

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 19 January 2021

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Olivia Birch
Cllr Val Evans (Chair)
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Zee Russell

In Attendance

Cllr Linda Leach Cabinet Member Adults

Employees

Courtney Abbott

Advanced Practitioner for Quality and
Improvement

Lynsey Kelly

Head of Community Safety

Hannah Pawley

Community Safety Manager

Keisha Harper

Domestic Abuse Specialist

Earl Piggott-Smith

Scrutiny Officer

Jennifer Rogers

Principal Social Worker (Interim)

Julia Cleary

Scrutiny and Systems Manager

Martin Stevens

Scrutiny Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **Welcome and Introductions**

Cllr Val Evans, Chair, welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and advised it was being live streamed to the press and public. A recording of the meeting would be available for viewing on the Council's website at a future date.

2 **Meeting procedures to be followed**

Cllr Evans explained the protocol to be followed during the meeting for asking questions and reminded everyone that microphones should be muted and cameras off, unless they have been invited to speak. Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, confirmed the list of people in attendance.

3 Apologies

Apologies were received from the following member of the panel:

Cllr Lynne Moran

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

5 Minutes of previous meeting

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

6 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

7 Implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020

Hannah Pawley, Community Safety Manager, and Keisha Harper, Domestic Abuse Specialist, gave a joint presentation on the work being done and planned to prepare for the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill.

The Domestic Abuse Specialist briefly outlined the progress of the Bill and the background to an announcement by the then Prime Minister of plans to transform the way the Government thinks about and tackles domestic abuse.

The Bill is currently going through Parliament. The Bill is having third reading in the House of Lords to consider amendments during the committee stage. The Bill is due to be implemented in April 2021.

The Domestic Abuse Specialist outlined the four main objectives of the Bill relating to domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Bill has seven key parts. For example, the Bill will create the statutory definition of domestic abuse. This would involve changes such as lowering the age from 18 to 16 years to ensure that children are included as victims or witnessing seeing or experiencing domestic abuse and recognising that domestic abuse is not just physical but also includes the idea of coercive control, and different forms of abuse such as psychological and economic. The Bill will introduce the post of Domestic Abuse Commissioner who will be responsible for overseeing and leading national public policy on tackling domestic abuse.

The Community Safety Manager outlined the new duties that the Bill will place on local authorities. The Bill will place additional duties on local authorities in responding to domestic abuse. Local authorities will have to identify or establish a local partnership board that will be responsible for overseeing the response to domestic abuse and the implementation of the Bill. The local authority will have to provide support and safe accommodation in the City for victims of domestic abuse and their children. The local authority will also be required to commission a robust needs assessment and report back annually to Government on progress.

The Community Safety Manager gave further details of the statutory duty for the local authority to provide safe accommodation and specifically to support all victims of domestic abuse and their children. The duty will include things like the provision of refugees and specialist rescue support, both commissioned and non-commissioned accommodation.

The Community Safety Manager commented on the support for people with protected characteristics or complex needs, in terms of the provision of face to face services and translators.

The Bill will introduce a Capacity Building Fund which is intended to help authorities meet their new responsibilities. Each tier one authority will receive £50,000 from a national budget of £6 million to prepare and conduct a needs assessment.

The expected outcome of this work will be increased engagement with key partners which will help facilitate expertise and information sharing about current local provision both commissioned and non-commissioned.

The Community Safety Manager commented on the expected outcomes of the fund.

The Community Safety Manager commented on the proposed next steps for implementing the Bill.

The panel thanked the Community Safety Manager and Domestic Abuse Specialist for their presentation. The panel welcomed the plans to map provision of commissioned and non-commissioned safe accommodation and support providers across the City.

The panel queried how the views of the victims of domestic abuse will be captured and considered during the needs assessment work, in response to concerns about the provision of support services. The Community Safety Manager responded that the needs assessment work will enable the Council to hold accommodation support providers to account for the services they have agreed to provide to victims of domestic abuse.

The panel queried the basis for the allocation of capacity building fund and how it can be used. The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that every local authority will be given £50,000 to prepare for the implementation of the Bill. The money will be used to fund the cost of the mapping and engagement work to be completed before April 2021.

The panel queried the proposed next steps to be taken in preparation. The Community Safety Manager advised the panel of the work being done with partners to prepare for the implementation. The service has identified the key partners working in the domestic abuse specialist provider sphere, for example, The Haven has been commissioned to provide services in the City.

There are plans to commission providers working either regionally or nationally to work with specific groups. The service is working with partners such as the police, courts and the health sector to make sure that as a City it is really responding to all key themes of the Bill detailed earlier. The panel queried work done to support refugees or people who have language barriers to access domestic abuse safe accommodation and the details of plans to engage with different providers in the City. The Community Safety Manager advised the panel that the service is working with frontline providers about supporting refugees with no recourse to public funds who are victims of abuse.

As part of the needs assessment mapping work the service is starting to engage with victims from different backgrounds and this information will help to better understand the victim's journey, which will include people from the refugee and migrant communities, who may not be aware of the support services available.

The panel queried if the service is planning to work local faith organisation and make them aware of the resources available which can then be shared with the members of the community.

The Community Safety Manager reassured the panel of the work done to support different communities and to raise awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and interpersonal violence. In addition, a targeted awareness campaign is planned to reach more people within local faith communities as there is an acceptance that this an underreported crime. The Community Safety Manager added that work is being done to understand how to encourage people to firstly report domestic abuse, but also to seek support which can help them break the cycle.

The panel queried the work that will be done to capture the views of victims of domestic abuse when developing plans to protect and support them. The Community Safety Manager added that the work is at an early stage of developing conversations with frontline providers about how to best engage with victims; while recognising that it is a sensitive topic. A key part of the work will be to ensure that victims voices lead this process and they feel protected and safe.

The panel requested a report on progress to be reported to a future meeting.

The Community Safety Manager agreed to present a progress report in September 2021 when the needs assessment and service provider mapping work will have been done.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to note the report.
2. The panel endorsed the proposed next steps for implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill as outlined in the report.
3. The Community Safety Manager and Domestic Abuse Specialist to jointly present an update report on progress in September 2021 in meeting the new duties on local authorities as detailed in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

8 **Adult Social Care Annual Report: The Local Account 2019-2020**

Jennifer Rogers, Interim Safeguarding Manager (Adults) and Courtney Abbott, Quality and Improvement Advanced Practitioner for Children and Adults, jointly presented the report to the panel.

Jenny Rogers, Interim Principal Social Worker, gave a brief introduction to the requirement for local authorities to publish Adult Social Care Local Account. The panel were invited to give comment and feedback on the 2019-2020 Adult Social Care Local Account prior to it being presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2021 for approval.

The purpose of publishing the Local Account is to provide the public with information on the performance of Adult Social Care service and activity against performance targets.

The report details the progress made against the priorities set in the previous year and includes a mix of both qualitative and quantitative information. The document also includes examples of real-life stories where there has been an impact.

The Interim Principal Social Worker commented on the importance of celebrating in the document the achievements of the service but also highlighting the challenges and where improvements are needed. The Local Account is part of the self-assessment process and important to make sure that it is easy to read and accessible. It is considered a really good practice for councils to include information about the financial situation and how resources have been used. The inclusion of financial information is not mandatory. The Local Account is normally published in November or December but to the impact of Covid-19 there has been a delay. The Interim Principal Social Worker invited panel to comment on the draft document.

The document has been shared with local groups who were invited to give us feedback on what could be done to make it work better for the public

Courtney Abbott, Advanced Practitioner for Quality and Improvement, commented that the Local Account looks at the strengths of the service and what has been done well against challenges faced during the year. The Advanced Practitioner, commented that the service has made good progress towards meeting the key priorities during the year. A key highlight in the document is that year-on-year adult social care of received fewer complaints when compared to the previous year.

The Advanced Practitioner added that the service replied to most complaints received within the required time scales and there is a focus on resolving complaints as quickly as possible. The Advanced Practitioner gave further details about the progress in meeting the target to register 3000 new people on Telecare which helps support people to remain independent in their own home for as long as possible.

The service is supporting 1372 people and is on target for meeting that goal of 3,000 new people using Telecare.

The Advanced Practitioner commented on the support given to people who have been discharged from the hospital and highlighted the increase in the number of people still in their home 91 days later when compared to the previous year.

The service is helping people to remain more independently in their homes and out of hospital unnecessarily. The service provides equipment and make adaptations that can help ensure that a person's home is safe for them and meet their needs.

The Advanced Practitioner commented on the progress in implementing the 'three conversations' throughout adult social care, and highlighted examples in the Local Account about the positive benefits of the approach in terms of helping people to connect with other people in the community. There has been an increase in the number of 'conversations' held in 2019 2020 compared to the previous year. The work has been supported by the community support and carers support teams.

The Advanced Practitioner commented on the success of care assessments for people being discharged from hospital either into a care home or supported accommodation. The service will ensure that people who are ready for discharge are going to be in the place that will best meet their needs, but there is a recognition that there this more to do to support the people who live in the City.

The priorities set for 2020 2021 are the same as the previous priorities because these are areas which are important to people in the City. The Advanced Practitioner advised the panel that the service wants to make the offer better and also working with the challenges presented by Covid-19.

The service will continue to prioritise the timely discharge from hospital in the future and also help people have more choice and to live more independently. The Advanced Practitioner commented in previous meeting where the issue of isolation and loneliness among older people was discussed and outlined the work being done to tackle this issue for people living in their own homes and connecting to them to support networks. There is a lot of work being done in this area because loneliness can affect both mental health and physical health of carers, for example, connecting carers to people with similar interests and hobbies, which can help to improve the situation.

The Mental Health Team has been set up a WhatsApp group to encourage people with mental health difficulties to keep them in touch with each other and to create a space where they can talk to each other. The aim is for the group to become their own support group. The service is continuing to evolve and learn from what else is going on around the country.

The panel discussed the impact of dementia on people using Telecare and other support that might be needed where they may not be wearing the alarm necklace and need help following an accident. The Advanced Practitioner accepted the ongoing challenge presented in helping people with dementia to remain independent in a home setting but reassured the panel of the work being done to support.

The panel thanked the presenters for their report and presentation.

Resolved:

1. The Panel agreed to note the Adult Social Care Local Account for 2019-2020.
2. The comments of the Panel to be included in the report to Cabinet on 8 March 2020.
3. The Panel agreed to approve the Adult Social Care Local Account for 2019-2020.

9 **Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel 2019 20 - Draft Work Programme - report to follow**

The Scrutiny Officer advised the panel that the draft programme has not yet been finalised. An extra meeting has been arranged for 8 March 2020 to consider a report on care fees charges. A revised work programme will be sent to panel members when details have been confirmed.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the progress of the draft work programme.