

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 12 December 2017

Time: 4.00 pm

Present: Councillors D Williams (Chair), J Cleverly, J Guy, T Holyoake, L Lacey, H Thomas, K Thomas, C Townsend and J Watkins

In Attendance: Councillor Paul Cockeram, Councillor Gail Giles, Daniel Cooke (Overview & Scrutiny Officer), Mike Dickie (Business Service Development Manager), Chris Humphrey (Head of Adult & Community Services), Sally Ann Jenkins (Head of Children & Young Peoples Services), Sarah Morgan (Deputy Chief Education Officer) and Eleanor Mulligan (Democratic Services and Communications Manager)

Apologies:

1 **Declarations of Interest**

None

2 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 October 2017**

Minutes approved as a true and accurate record

3 **Improvement Plan 2016-18 Update - Quarter 2**

IP Objective 1 – Improving Independent Living For Older People

Invitees;

- Head of Adult and Community Services
- Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Cabinet Member and Officer provided an overview of the service area and all of its measures, all of which are Green. The Cabinet Member spoke of how their work is led by providing the older people with the ability to make an informed choice. The Social Services and Wellbeing Act is also instrumental in the how the service is delivered.

The Committee wanted to know how long the wait time was to see a LA Occupational Therapist (OT). The Officer explained that the average wait time was 4 weeks, but this doesn't include those seen in hospital and those that needs allow them to be prioritised. There are more OTs in hospital which means there is a less of a wait there. The Members also wanted to know if there were many people joining the occupation. The Officers replied that they are currently struggling to get staff to join the occupation. Members had an idea about running a recruitment process similar to the army to improve recruitment levels.

The Members enquired if bringing care back into the community would increase pressure on services and what effect it is already having. The Officer explained that the Integrated Services Manager oversees both community and hospital OTs. If a person is under the care of an OT in the community, the OT would follow them into hospital. The OT and community care package would stay with the individual unless their stay in hospital is for longer than three days. The Step Up Step Down initiative has been a great success in decreasing the delayed transfer of care. The Officer continued to explain how the initiatives were not available in all GP surgeries currently, but the Care Closer to Home Strategy would look at ways to improve and increase this.

The Members of the Committee are concerned about the night staff being cut from the Willowbrook Care Home. The Cabinet Member explained that this was one of the budgetary cuts out for consultation and not set in stone.

The Committee enquired as to how the private sector care providers were monitored to ensure standards were met. The Officer explained to the Committee that the CCISW and Council share overview responsibility for any private sector care provider that we had contracts with. There are regular forums which took place to ensure a dialogue is open for all care providers, carers and people receiving care. There were also escalating procedures for reporting issues and problems with the services to us and CCISW.

Members queried if the Council provided any of the services themselves and how long a person would be allocated for washing and dressing in a morning. The Officer explained that the Council delivered an extra care scheme but other services were contracted out. With regards to how long each person was allocated for washing and dressing the Officers explained that the contract monitoring ensured that a certain level of care was met, made up of quality and time. If this quality of care is not delivered then they can use the escalating procedures to ensure it is in the future.

One of the Members commented that they knew of individual care providers that log in and log out as required by the company they work for, but spend additional time at the recipient's home and are not reimbursed for it.

The Members enquired if the annual measures could be presented in year to ensure progress was being made. The Officer explained that the numbers could be presented in year, but it is currently done at the end of the year not to skew the numbers.

The Committee questioned if the Council could withhold business to companies and organisations that do not pay the national living wage. The Cabinet Member agreed that the carers are not paid enough and recognised that there is a high turnover of staff in the sector.

The Committee were interested in why the Council did not provide the care services themselves. The Cabinet Member explained that following a detailed review of the options, commissioning services from a third party suppliers was by far the most cost effective option. The Officer also added there are also additional costs to bringing the care service back in house.

The Committee asked the Officer and Cabinet Member on their views on the management of the care services. The Committee had heard that some carers were working 11 hours but only getting paid for 6, as travel time was not included. The Officer assured the Committee that this is something that does not happen, the Council have not allowed contracts to go to companies that practiced in this way.

Conclusion

The Members of the Committee acknowledged the demand on resources, capacity and commitments to provide statutory obligations. The Members also commented on the ever

increasing demand on services and how this would put further strain on the delivery of quality care.

The Committee recommended that a survey is offered to carers asking about their employer, delivery methods and practices. This could be extended to a protected whistleblowing process to ensure high quality services are delivered.

IP Objective 2 – Ensuring people have the right social services to meet their needs

Invitees;

- Head of Adult and Community Services
- Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Officer provided an overview of the IP Objective and the first Red measure, concerning delayed transfer of care. The Officer expressed importance of understanding the difficulties of getting a care package in place to allow a person to leave hospital are a national issue not just local one. These difficulties impact directly on the delayed transfer of care measure in the objective.

The Members and Officers discussed the Integrated Pathway and the relationship with GPs across Newport. The Care Closer to Home Strategy would shed further light on the subject when it is brought to the committee in the New Year as an information report.

The Officers informed the Committee about the In Reach programme which takes Community OTs onto wards to conduct consultations and hold conversations with the individual and NHS staff prior to referrals being made. The In Reach programme was only on 7 wards initially but the ABHB has asked that we roll it out to all hospitals.

Conclusions

The major discussions here were around delayed transfer of care and this is something that the Committee have stated that they will keep their eye on in the next meeting to ensure performance is increasing. The Committee are happy to receive the Care Closer to Home Strategy for more information in the New Year.

IP Objective 8 – Improving outcomes for youth justice

Invitees;

- Head of Children and Young Peoples Services
- Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Officer and Cabinet Member introduced the overall performance as Amber. There are a number of Red measures. The Officer explained that the first Red concerns the number of first time entrants into the youth justice system. The Officer explained that there was no way the Council can control the entrants. There was ongoing work with the Police and education establishments to educate young people about their choices. September also saw the lowest number of first time entrants in the year to date. The second Red measure looks at the percentage of young people who reoffend within 12 months. The Officer informed the Committee that the young people who reoffended had been small. As the numbers of young people offending comes down those who reoffend were more likely to be complex individuals. The last measure, an Amber, the Officer introduced related to the access to timely assessment and treatment in relation to substance misuse. The measure is Amber because one young person missed the targeted time. The Officer reminded the Committee

that during the last quarter the Police conducted two major operations which had an impact on the number of first time entrants and also on those reoffenders.

The Committee and Officers held a broad discussion around levels of substance misuse in YOS young people. The Officers explained that substance misuse was not a primary factor with the YOS young people but the trafficking of substances for older adults. The Officer agreed to provide the Committee with a report from the YOS Substance Misuse Officer on the levels of substance misuse in the YOS.

Members enquired about how partnerships were working in the YOS. The Officers responded by explaining that the partnerships were working well and all relationships were positive, especially with the Police.

Conclusion

In conclusion the Committee understood the difficulties faced by the service area to report on performance measures that they had little or no control over and were happy to receive information reports focusing on substance misuse in YOS young people.

IP Objective 6 – Ensuring the best educational outcomes for children

Invitees;

- Head of Education
- Chair of Education and Skills

The Officer and Cabinet Member introduced the overall performance of the Objective as Green Star – Excellent. The Key Stage three figure is currently 0.5% over target. This measure is still under the Welsh average but the Council was working to reach this. Newport was ranked 16th in Wales for this performance measure three places higher than its place on the deprivation index. Newport was currently improving performance at a faster rate than any other LA in Wales. The difference in the Key Stage 3 performance and the Welsh average was around 30 pupils. The Officer also informed the Committee that there would be a Key Stage 3 leadership review. This review would be conducted by EAS and Peers from other Newport schools.

Members on the Committee wanted to know if the Pupil Referral Unit was a school and the outcomes facing those children who are excluded from schools. The Officer explained that pupil exclusions was going down year on year, there were no permanent exclusions only 6 week fixed term exclusions. The 6 week programme was a revolving door and not all young people stayed for the entire time, all work completed with the young people was tailored to their specific needs. The young people who were referred into the PRU were individuals with complex issues. To overcome the issues the young people have access to an Educational Psychologist, who would look at the mental health and wellbeing of the young people. This WG funded project was in two schools, Bassaleg and Newport High, and has halved the amount of days lost in the previous year. All young people in these schools had access to a counselling service.

A member queried about Smooth Start and what checks are conducted on the Therapists. The Officer assured the Member that Smooth Start did not deliver in Newport. The Officer continued to explain that if it did, the checks would be the same as other positions working with young people. The checks would normally be DBS, quality assurance, safeguarding and monitoring of young people's progression.

The Committee questioned whether the attendance figures and what else could be done to improve them. The Officer explained that the schools have seen great rises in attendance with good practice sharing at an attendance forum. The next report that comes to scrutiny will outline the figures. There will also be a social media and local radio campaign to further

increase the attendance rates. There are some schools that have not seen an increase in attendance and these schools are being targeted.

The Committee enquired whether the 21st century school funding had been announced. The Officer explained that Newport City Council would have a total budget of 70 million pounds for the Band B project. 35 million pounds was provided by the Council, this was match funded by Welsh Government. The Officer informed the Committee that the LA have until 2021 currently to spend the money but this might be extended. Further information from Welsh Government is expected shortly.

Conclusion

The Committee commended the Officers and Cabinet Member on the success of the service area and the progress made for the young people of Newport. The Committee was also impressed by the 70 million pounds for the improvement of schools. The Members thanked the Officers for the insight into the workings of the PRU and how it is supporting those children who need additional support outside of formal education.

4 Mid Year Performance Update

Business Service Development Manager Introduction

The Head of People and Business Change informed the Committee that the information presented in the report related to the second quarter of the year. The new process used is the report comes to Scrutiny before Cabinet. This allows the Committees to provide comment for the Cabinet Members.

Education

Invitees;

- Head of Education
- Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The Officer provided an overview of the performance of the service area working through the general comments and then the individual comments. All of the measures are Green. The Committee were happy with the performance and the comments of the Officer.

Children and Young People

Invitees;

- Head of Children and Young Peoples Services
- Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Officer and Cabinet Member provided an overview of the Red and Amber measures. The Red measure was discussed in the IP Objective 8, the details of which are recorded above on page 3. The four Amber measures were discussed; the first of which looked at the percentage of looked after children returned home from care. This it was explained was a view of the courts and not something the service area can control. There was also an influx of young people who have had repeated interventions to improve conditions, but the long term care of the children is important and they were unable to return home. The Officer added that the performance shortfall was also due to the financial implication of austerity and the cuts made to Social Services.

The second Amber measure was the percentage of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after. There were problems with how this information was collected and it does not take into a number of different factors such as when was the last time the young person saw the dentist. The Officers were working on getting more accurate information for this measure.

The third Amber measure was the percentage of looked after children who have had three or more placements. The Officer explained that this measure has been difficult to achieve over the last couple of years. They continued to state that this measure was made difficult because the number of siblings in the system who they try and place together. Older children are also more difficult to place long term.

One of the Members enquired if the Council were still able to find emergency placements and whether or not the growing complexity of young person's history and issues make it more difficult. The Officer explained that the staff were always able to secure placements for a young person, including emergency ones. Placements are decreasing for young people on a whole. The proposal to develop fostering services on a regional basis has been to Scrutiny to try new initiatives. The Officer added that the having a better understanding of the young people and their history and problems allows you to create better and longer lasting placements.

The Committee commented on the fact that the Council had decreased the number of beds in Forest Lodge house, but were still paying large amounts of money to send young people out of area. The Officer responded that the needs of the young people come first and it is known that young people do not do well in houses with high numbers of beds. The larger the number of high risk young people the more likely there are to be breakdowns and issues within the house. Numbers had been reviewed at Forest Lodge and this was an appropriate number of beds for this facility at the present time.

One of the Members questioned the additional grant funding and how it was used. The Officer stated that the Council had received 8 million pounds in grant funding. This additional money has been used to employ Social Work Assistants who can complete targeted work on the areas of work that need it the most.

Another Member enquired whether the Council had looked at providing a high rate of pay to Foster Carers to home high risk young people. The Officer explained that fostering was not financially motivated. Foster Carers receive higher amounts for young people with physical needs. This was because the payments are now related to the needs of the young person and not the needs of the carer.

The Officer assured the Committee that the run up to Christmas had been completed and that all of the looked after young people and those children who were known to Social Services would be provided with a Christmas.

Conclusion

The Committee made it clear that they were happy to hear about how Christmas was being provided for the looked after children and those known to social services

The Committee were happy to accept the previous answers to the Red measures given during IP Objective 8 page 3. The answers to the Amber measures and the questions asked by the Members were accepted by the Committee.

Adult and Community Services

Invitees;

- Head of Adult and Community Services
- Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Head of Service introduced the service area and its measures. The area had two Red measures. The first of which was the delayed transfers of care, this was discussed as part of the IP Objective 2 in the previous agenda item (reported above on page 3).

The second Red measure reported on the number of people receiving a service from the Rehabilitation Officer (Visual Impairment). The number of people seen was lower than expected but as this was a new target for the year the Officers were estimating the amount of people who would be seen. The good news was that there was no waiting list to see the Rehabilitation Officer, which was a first for Newport. The Rehabilitation Officer had been able to directly address the complaints that had come in from people with visual impairments and no further complaints have been received. The Rehabilitation Officer also referred individuals onto services which are better suited to support the individual, which had again impacted on the numbers receiving a service from the Rehabilitation Officer. The Officer explained that the service was currently working in partnership with GPs and others in the health board, and this was impacting number also.

A Member of the Committee wanted to know how many staff were working on the Communities Connectors programme. The Officer explained that the Manager was currently off but the programme had 6 full time staff currently working.

Conclusion

The Committee were happy with the responses gained from the Officers regarding the Red measures and answers to the questions the Members asked in addition. The Members were happy to refer back to the previous agenda items to provide clarity to other Red measures.

5 Forward Work Programme Update

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the report to Members and outlined the purpose of the report in seeking the Committees approval for items on its work programme for the next two meetings.

The Committee approved the report and the items to be considered during the next two meetings.

The meeting terminated at 6.30 pm