

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 26 July 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors W Routley (Chair), J Cleverly, C Townsend, T Watkins, B Davies, P Drewett, D Jenkins, M Pimm and A Screen

Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Adviser), Sally Ann Jenkins (Strategic Director - Social Services) and Mary Ryan (Head of Adults Services)

Apologies: Councillors P Bright

1 Apologies

Councillor P Bright.

2 Declarations of Interest

None.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held 12th July 2022 were **accepted as a true and accurate record.**

4 Children and Young People Services End of Year 21-22 Report

Invitees:

Sally-Anne Jenkins - Strategic Director of Social Services

Councillor Stephen Marshall – Cabinet Member for Social Services

Councillor Jason Hughes – Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Cabinet Member for Social Services highlighted the continued work of staff thanked them.

The Strategic Director introduced the report.

The Strategic Director highlighted that part of the year was subject to pandemic restrictions however staff continued to deliver almost all services. The Strategic Director highlighted the dedication and commitment to the vulnerable by staff.

The Strategic Director informed the committee an assurance check had been performed by the Care Inspectorate Wales and their comments showed that the services had been delivered safely and effectively. The Strategic Director felt that the report showed that staff in Children's Services continued to work creatively and innovatively despite past and continued challenges.

The Strategic Director highlighted the continued development in residential care and stressed that they had a strong commitment to developing enhanced provision for the children of Newport. The Strategic Director commented that Newport City Council was ahead of other Local Authorities ending profit in children's social care and this was due developing its own provision.

The Strategic Director informed committee that Windmill Farm should be opened shortly and that the builders were expected to handover Social Services within the fortnight.

The Strategic Director informed committee that they had been able to support asylum seeking children not only within Newport but regionally due to the level of their expertise.

The Strategic Director acknowledged that there had been an underspend but informed committee that this was not an indicator that the service areas did not need the resources allocated. The Strategic Director informed committee that they had received funding and grants from Welsh Government that had assisted in their budget, but that was coming to an end.

The Strategic Director highlighted that they were keen to drive Corporate Parenting forward and to act proactively but there had been delays nationally. The Strategic Director echoed the Cabinet Member's words of thanks and congratulations to service area staff.

The committee thanked the Strategic Director and her teams for the work done despite the challenges and added their appreciation for the videos.

Questions:

The committee asked whether the Strategic Director of Social Services foresee any challenges resulting from the Basic Income Pilot for care leavers?

- The Strategic Director acknowledged the concern for the safety of young people within the pilot and any resulting challenges. The Strategic Director assured committee that the primary focus would be on supporting young people within the pilot to remain safe. The Strategic Director highlighted that they had successfully raised with the Welsh Government to change payments from monthly to a fortnightly and rent would be payable directly to Landlords. The Strategic Director informed committee that they had already identified all 43 children within Newport that would be eligible for the pilot. The Strategic Director felt that the small number would enable the service area to work closely with the identified children.

The committee asked what was identified as needing improvement, how long would this take, and did they foresee any difficulties?

- The Strategic Director informed committee that they could supply the report from Care Inspectorate Wales to the committee for detail. The Strategic Director highlighted that there was nothing that required an Action Plan or Emergency Action and things that had been commented on were already expected to be outlined in the report. The Strategic Director noted that the feedback raised ongoing issues with workforce and recruitment. The Strategic Director informed committee that this was affecting the whole public sector on all levels and that there were provisions are in place.

The committee asked when the funding and grants from Welsh Government were received.

- The Strategic Director informed committee that grants were received throughout the year that were distributed in various ways such as for placements and direct to families.

The committee highlighted that Family Court cases were in red and had historically been a difficulty. The committee asked how the service was planning to improve this.

- The Strategic Director informed committee that there had been difficulties that had resulted from delays in the Family Courts which were out of their control. The Strategic Director assured committee that there had been national discussions improving the system which Newport had been involved in. The Cabinet Member for Social Services highlighted that despite delays in this area, the service has provided excellent diversionary work such as Baby and Me to avoid getting to the fourth stage. The committee were concerned with the back log and any Safeguarding concerns it caused. The committee suggested that there should be an update on this topic in future.

The committee asked whether the underspend would be redistributed within the service or into the Newport-wide pot?

- The Strategic Director informed committee that it would be a mixture. The Strategic Director highlighted that there was work ongoing to look at the challenges around the Children's Services budget 2022/2023 and this would be detailed in a later report.
- The Strategic Director informed committee that a breakdown of the redistribution could be circulated to committee for information.

The committee noted that the Service Area Risk graph could be presented in a clearer way with collaborative work. The committee asked whether there was a set date for the committee to visit Windmill Farm after its completion.

- The Strategic director of Social Services confirmed that as soon as the building was handed back to them from the builders that a visit would be organised.

The committee were concerned with the delays preventing the completion of Windmill Farm and asked for confirmation on when it would be completed.

- The Strategic Director highlighted that they were still waiting for the building to be handed back from contractors and that many delays were out of their control including bats, material costs and water supply issues. The Strategic Director was confident that it was almost complete and reassured the committee that work had already been done with Care Inspectorate Wales for registration, as well as ongoing work and funding allowing them to bring in the staff for training and experience whilst

the delays were ongoing.

The committee asked how many children could Windmill Farm accommodate?

- The Strategic Director confirmed that 4 children could be accommodated and additionally had 4 small 1-bedroom homes as extra emergency accommodation separate to the main house. The Strategic Director stressed that it would be short to medium term accommodation to understand the children's specific placement needs.

The committee asked would Windmill Farm cater to children with specific needs that otherwise would be placed out of county

- The Strategic Director confirmed that it would be and informed committee that they had received funding for this. The Strategic Director stress recognised that all good quality residential care would be expensive, but they are able to meet the needs of the children more effectively with local provision.

The committee asked whether there was a date that Windmill Farm could begin to house children

- The Strategic Director informed committee that their aim was September but would be by October. The Cabinet Member for Social Services recognised the work done by the previous Cabinet Member.
- The committee acknowledged this and welcomed to the two new Cabinet Members to the position and the role within this committee.

The committee asked if there would be a specific opening date for the Rosedale Annexe.

- The Strategic Director informed committee that it would be later than previously thought due to similar delays that had affected in Windmill Farm. The Strategic Director confirmed the date when known to committee.

The committee asked whether there were plans for Cambridge House.

- The Strategic Director informed committee that they were still undecided about the use of Cambridge House and that there were ongoing discussions on how best to use it. The committee asked whether there were any legal definitions or covenants on Cambridge House and asked how the property was required.
- The Strategic Director confirmed that there was no covenant that restricts the usage of the property however she was not aware of how the property was required.

The committee asked for an explanation on the apparent lack of progress for the children exploitation response model.

- The Strategic Director informed the committee that there had been significant progress in this area, but the work reported was slower due to the scale. The Strategic Director highlighted the work of a previous colleague in developing an Exploitation Toolkit which has been used in Newport and is now being rolled out to other local areas. The Strategic Director highlighted that this involves wider working with schools, parents, families, and police in addition to internal work.
- The committee highlighted that an action showing 50% stagnation was also marked completed and questioned how this could happen. The Strategic Director informed the committee that the evaluation has yet to be completed but a large portion of work has been completed.

The committee asked whether there were safeguarding measures in place for arriving asylum seekers.

- The Strategic Director informed committee that they had high level of expertise to be able to work with these children. The Strategic Director highlighted the efforts that had been made with foster parents to be able to meet the children's needs. The Strategic Director informed committee that legislation from Welsh Government changed regularly and they are mindful that there is potential future pressure from working with Ukrainian children.

The committee asked why the measures to retain staff are showing as green when there was a workforce issue.

- The Strategic Director acknowledged the challenges with staffing were a national and ongoing issue, but the specific measures planned by the service area had been implemented and thus marked as completed. The committee requested that the workforce problem would be presented as an ongoing issue so that the committee could be assured that the service was working to improve it.

The committee asked for clarification on how an 80% can be both amber and green when looking at the Public Law working group.

- The Strategic Director highlighted that it was a substantial piece of work which has seen delays. The Strategic Director noted that the project was ongoing as and continued to change but the service had completed the actions set out and thus marked it as green.

The committee asked about how 0% in relation to Corporate Parenting could be marked as both red and green and when could progress be expected.

- The Strategic Director advised that they were waiting on guidance from the Welsh Government and that this was out of their control but believed that it would be soon as the delays had arisen from the pandemic.
- The committee advised the preference of listing the action as red and including the explanation as further commentary.

The committee asked what impact the pandemic had had on work experience and mentorship for CLAs and how could it be prioritised

- The Strategic Director informed committee that prior to the pandemic there was a scheme for looked after children where each would have individual and specialist support. The Strategic Director that this should improve soon and that the Basic Income Pilot should also have a positive impact.

The committee asked whether there would be any monitoring on spending for the Basic Income Pilot?

- The Strategic Director informed committee that there would not be and was out of their control as it is a Welsh Government scheme. The Strategic Director highlighted that their duty was to support and work with them to ensure the money is spent safely.

The committee enquired about the lack of social housing options and the quality of the social housing that is available.

- The Strategic Director informed committee that work had been done to address these issues and to try to offer more variety of choice. The Strategic Director highlighted the expansion of the 'When I'm Ready' scheme and its positive, preventative impact.

The committee asked for an update on the recruitment of foster carers and the training provided to them

- The Strategic Director informed committee that work is still ongoing and there has been an emphasis on expanding the number of specialist foster carers. The Strategic Director informed committee that there is rigorous training for all foster carers to complete and specialist training courses are mandatory for those foster carers taking on children with specialist needs.

The committee commented on the complexity of the performance measures presented on the National level.

- The Strategic Director advised that it was required to be presented in that way but offered to have a separate session in which they could advise the committee on

understanding the data.

The committee asked for clarity data regarding children that ceased to be looked after.

- The Strategic Director explained that there were many reasons for children to leave care such as returning to their family, being adopted, or turning 18 etc and the data was unable to provide context.

5 **Adult Services End of Year 21-22 Report**

Invitees:

Mary Ryan – Head of Adult Services

Councillor Stephen Marshall – Cabinet Member for Social Services

Councillor Jason Hughes – Cabinet Member for Social Services

The Cabinet Member for Social Services introduced the report. The Cabinet Member for Social Services thanked staff for their work and resilience.

The Head of Adult Services presented the report.

The Head of Adult Services felt positive despite increasing pressures. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that there are issues with staffing and so was important to be mindful when delivering services to ensure that the most vulnerable receive help.

The Head of Adult Services highlighted the emphasis on ensuring that people are being kept out of hospital during winter where possible and safe and cared for at home. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that this has been done by using funding to concentrate on carers who support people in the community.

The Head of Adult Services informed the committee about the accreditation that Newport gained as an Older Person City.

Questions:

The committee asked whether there was a date for the development of a regional appointeeship service to begin.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they had been working closely with Caerphilly and that the appointeeship service is almost self-funding. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that there is also a deputyship that helps ensure that money is used wisely and those who required a deputyship will have been managed by Caerphilly with the next step being the appointeeship. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they were satisfied with the partnership with Caerphilly and that the scheme needed to grow. The Head of Adult Services explained that there was not a timescale in having a regional service as the work is ongoing.

The committee asked for an explanation of appointeeship and deputyship.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that an appointeeship was a service supplied by the council to help those who couldn't manage their own money by giving them allowances and supporting them to manage their own finances. The Head of Adult Services explained that a deputyship dealt with those who had a considerable amount of money to ensure that they are looking after that in the most effective way as a form of safeguarding.

The committee what was being done to address staffing shortages and reduced capacity in home care.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they had taken part in panel groups that have looked at what could be done at every level. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that Newport outsources its domiciliary care and has been in a good position working with a range of providers. The Head of Adult Services expressed concern for the future as many carers are leaving the profession which is causing the shortage in addition to the need for consistency for cared for people

The committee queried grants and funding for carers such as grants to assist with driving lessons.

- The Head of Adult Services confirmed that there is a process for over 18 carers to apply for assistance to help with driving lessons if there was an issue preventing them from a career in care work and can be explored for informal carers.

The committee asked for an explanation for the underspend.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that it was for similar reasons to Children's Services where there had been funding and grants available during the pandemic. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they were still looking at how that underspend would be brought forward.

The committee asked how the lack of growth in appointeeship Regional Services would impact on the service going forward.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that as they had been working in a hybrid model with Caerphilly where they have taken on some of the deputyship work as the waiting list only had a two-person backlog. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they would continue working with Caerphilly. The Head of Adult Services noted that the larger issue in this area was the direct payment service and allowing people to be able to manage their own care.

The committee asked when the integration of the frailty team would be completed.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that the work in this area started before Covid-19 and then became more hospital based. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they were now making progress. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they have considered an IAA hub with the frailty team built in to be able to provide wraparound care attached to frailty. The Head of Adult Services noted that there should be some progress on this by December.

The committee asked whether people would be able to arrange their own care and whether the service area would have checks in place?

- The Head of Adult Services explained that where there is a care need, there would initially be discussions on whether care could be provided by family with financial assistance before considering a care agency. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that this arrangement was not available in all areas of Wales as some areas don't allow payment to go to family members and there was an aim at ensuring a fair and equitable service payment across the nation. The Head of Adult Services noted that the payment wouldn't be stand alone and that there would consistent reviews.

The committee asked for reassurance and an update about plans for the Day Opportunities Development of Outreach Service.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that during the pandemic, many centres closed which enabled work to be done to consider the provision was aligned with service user requirements. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they had reviewed the systems and implemented a hybrid model.

The committee asked for assurance that they were operating under DOLS until the about the Liberty Protection Safeguards were implemented.

- The Head of Adult Services confirmed this noted that the change to LPS would occur within a few years. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that they have used the time to ensure up to date training in the Mental Capacity Act. The Head of Adult Services offered to arrange a session for committee on the Mental Capacity Act and differences between DOLS and LPS. The committee questioned the stagnation shown in item 1 regarding Early Intervention and Prevention. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that pressures on the workforce had lowered the opportunities for development.

The committee asked how effective Home First had been at increasing hospital discharge from hospitals.

- The Head of Adult Services highlighted that the Home First model is used prior to hospital admission ensure that people have appropriate care and only those who are medically unwell are in hospital. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they could provide the committee with the information and statistics from a Newport perspective.

The committee asked about the impact of stagnation in the regional appointeeship service and whether current recruitment would improve the outcome.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that the impact was at a manageable level but there were plans to move on it as it will become full. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they had supported those within the service where they could increase capacity elsewhere... The Head of Adult Services assured committee that there had been improvements since the report was written, as well as a movement of resources to support the appointeeship team.

The committee asked for clarity regarding the new Welsh Government framework and the inconsistency with the RAG markings.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that the green percentage was due to the area having done everything they could making it effectively completed on their end. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that there would be changes and noted that maybe more of an explanation within the report was necessary.

The committee highlighted the repetition of certain areas such as the implementation of LPS within the report.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that objectives within major projects can fall under different areas but agreed that they could all be consolidated for clarity. The Cabinet Member for Social Services asked that if Members were aware of any unpaid carers to let the department know to ensure that they get the amount they are entitled to.

The committee highlighted that staffing was an overarching issue and asked whether anything was being done to address this on a Welsh Government or UK level.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that there were local, regional, and national task forces looking at this. The Head of Adult Services highlighted that there had been an implementation of a significant fee uplift towards the commissioner services and residential nursing care. The Head of Adult Services noted the previous focus on value for money versus the current focus on ensuring that needs are met for residents and the necessity of being able run an effective, fair, and meaningful service. The Head of Adult Services highlighted the focus on trying to attract and retain staff by looking at career paths and other ongoing projects.

The committee asked what the impact would staffing issues from this year have going forward.

- The Head of Adult Services informed committee that if there was not enough care in the community, there would be a rise in the need for residential care at a cost to the council. The Head of Adult Services informed committee that there was a worry around the development of direct payments and whether people would need to come to the council for care packages. The Head of Adult Services highlighted that people would stay in hospitals for longer than they need to if these issues occurred.

The committee asked for an update on the project supporting young carers.

- The Strategic Director confirmed to the committee that the projects have been going well including the launch of the Young Carers Identity Card. The Strategic Director highlighted that there had been more funding received for Families First as well as poor children's services.

The committee asked what impact the increase in contacts received by adult services would have.

- The Head of Adult Services highlighted that the data included signposting people and was not necessarily the total number of people taken on. The Head of Adult Services noted that no data was collected from 2019 to 2020.

The committee thanked the invitees for their attendance and asked them to leave the meeting.

6 Conclusions of Committee Reports

The committee felt that the reports were comprehensive and thanked the Officer's and their teams for their hard work throughout their service areas.

The committee asked that a copy of the letter provided to Children and Young People's Services regarding the Care Inspectorate Wales' findings be circulated to committee for information.

The committee asked that a breakdown be provided detailing where the underspend for Children and Young People's Services be circulated to committee for information.

The committee asked that once a date is confirmed for the handover of Windmill Farm, a visit be arranged to site for committee.

The committee asked that information sessions be scheduled for them and Heads of Services/Strategic Directors to detail the differences between DOLS and LPS and to go through national performance measures in more detail.

The committee asked that information specific to the Newport area be provided regarding the Home First initiative.

The committee raised some comments on presentation:

- They noted that the Service Area Risk graph and table could be presented on its own page with context provided for both reports for clarity.
- They noted that they found it misleading where areas were a) marked complete but work was still ongoing and b) a N/A was shown where work was still ongoing.

The committee welcomed the partnership between the Cabinet Members and Directors/Heads of Service.

7 Scrutiny Adviser Reports

The Scrutiny Advisor reported to the committee that there was not a Forward Work Programme at that time, and it would be presented to committee as soon as possible.

8 Date of the Next Meeting:

13th September 2022 at 10am.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified