

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 30 July 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors D Fouweather (Chair), B Davies, S Marshall, D Jenkins, T Watkins, D Mayer, D Harvey, J Cleverly and C Townsend

In Attendance: Sally Ann Jenkins (Strategic Director for Social Services), Caroline Ryan-Phillips (Head of Prevention and Inclusion), Lucy Jackson (Interim Head of Adult Services), Penelope Phillips (Early Support Team Manager), Petra Sheppard (Service Manager), Helen Lloyd (Service Manager) and Samantha Herritty (Scrutiny Adviser)

Cllrs P Drewett (Cabinet Member for Communities and Poverty Reduction) and L Lacey (Cabinet Member for Social Services)

Apologies: Councillors M Pimm

1 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Davies as her daughter is a social worker. Cllr Cleverly as she works in partnership with the youth offending team. Cllrs Marshall and Harvey as they were Cabinet Members during the period of reporting being considered. Cllr Harvey left the meeting before item 4.

2 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting held on the 15th of June 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record. The Committee noted that its request for supplementary information on the use of digital solution and artificial intelligence in schools was being considered with the potential of the Committee receiving a briefing note.

3 **End of Year Reports**

Adult Services

Attendees:

Sally Ann Jenkins – Strategic Director for Social Services
Lucy Jackson – Interim Head of Adult's Services
Petra Sheppard – Service Manager
Helen Lloyd – Service Manager
Cllr Laura Lacey – Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Interim Head of Adult Services (IHAS) introduced the report.

Questions:

- The Committee asked for an update on recruitment and retention within the service area.
- The Committee asked whether there were strategies to manage the complex workload with limited resources. The IHAS informed the Committee that the service area was undergoing restructuring alongside Children's Services to ensure efficiency and adequate capacity to respond to casework.
- The Committee asked for an assessment of the relationship between Social Services and health services. The IHAS confirmed the ongoing commitment to working with health services and highlighted examples of partnership working such as the Frailty service, Step Up Step Down, and Parklands. The Cabinet Member for Social Services (CMSS) noted their work on the regional partnership board. The Committee expressed disappointment that the Frailty service had not progressed in dealing with bed blocking in hospitals. The Strategic Director for Social Services (SD) highlighted the focus was on preventative measures to alleviate this challenge.
- The Committee asked what preventative measures could be developed to reduce the need for intensive interventions in the service. The SD highlighted the work of domiciliary care as a preventative measure against further escalation. They noted the support of external organisations to ensure progress in this area. They also noted the importance of managing residents' expectations. The CMSS noted that there are responsibilities across different sectors and service areas within the Council.
- The Committee expressed praise for the establishment of dementia hubs in the city and asked for details of where citizens can access the Dementia Hwb. The IHAS confirmed the Hwb is in Newport Central Library in the City Centre.
- The Committee asked what the timescales and numbers were for those coming out of hospital that NCC supported. The IHAS noted these numbers changed weekly and were often dependent on individual care requirements. The IHAS confirmed that Centrica House has now been absorbed into the Council portfolio. The IHAS clarified that Eliminate only related to Children's Services.
- The Committee asked whether performance targets were challenging enough. The IHAS explained that there were multiple performance indicators (PI) collected and reported to Welsh Government (WG) which didn't necessarily demonstrate context for service delivery impact on residents' lives. They confirmed that feedback and discussion with WG was ongoing. The SD highlighted that this was a national issue and that while they were able to compare data, it lacked context.
- The Committee questioned what preparation had been done for the change from the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS). The CMSS stated Newport is the procurement lead for the Gwent region on an 18-month programme of transition from WCCIS, and had written to Welsh Government concerning the importance of funding for this programme.
- The SD noted that WCCIS was not used in all local authorities (LAs) in Wales and so the national picture was disjointed. They confirmed that the priority was to ensure no records are lost when a system migration occurs. They informed Committee that weekly national review meetings are ongoing alongside fortnightly meetings with relevant Gwent leaders. They noted that systems were being considered which would integrate with future solutions on a regional basis.
- The Committee asked how migration factors into budgetary challenges. The CMSS noted that they had written to WG about the cap on domiciliary care and highlighted that it would not have a negative impact on residents who couldn't afford an increase as it is means-tested.

Conclusions:

- The Committee requested an update on the Recruitment and Retention Report on a 12-monthly basis. They suggested that this be an information report circulated in February to allow time for any additional meetings to be created to explore the report in more detail if required.
- The Committee were content with the report.

Prevention and Inclusion

Attendees:

Sally Ann Jenkins – Strategic Director for Social Services
 Caroline Ryan-Phillips – Head of Prevention and Inclusion
 Penelope Phillips – Early Support Team Manager
 Cllr Laura Lacey – Cabinet Member for Social Services
 Cllr Pat Drewett – Cabinet Member for Communities and Poverty Reduction

The Head of Prevention and Inclusion (HPI) presented the report.

Questions:

- The Committee asked whether Officers were confident that current staff levels were adequate to deliver services efficiently. The HPI confirmed that they were, and highlighted that the workforce was stable. The Committee asked for the Cabinet Members' input on the service. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Poverty Reduction (CMCPR) acknowledged the significant demand on Social Services and highlighted services such as Flying Start, the Play Service, partnership arrangements with Newport Live, alternative education provision and the Youth Service. They confirmed they were confident in the provision and staff. The CMSS noted that while the job is demanding, morale amongst staff was high.
- The Committee asked what strategies could be used to improve integration between service areas, and how the long-term impact of prevention can be measured. The HPI assured Committee that continual integration is a clear aim for the service area. They highlighted the holistic approach taken which included meeting with Heads of Services, assessing systems already in place and ensuring the system is proactive in identifying and addressing challenges.
- The Committee asked how the impact of PI can be measured effectively. The HPI acknowledged the challenge with PI as they are often without context and noted that impact measurement and data collection needed to be improved.
- The Committee asked how the service empowered communities. The HPI informed the Committee that the work of the service area is especially concentrated in hearing and addressing the concerns of the residents and local communities, and that this priority often overlapped with Adult Services.
- The SD explained that grant funding came with specific prescription.
- The Committee asked what support NCC is providing to organisations supporting service delivery. The CMCPR confirmed that they had full support and partnership working and facilitation was integral to ensuring this. The Committee were concerned that when considering budgets, reducing financial support for these organisations could have a significant impact.
- The Committee asked how the service area can better support families with complex needs. The HPI noted that the complex needs provision for children has changed as a result of the restructure, and that a piece of work developing age appropriate provision for children with complex needs was ongoing. They highlighted that they were looking at the quality of provision and that there was joint work ongoing with the disabled children's team. They informed Committee that they were working to engage with families in designing aspects of the programme to better support them. They highlighted the importance of managing the changing culture and expectation of

service users as they do not provide respite – if needs were complex enough, they would be picked up within statutory services.

- The Committee asked what work was being done with outside bodies to enhance this support. The CMSS highlighted ALN quiet time for the newly opened splash pad in Tredegar Park, and ongoing events and improvements in sessions being offered. The Early Support Team Manager highlighted the importance of maximising the number of children and locations.
- The Committee asked what cross-portfolio work for poverty reduction was ongoing. The HPI informed Committee that a multi-agency cost-of-living partnership network was ongoing alongside the Anti-Poverty Strategy work. The CM CPR highlighted discussions with Newport Live regarding concessionary charges to assist with accessibility. The SD noted that the Anti-Poverty Strategy would be considered by Scrutiny and aimed to ensure work was focused and catalogued.
- The Committee asked what work was being done to balance short term and long term relief. The SD acknowledged the work being done regarding the cost of living and noted that it was a Council-wide question. They felt that it was about balancing prevention and support for those who need it, but that the existence of PI as a service area was significant. The CMSS felt that “crisis mode” since the pandemic was ongoing and there was a lot of work to be done across services. The CM CPR highlighted uniform banks and prom dress banks. The Early Support Team Manager noted that the team link in with other service areas to provide support, and highlighted the space wellbeing panel and cost of living advisors.

Conclusions:

- The Committee recommended that if any grant pressures were identified, that they be brought back to Committee.
- The Committee were content with the report.

4 Scrutiny Advisor Reports

a) Actions Arising

The Scrutiny Advisor noted no changes.

b) Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Advisor noted no changes and that the next meeting was scheduled for the 1st October 2024.

c) Outcomes Monitoring

The Scrutiny Advisor noted no changes.

The meeting terminated at 12.02 pm