as restaurants, community centres and libraries that was launched on disabledgo.com. The Head of Adult Social Care responded that

she would feedback to the team responsible for the website and have them check the accuracies of the guide.

A Member questioned what support service was available on the weekends as the local community hubs operated Monday – Friday 9am-5pm. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing advised that she was aware that there was a need to focus on the service that was offered and stated that third sector organisations were able to operate outside of core business hours so they would look at how they worked. She added that new software was currently being developed to enable access to support online outside of core hours. A Member stated that there was a high percentage of older people that were not IT literate and unable to access the support, Members suggested that being able to speak to someone out of hours should be available. Members also suggested reinstating the bulletin and utilising resources such as GP surgeries, job centres and police to share the information available to them.

A Member raised concern at the lack of access for disabled people to some publicly run clubs in the Bridgend area and stated that more should be done so that they are able to access and participate in the activities, in particular Bridgend Bowls Club.

Conclusions

The Committee noted the report, which provided Members with an update on the development of preventative services and local community co-ordination in line with the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

- Members commended the work of the Local Community Co-ordinator for the Bridgend locality.
- Members asked about the locations of the Local Community Co-ordinators and whether any were located south of the M4. The Deputy Leader responded that the pilot carried out in the Llynfi Valley would now be rolled-out to other areas, and that a substantial programme of staff training had taken place to enable this.
- Members queried whether current funding for the work is enough or whether this may diminish over the next few years. The Officer responded that it was vital that this work becomes a core service and that the Authority needs to work with the third sector and seek out different funding streams. The Deputy Leader suggested that, as the programme supports savings for health services, a representative from health services is invited to future Scrutiny Committee meetings where this subject is on the agenda in future.
- Members raised queries regarding the security of the information held on registers about individuals using services for visually impaired people and asked who has ownership and access to the systems holding the information. The Officer responded that the register is protected, that the Authority is signed up to a robust data sharing protocol and that all individuals on the register would have given their consent to their details being held.
- Members further queried the completeness of the information on the register considering that some people may not consent to being on it. The Officer responded that they were unaware of any resistance from individuals to being on the register and that it was important to make people aware of the benefits of being on it.
- Members queried the accuracy of some of the information provided on the 'disabledgo' website, and also raised concerns regarding the lack of information for visually impaired people. The Officer responded that they would feed the concerns back to the team responsible for the website.
- Members raised concerns that day services hubs only operate during working hours, Monday to Friday. The Officer responded that there is a need to shift the focus of services and support and gave the example of third sector organisations and other groups who routinely operate outside of traditional working hours. The Officer added

that software was being developed to enable access to information and support outside of traditional working hours.

- Members raised concerns regarding the lack of information in a variety of formats for people who do not or cannot use ICT. Members suggested solutions such as reinstating the bulletin, utilising staff resources such as GPs, district nurses, social workers and the Police and using locations such as job centres. The Officer agreed that there should be a choice of formats.
- Members raised concerns regarding the need for prioritisation of resources and funding for services in the community by health service providers and Welsh Government, and commented that while they commended health services in general there appears to be little evidence that they are fully committed to supporting prevention and wellbeing work based out in communities.
- Members raised concerns regarding the lack of physical access for people with disabilities to some activities provided by third sector or partner organisations, for example the bowls club.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommends that representatives from a variety of roles within the health services are invited to future Scrutiny Committee meetings where this subject is on the agenda in future.
- The Committee recommends that information on the disabledgo.com website is checked for accuracy and that information for visually impaired people is included.
- The Committee recommends that further consideration is given to the provision of information regarding services in various formats and locations to address potential exclusion of those who do not have access to ICT or who can't or don't want to use it.
- The Committee recommends that the offer of activities from third sector or partner organisations to support wellbeing includes accessibility to ensure that the activities are inclusive for all to participate in.

Further information requested

- The Committee requests further information on 'Age Friendly Communities' to illustrate what this entails and what the outcomes will be for individuals and communities.
- The Committee requests copies of leaflets currently used to raise awareness of services.
- The Committee requests information on the locations and projects covered by the current Local Community Co-ordinators

41. DIRECT PAYMENTS

Councillor D Sage left the meeting for the Direct Payments Item as he had earlier declared a prejudicial interest as he is in receipt of Direct Payments. Councillor P Davies chaired the meeting for this item.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing gave a report to Committee of the current situation with the provision of Direct Payments and the plans for the development of the use of Direct Payments in line with the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

She explained that Direct Payments were cash payments made to a person who was eligible for care and support from social services, to enable them to arrange and pay for their own care and support. Direct Payments were a different way of delivering social services responsibilities where there was an assessed eligible need. The main purpose of Direct Payments were to give people:

- Flexibility over when their care was provided and the exact nature of the care.
- Choice and control over who they have caring for them and the standards and quality of that care.

A Member asked what percentage of payments made were paid to employ personal assistants. The Group Manager Learning Disability stated that payments were made monthly and that on average £14 an hour was paid to personal assistants however this could vary a lot depending on what providers were used.

A Member queried the process where service users had not fully utilised their payments. The Group Manager, Learning Disability advised that payments were regularly monitored and instances where payments had not been used the Authority had reclaimed the amount and there had also been instances where the monthly payments had been reduced as a result. He added that invoices were submitted by recipients of Direct Payments to detail how the funds had been spent.

Members queried how often payments were made and how robust the process was. The Head of Adult Social Care stated that payments were made in advance on a monthly basis to enable service users to pay their employees in a timely manner. She added that payments were reviewed regularly and adjustments made to payments where required.

A Member was concerned at the complications that came with the Direct Payments in that those in receipt of them would become an employer and questioned what support was available for them to manage the process. The Head of Adult Social Care advised that when Direct Payments are taken up there is a lot of discussion with the recipient about their responsibilities as an employer and support and advice relating to banking and tax as well as their specific needs to determine the package of care they require. She added the process is closely monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

A Member raised concerns regarding the funding for the contract of a service provider. The Group Manager Learning Disability stated that the contract would be for three years with the option to extend and that the contract included £100k staffing costs.

Conclusions

The Committee noted the report, which provided Members with an update on the current situation with the provision of Direct Payments and the plans for the development of the use of Direct Payments in line with the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Members asked how it was assessed where the Direct Payments were to be spent as in some instances visits to sporting events had been proposed. The Head of Adult Social Care stated that there is a case management process in place for each person in receipt of Direct Payments and from that there are clear outcomes with clear responsibilities for Wellbeing. She added that during the process they consult with the individual, their family members and their GPs to determine the best care package for their requirements whilst ensuring that they were promoting choice for the individual.

Members asked what suitable safeguards were in place for people in receipt of Direct Payments that had a dependency on drugs or alcohol. The Group Manager Learning Disability stated that they would not make cash payments to a person with a dependency on drugs or alcohol as this could potentially add to the problem. He added that mechanisms were in place for monitoring the provision of payments.

- Members asked what percentage on average of Direct Payments paid to individuals was used to employ a Carer. The Officer responded that most people employ a Personal Assistant at a payment of approximately £14 per hour.
- Members queried the process applied where an individual has not used all of their payment. The Officer responded that the payments are monitored and that where payment has not been used or used inappropriately the payment may be reduced and that there have been instances where this has happened.
- Members queried how robust the monitoring of payments was, the Officer responded that this was carried out regularly and that a balance had to be struck between encouraging individuals to self-manage the payments and ensuring that checks are carried out appropriately.
- Members raised concerns regarding the funding, scope and length of contract for the commission of a service provider. The Officer responded that the contract would be for three years initially with the option to extend and that the contract includes staffing costs.
- Members raised concerns regarding the competitiveness of the offer from BCBC compared to other providers. The Officer responded that there is a need to raise awareness of the benefits and advantages of Direct Payments for individuals, for example via social workers, and that in future the service provider would be responsible for explaining this to potential clients.
- Members queried several of the new additions to the legislation and guidance and asked what the 'suitable safeguards' referred to in the requirement to enable individuals with a drug or alcohol dependency to request payments with suitable safeguards meant. The Officer responded that an alternative to cash payments could be an option where there may be a potential for payments to be used inappropriately by an individual.
- Members raised further queries regarding the apparent tension between prohibiting local authorities from stipulating how payments should be used and the requirement for 'suitable safeguards' in the case of people with drug or alcohol dependencies. The Officer responded that mechanisms for monitoring needed to be in place to ensure that the Authority is carrying out the provision of payments as required by the Act.
- Members queried how assessments were carried out regarding the potentially large and diverse variety of activities may qualify for payment, for example where individuals have proposed activities such as visiting sports events or massage sessions. The Officer responded that new methods of assessing and evaluating requests need to be developed.
- Members requested that this item be revisited in future and that reports include information on how the payment system is being monitored, how outcomes for individuals are being identified and monitored and the type of activities being requested by individuals to enable them to achieve their personal outcomes.

Further information requested

- The Committee requests further information in the form of case studies to enable them to understand how the system works and how accessible the paper work and application forms are. The request for case studies is as follows:
 - A client with few needs - how their needs are assessed, the paperwork that has to be filled for direct payment, typical rate of payment, how the payment is paid and the outcomes for the client.
 - A client with greater needs - how their needs are assessed, the paperwork that has to be filled for direct payment, typical rate of payment, how the payment is paid and the outcomes for the client.

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- A client who has not used all of their payment and therefore has to reimburse, how this was discovered and if and how this has impacted on wellbeing outcomes for the client.
- The Committee requests further information on the criteria for a 'suitable person' when assessing applications for payments.

42. **NOMINATION TO STANDING BUDGET RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PANEL**

The Scrutiny Officer gave a report to Committee to seek nominations for the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel.

RESOLVED: That Councillor PA Davies and Councillor M Butcher (Reserve) were appointed.

43. **URGENT ITEMS**

None

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm