

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 7 November 2017

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Ian Claymore
Cllr Barry Findlay
Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Linda Leach (Chair)
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Patricia Patten (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Tersaim Singh

Employees

David Watts
Louise Haughton
Alison Shannon
Dawn Williams

Service Director Adults
Principal Social Worker
Finance Business Partner
Head of Service Safeguarding

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Sandra Samuels and Linda Sanders, Independent chair of the City of Wolverhampton's Safeguarding Boards
- 2 **Declarations of Interest**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 **Minutes of previous meetings**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters arising**
With reference to the previous discussion about the Draft People Directorate Commissioning Strategy, the panel queried how members comments on the previous plans were considered and the timeline for the publication of the easy read version of the document. David Watts advised that the panel that the revised draft is currently

being consulted on and previous comments of the panel will be considered. David Watts advised that an easy read version had been prepared and would be shared with the panel.

Minute No. 5: Wolverhampton's Approach to Tackling Modern Slavery.

The panel expressed their concern about the delay in receiving the information requested by the panel.

The Scrutiny Officer advised the panel that he would contact Karen Samuels to check progress and share any response when received.

The panel commented on the failure to send papers out on the due date and requested that the issue is raised with senior managers. The scrutiny officer agreed to refer the matter to the Scrutiny Manager for a response and would report back to a future meeting of the panel.

- 5 **Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-19 to 2019-20**
Alison Shannon, Finance Business Partner, introduced the report and outlined key aspects of the draft budget proposals for 2018-19 and the consultation timetable. The panel were advised that there were no new budget savings proposals that relate to its remit.

The panel were invited to comment on the budget reduction proposals previously presented and the consultation plans.

The panel queried the reference in the report to older people promoting independence project and the increase in the number of reviews. The panel queried how this work would be affected by budget savings proposals. The panel also queried if a person's care needs would be re-assessed in the future, if the level of support was reduced following an assessment.

David Watts, Director of Adults Services, advised the panel that a person's needs would be monitored and if their needs change then they will be re-assessed. The Director of Adults Services added that in some circumstances a review of a person's needs could lead to an increase in the level of care provided. The Director of Adults Services advised the panel that 73% of assessed cases resulted in no change in the level of support provided.

The Director of Adults Services commented on the headline Government announcement of an extra £2 billion for adult social care, but advised the panel this was not recurring funding and the amount would be reduced annually. As a result, the Council had to consider how best to use the money and respond to the challenge in meeting national priority of Department of Health to reduce the number of delayed transfers of care, and changes in local needs.

The Director of Adults Services added that the Government had planned to publish a Green Paper setting out plans to create a more sustainable financial model in response to concerns that the level of funding was not enough to meet demand. However, the timetable for publication had been delayed and no date has been set when Government will publish its proposals.

The panel expressed concern about the risk to people either living alone or limited family support experiencing financial hardship, due to changes in the welfare benefit rules. The Director of Adults Services advised the panel about the work of the welfare rights team who can offer support to people wanting to challenge decisions about their benefits. The panel were advised that the team had been very successful in challenging decisions at appeal hearings.

The panel discussed the quality of care given to residents and wanted assurance about the checks done that the level of care expected is being delivered. The Director of Adults Services commented on work of the quality assurance team to check that the services are being delivered to the required standard.

The Director of Adults Services commented that as alternative way of people taking control of the service received was to consider [personalised social care budgets](#) which would give a person with disabilities to have more control of the services received.

The panel queried the work being done to check that the Council is getting value for money from the services that are commissioned. The Director of Adults Services commented on the commissioning process and work done to deliver more efficient care services.

Resolved:

The panel comments on the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy to be submitted to Scrutiny Board.

6 **Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report**

Dawn Williams, Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults, introduced the report of behalf of Linda Sanders, Independent Chair of Adult Safeguarding Board. The Head of Safeguarding gave an overview of the main findings and recommendations of the annual report 2016/17 and the work done to improve performance and achievements.

The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults referred the panel to the overall conclusion of the Board that safeguarding adults during this period was considered to be effective and there was a strong commitment among the partner agencies to work towards improving practice.

The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults commented on future work of the Safeguarding Board to look at the issue of violence against women and girls and its links to the areas highlighted as a priority to promote the wellbeing of groups identified as being at risk.

The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults, commented on the work done to improve the quality of services offered by the different partner agencies.

The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults, commented on the mixed results of survey work done by Wolverhampton Healthwatch with adults who had experienced a safeguarding review. The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults commented on the work done in response to the comments received.

The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults, commented on the impact of changes made to the work of the MASH and the benefits gained from professionals working together to share intelligence.

The Head of Safeguarding – Children and Adults, commented on how learning from case studies had been used to improve future practice.

Resolved:

The panel welcomed the report and wanted to formally record its appreciation to partners represented on Safeguarding Adults Board for their work and the progress made against key priorities.

7 Update on Mental Capacity Act - Deprivation of Liberty(DoLS)

David Watts, Director of Adults Services, introduced the briefing paper which gave an update on the legislation regarding deprivation of liberty safeguards(DoLS) and the performance of Wolverhampton against national standards.

The Director of Adults Services advised the panel that following a legal judgement in March 2014 the definition of where an independent assessment is needed was changed to cover a wider group of situations than before.

As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of cases of people lacking mental capacity and receiving care homes or hospitals that had to be assessed or re-assessed following a change in circumstances – for example, a person moving from the care home to the hospital would require a further assessment.

The Director of Adults Services advised the panel of the work done to reduce the backlog of assessment – the number of cases had been reduced from 253 in July 2017 to 17.

The Director of Adults Services advised the panel that the Council had absorbed the significant costs involved in the DoLS assessment and highlighted the challenges involved in ensuring full compliance with the legal judgement. The Director of Adults Services advised the panel this decision to extend the criteria and the costs involved had been challenged in a later case at the Supreme Court. However, the decision was upheld. This has added a great financial pressure on local authorities because of the requirements to carry out an increased number of assessments.

The Law Commission have recommended changes to the law to deal with the issue but it is unlikely to find time in the Government's legislative timetable to make the necessary changes to reduce the numbers of people who require an assessment.

Resolved:

The panel welcomed the report and noted the progress made to comply with legislative requirements and court judgements.

8 Social Work Health Check - Wolverhampton

Louise Haughton, Principle Social Worker, presented the main findings of the annual adult social work health check 2017. The Principle Social Worker commented that it was a largely positive report. The response rate had increased from the previous years and most social workers reported that they were managing their caseload – this figure had remained relatively static during the previous three years.

The panel discussed the findings in more detail and issues of concern – the number of staff reporting feelings of stress and numbers who supervision sessions cancelled. The Principle Social Worker welcomed the positive comments on the number of social workers reporting getting good support from their manager and the high proportion who want to stay with the Council.

The Principle Social Worker commented on the work done to create a learning organisation – this has been achieved through regular team briefings and the introduction of a quality assurance framework.

The panel discussed the methodology of the survey and conclusions reached and need to consider the responses with caution as this may not be representative of the views of most social workers.

The Principle Social Worker commented on the increased use of modern technology as part of the digital transformation programme to help social workers to record information in a timely and efficient way.

The current Care First System will be updated shortly which will help to further improve the situation. The Principle Social Worker advised that a strength based approach which has been introduced to children's social work teams will be extended in 2018 to include adults – the new redesigned services will help to reduce bureaucracy and bring in new ways of working.

The Principle Social Worker commented on the action plan developed in response to the results of the health check survey to make the necessary changes.

Resolved:

1. The panel welcomed the report and the progress made detailed in the social work health check 2017.
2. The panel agreed to receive a copy of the Health Check Survey action plan when available.