

**MINUTES OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 9
MARCH 2017**

Present:

Councillor D Coleman (in the Chair)

Councillors

| | | |
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| Collett | O'Hara | Stansfield |
| Critchley | Scott | L Taylor |

In Attendance:

Councillor Graham Cain, Cabinet Secretary (Resilient Communities)
Councillor Amy Cross, Cabinet Member Adult Services and Health
Councillor Kath Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning
Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Leisure Services

Ms Karen Smith, Deputy Director of People (Adult Services)
Mrs Val Raynor, Head of Commissioning
Mrs Hilary Wood, Head of Business Support and Resources
Ms Kate Aldridge, Service Manager, Care and Support
Ms Jo Humphries, Integrated Commissioning Manager
Mrs Ruth Henshaw, Engagement and Intelligence Officer
Mr Chris Kelly, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser (Scrutiny)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 January 2017 were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Committee noted that there were no applications for public speaking on this occasion.

4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Committee considered and agreed to note the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions within the portfolio of the Cabinet Secretary, taken since the last meeting of the Committee.

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5 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2016/2017

Mrs Ruth Henshaw, Delivery Development Officer presented the performance against the Council Plan 2015/2020 for the period 1 October 2016 to 31 December 2016 and highlighted the key exceptions.

Mrs Henshaw reported that of the indicators where data was available, there were three indicators in which performance had deteriorated in Quarter 3 2016/2017:

- Number of referrals / rate of referrals to social care per 10,000 children;
- Number of looked after children / rate of looked after children per 10,000 population; and
- Percentage of children who became subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time.

Mrs Henshaw also drew the Committee's attention to an additional exception report that had been provided for the new indicator of 'Percentage of long-term service users and an annual review'.

The Committee noted that in relation to the 'Number of referrals /rate of referrals to Social Care per 10,000 children' that the Corporate Delivery Unit was now four weeks into a mapping exercise with Children's Services, with the aim to determine where attention was required to be focused to deliver improvements. Members queried the level of progress of the mapping exercise and Councillor Cain advised that the review was progressing well, with front door services having already been considered and work being currently undertaken in relation to safeguarding children. He added that the whole of Children's Services was currently under review as a means to prepare for and support the new Director of Children's Services, who would be in post from late April 2017. Members requested that an update of the progress of the review be presented to the Committee at its next meeting as part of the Children's Services Overview report.

The Committee noted the number of looked after children target of 443 and challenged how realistic the target was given that there were currently 520 looked after children. Councillor Cain advised that the current service review would consider the steps required to reduce the number and further work would be undertaken with partner agencies to ensure that there was consistency in dealing with potential looked after children. He added that whilst the target may seem hard to achieve, he considered it to be set at an appropriate level that could be achieved, noting it had been lower than the target 18 months ago.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

Background papers: None.

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6 ADULT SERVICES OVERVIEW REPORT

Ms Smith, Director of Adult Services, presented the Adult Services Overview report to the Committee.

Members noted the high volume of calls to the Vitaline service and queried whether there were appropriate staffing levels to cope with the demand. Ms Smith reported that she considered there to be appropriate staffing levels and provided details shift patterns for workers throughout the night. Upon further questioning from Members, Ms Smith provided details regarding the different levels of service that were offered by Vitaline and of the steps that would be taken in the event of an emergency.

Members raised questions relating to the Phoenix Centre after noting the occupancy rate of 108% based on the service having four beds. Ms Smith advised that the service had capacity to escalate the service to six beds but that additional staff had to be placed on the rota in that event. She noted that the service usually operated between four and six beds.

The Committee noted the difficulties that Adult Social Care had endured with completing annual reviews across all teams and the steps being taken to address the situation. Ms Smith explained that additional staff had been recruited to address the backlog and that substantial progress was being made into completing the outstanding reviews. Upon further questioning, Ms Smith advised the Committee that the service still prioritised new assessments, in which the details of the case were unknown. She also explained that the review process had been streamlined as far as possible with elements being removed that were not considered strictly necessary. However, the Care Act determined the framework of what was required in a review.

Members enquired further regarding the details of what was considered as part of a review and Ms Smith advised that officers would consider what care package was currently in place for a client and its objectives, and whether there had been any changes in the clients' circumstances, including the involvement of family and friends. She advised that there was a lot of information considered in a review and that officers would always take into account the capacity and communication capabilities of the client.

The Committee noted the table of clients reviewed contained within the report and requested that for future reports a key be provided.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

Background papers: None.

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7 THEMATIC DISCUSSION - CARE AT HOME SERVICES

Mrs Raynor, Head of Commissioning, provided the Committee with an overview of the Care at Home services available to residents in Blackpool, noting that the term 'Care at Home' covered three distinct service areas:

- Care at Home for Adults
- Supported Living
- Care at Home for Children

Mrs Raynor summarised the various methods by which care and support could be provided and informed Members of the national concerns relating to instability in the domiciliary care market and the difficulty experienced across the sector in attracting and retaining quality staff, due to low wages and lone working.

With regards to one of the contracted domiciliary care providers operating in Blackpool, it was noted that there was a correction to the information provided in the report in that Lifeways had been re-inspected by the Care Quality Commission and now had a rating of 'Good', following a report published in October 2016.

The Committee challenged the steps being taken to improve recruitment and retention of staff. Ms Smith advised that care providers in Blackpool, due to the limited amount of private work available, required the local authority to subsidise their ability to pay at least the National Living Wage and therefore every penny increase on the hourly rate would cost the Council £40,000. Ms Smith explained that there were frequent negotiations with providers relating to wages and that as a result of the Council having limited resources to invest further in care providers, an effort was made to consider other services that could be provided in kind, for example parking permits so that carers could park in residents' parking areas outside of their client's property. Ms Smith also noted that further work was being undertaken across the health and social care sectors in Blackpool to better market jobs as a career to be proud of and to advertise the benefits of living in the area.

In relation to the terms and conditions of care workers, Ms Smith advised that when contracting with care providers, a number of expected practices and behaviours to be established were proposed, including no zero hours contracts, all time at work being paid and in conditions relating to sick pay.

The Committee discussed the length of care visits and issues relating to care workers travelling between visits. It was reported that care visits of less than 30 minutes were no longer commissioned and that travelling time was paid in the hourly rate, so that visits were not rushed. Ms Smith advised that although Blackpool was a geographically small borough so travelling issues were not as significant as in some other larger local authority areas, work was being undertaken to consider a neighbourhood or zoned approach to provision to reduce travelling time further.

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Members questioned how care visits were monitored, with it being noted that many visits would be to vulnerable individuals undertaken by one care worker. Ms Smith acknowledged that it was a risk area, especially as many clients were older people that did not like to complain or were not capable of making a complaint. She advised that Adult Services was incorporating monitoring visits to service users and that clients were advised of how to make a complaint if they felt they were receiving a poor service.

Questions were raised in regards to the uptake of the Direct Payments scheme. Ms Smith explained that there had been an increase in the take up of the scheme but the majority of clients preferred to go through Adult Services, as under the scheme clients became the employer of their carer. Upon further questioning, Ms Smith advised that ensuring appropriate care for people using the Direct Payment Scheme was a risk area, but that there were caseworkers that monitored the care provided.

The Committee discussed the funding local authorities received for domiciliary care, noting it had reduced by 20% between 2009 and 2015. Councillor Cross advised the Committee of the Chancellor's recent budget announcements relating to domiciliary care and stated that whilst the boost to social care funding over the next three years was welcomed, the funding that would be provided did not correlate with the actual cost of care, which was far greater. Councillor Cross reported that the Local Government Association was working with Ministers to find a longer term solution to adult social care issues and that there was due to be a Green Paper produced later in 2017 to consider the issues further.

The Committee noted the Care Quality Commission inspection results and questioned how improvements for the providers rated as 'Requires Improvement' were ensured. Ms Smith noted there were two contracted providers rated as 'Requires Improvement' and provided Members with details of the reasons for the inspection results. She explained to Members that she considered that there was a good quality monitoring service in place and a good relationship with the Care Quality Commission, which helped to ensure improvements kept being made, including for the care providers currently rated as 'Good'.

A question was raised in relation to the rebranding of Sevacare and Ms Smith reported that details would be investigated and provided for Committee Members.

The Committee agreed:

- 1) To note the report
- 2) To receive information relating to the rebranding of Sevacare, to be circulated outside of the meeting.

Background papers: None.

8 THEMATIC DISCUSSION - INTERMEDIATE CARE SERVICES

The Committee considered the report on Intermediate Care Services.

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Members noted that, with regards to the Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre, the length of stay had decreased from an average of 42 days per person prior to April 2016 to 29 days and yet the number of people using the service had increased. Members queried the impact of the reduction in length of stay and Ms Aldridge, Service Manager, Care and Support, advised that changes in the admission figures to the service could be in part attributed to going from two providers of residential rehabilitation service, to one. She reported that there had been an increase in admissions following a stay in hospital but a reduction in people being admitted from home, which was considered to be as a result of the impact of other services helping to keep people at home. Ms Aldridge also noted that there had consistently been vacancies at the Centre.

The Committee raised questions relating to the percentage of people discharged from the Assessment and Rehabilitation Centre still being at home when the 91 day follow up check was undertaken. Ms Aldridge reported that 74% of people discharged from the service were able to return home and of those 74%, 96% had still been at home when the follow up check had been undertaken 91 days later. She advised that those no longer still at home would be in long term residential care or would have died. Upon further questioning, Ms Aldridge advised that not all deaths would be unexpected as the service did help some people in poor states of health, with the aim of helping them to return home rather than go into residential care.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

Background papers: None.

9 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The Chairman presented the workplan to the Committee and highlighted the Implementation of Recommendations' table.

The Committee agreed:

1. To approve the Scrutiny Workplan.
2. To note the 'Implementation of Recommendations' table.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 27 April 2017 commencing at 6pm in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.45 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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