

# Minutes



## Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

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Date: 23 October 2024

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors J Reynolds (Chair), P Bright, S Marshall, A Screen, J Hughes and K Whitehead

In Attendance: Laura Lacey (Cabinet Member for Social Services), Tanya Evans (Strategic Director – Social Services), Natasha Harris (Interim Head of Gwent Regional Partnership Team), Neil Barnett (Scrutiny Adviser), Katharine Majer (Deputy Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Simon Richards (Governance Officer) and Taylor Strange (Governance Officer)

Apologies: Councillors B Davies and J Jones

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### 1 **Declarations of Interest**

None.

### 2 **Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) Annual Report 2023-2024**

- Councillor Laura Lacey (Cabinet Member for Social Services)
- Tanya Evans (Strategic Director – Social Services)
- Natasha Harris (Interim Head of Gwent Regional Partnership Team)

The Strategic Director – Social Services (SDSS) introduced the report, and the Interim Head of Gwent Regional Partnership Team (IHGRPT) presented the report to the Committee.

The following was discussed:

- The Committee asked about training needs assessment methods. The SDSS advised of a Regional Workforce Development Board that facilitated formal and informal training programmes through the Regional Partnership Board (RPB).
- The Committee queried the availability of nationally recognised qualifications. The SDSS explained these were available based on individual circumstances, with a "grow your own" training approach preferred.
- The Committee enquired about staff-identified training needs. The SDSS confirmed monthly one-to-ones included training discussions, while the IHGRPT added that two free packages were being developed for unpaid carers and autism training based on service user feedback.
- The Committee asked about service streamlining to reduce duplication. The SDSS explained that all grant-funded programmes were currently under review across the region to prioritise programmes in the light of funding only being guaranteed until 2027. The SDSS emphasised these schemes were vital to RPB services.

*This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg*

- The committee expressed concern regarding the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) funding relationship with Welsh Government. The SDSS advised that Gwent had led the way in lobbying Welsh Government to remove the tapering element of RIF, which had been successful. The IHGRPT noted ongoing dialogue between board Chairs and Welsh Government.
- The Committee queried the sustainability of critical services including bereavement support. The IHGRPT explained collaborative work amongst stakeholders was constant, with a Welsh Government bereavement initiative in development.
- The Committee asked about addressing regional staffing shortages. They were advised by the IHGRPT of initiatives including university partnerships, clinical placement programmes for second-year students, and Access to Medicine work targeting socially disadvantaged students.
- The Committee enquired about the effectiveness of dementia initiatives. The IHGRPT detailed the Dementia Friendly Network's 300+ multi-agency membership, with a new hub being developed at Newport Riverfront Theatre and provided evidence of positive feedback from existing schemes.
- The Committee queried how the partnership communicated access to services. The IHGRPT outlined website developments ensuring national average reading levels were applied and also noted the availability of easy-read documents, acknowledging mental health challenges among service users. The IHGRPT also detailed community outreach through leaflet drops, advertising in GP surgeries and on community noticeboards.
- The Committee asked about digital systems evaluation methods. The IHGRPT advised of collaboration with Data Cymru, website access tracking, and quarterly updates through the RIF.
- The Committee asked about improving hospital discharge efficiency and preventing bed blocking. The SDSS confirmed ongoing work to minimise waiting times and improve discharge processes. The SDSS also outlined preventative measures including funded bed spaces at Parkland Residential home for early discharge support and hospital admission prevention.
- The Committee asked about the community transport scheme's effectiveness. The IHGRPT confirmed increased funding for the community car scheme, highlighting its positive impact on mobility-challenged users.
- Concern was raised about Newport's dementia rates. The IHGRPT noted that a Brain Health programme was being developed for the Newport Dementia Hub to educate residents about preventative steps that can be taken to reduce their risk of developing the disease
- The Committee queried how RIF funding affected long-term planning. The SDSS acknowledged that short-term funding significantly impacted long-term planning capabilities across RPB initiatives and that lobbying of Welsh Government for longer-term funding would continue
- The Committee enquired how carer wellbeing was monitored. The IHGRPT detailed the Carer Strategic Partnership Board's work with employers, schools, and other institutions supporting both professional and unpaid carers.

- The Committee queried ethnic minority community engagement. The SDSS described Local Authority boards' outreach work with minority communities in environments they felt comfortable with, while the IHGRPT added specific dementia awareness work was carried out with minority groups.
- The Committee enquired about the autism partnership review. The IHGRPT explained that this review was due to its elevation from steering group to strategic partnership status, due to increased scope and size.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Services commended the report and highlighted the demands on social care and stressed the importance of the RPB. The Cabinet Member for Social Services thanked the previous Cabinet Members for the prior work conducted as part of the RPB.

The Committee thanks the officers for attending.

### **Conclusions**

- The Committee requested clarification on Bereavement Funding arrangements once national and local frameworks are in place.
- The Committee requested to receive regular updates on College Consortium developments.
- The Committee requested updates on both the Dementia Friendly initiative and the Brain Health Programme.
- The Committee emphasised the need for ongoing communication about the partnership's progress, particularly to enable Ward Councillors to share developments with their communities. The Committee highlighted the importance of establishing strong links between the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and Ward Councillors regarding available programmes and services.
- The Committee recommended creating a simplified or easy-read version of the report to improve accessibility.
- The Committee recommended to track carer accreditation at city and ward levels to help promote the programme.
- The Committee recommended maximising the role of Community Connectors in engaging with local groups.
- Further details were requested about the Autism Neurodivergence Strategic Partnership.

## **3 Scrutiny Adviser Reports**

- **Actions Arising**

The Scrutiny Adviser informed the Committee of the Actions Arising.

- **Forward Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Adviser informed Committee that the agenda for the next two meetings are:

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024

- Norse Joint Venture – Strategy and Performance Review

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024

- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- One Newport Annual Report.

- **Outcomes Monitoring**

The Scrutiny Adviser informed the Committee of the up-to-date outcomes.

The meeting terminated at 6.25 pm