

Minutes



Performance Scrutiny Committee - People

Date: 25 July 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors W Routley (Chair), J Cleverly, P Bright, B Davies, P Drewett, D Jenkins, M Al-Nuaimi and D Mayer

Samantha Schanzer (Scrutiny Adviser), Sally Ann Jenkins (Strategic Director - Social Services), Mary Ryan (Head of Adults Services), Caroline Ryan-Phillips (Head of Prevention and Inclusion) and Rhianydd Williams (Service Manager - Integrated Family Support)

Apologies: Councillors C Townsend and R Howells

1 Apologies

Councillors R Howells and C Townsend

2 Declarations of Interest

Councillor W Routley declared an interest as the Chairperson of the David Bomber Pierce Charity.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of meeting held on **11 July 2023** were **accepted as a true and accurate record.**

4 End of Year Reports 22-23

Invitees:

Sally Ann Jenkins – Strategic Director for Social Services

Mary Ryan – Head of Adult Services

Caroline Ryan-Phillips – Head of Prevention and Inclusion

Rhianydd Williams – Service Manager for Integrated Family Support

Appendix 1 – Children’s Services

The Strategic Director for Social Services and the Cabinet Member for Social Services presented the report.

Questions:

The Committee noted that the Eliminate agenda was compounding the situation regarding placements and this was highlighted through Children’s Services report. The Committee felt that although a regional team was being developed, the Eliminate agenda was having a negative effect. The Committee asked for further explanation on this.

- The Strategic Director stated that the Eliminate agenda was a strong policy driver and the regional team was in place. The Strategic Director informed Committee that Newport managed the team, ensuring the 5 Local Authorities in the Gwent area are ready for the Eliminate agenda and build our fostering capacity.
- The Strategic Director noted that this was a challenging environment regarding placements and foster carers were always sought after. The Strategic Director explained that working in partnership was key.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Services highlighted that Newport was one of the only local authorities in Wales that had applied for and received grant funding that allowed for innovation in Social Services to assist service delivery.

The Committee highlighted the section that noted the aftermath of the pandemic continued to emerge with the complexity of referrals but also states that number of children looked after remains stable which was this a contradiction. The Committee queried whether this increase been dealt with in a different way.

- The Strategic Director stated that a lot of work had been done with data on referrals coming in versus how many converted into ongoing work with families so there did seem to be anomaly. The Strategic Director noted that CLA numbers remained the same as well as the number of children on the Child Protection Register but this was not wholly reflective of what's being done as these numbers change where children move on and off of the register. The Strategic Director highlighted that these figures recognise the quality of work being done in services, but this is not an easy position to maintain and has an impact on staff.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Services noted that during the pandemic, children were home-schooled, so these figures had an upturn when schools reopened and there was more contact which resulted in more referrals.

The Committee noted that while it was saddening to have to fund Asylm Seeking Children, Committee wanted to commend Social Services for their continued hard work in this area. The Committee noted that 40% of staff had accessed training and asked whether there is a problem or was this due to the timing of the action.

- The Strategic Director noted that it was an issue of timing within the action, and this was not an area of concern.

The Committee requested an update on the Rapid Response Team.

- The Strategic Director agreed to provide further information to Committee outside of the meeting.

The Committee asked for an update on the Rapid Response action where it had completion date of June 2023 which had passed and was marked as 0% complete.

- The Strategic Director informed Committee that the action was to have the arrangement in place, and stated that grant money has been received to enable this. The Strategic Director noted that this presentation of data would be looked at as there was a need to be clear about this discrepancy in reporting.

The Committee noted the difference in percentages which were all marked green and asked for an explanation of this.

- The Strategic Director confirmed that these were ongoing pieces of work as the projects were incomplete and highlighted that they were marked as green as progress was on target.
- The Committee felt that the colour of an action should not be green if it was not completed.

The Committee asked what progress there was on the Children and Young People's Accommodation Pathway.

- The Strategic Director confirmed that there was strong progress in this area in bringing the relevant parties together as accommodation was not just about Social Services, but it was about working with Housing, RSL's, employment services etc. The Strategic Director felt that they were working constructively but noted massive housing challenges to consider going forward. The Strategic Director felt that group working brought together a variety of strengths and focused on outcomes for young people.

The Committee queried the development of Specialist Fostering Placements and requested an update.

- The Strategic Director for Social Services confirmed that the Committee would receive further information on this outside of the meeting.

The Committee commented on the turnaround offer and asked whether it was having the expected impact.

- The Strategic Director of Social Services confirmed it was having the expected impact.
- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion added that this was a new project but was confident that it would have an impact.

The Committee asked why there had been a jump in the figures regarding Child Exploitation.

- The Strategic Director explained that it could be that services have improved which means that they are able to detect more effectively, or it could be that there is a genuine increase in the numbers. The Strategic Director felt it would be complex to separate these.
- The Strategic Director explained that Social Services is a reactive service and that child exploitation was difficult to combat as it was a societal issue. The Strategic Director assured Committee that work would continue to be done with Gwent Police and with all partners to address this issue.

The Committee asked why a 15% tolerance had been allowed for targets.

- The Strategic Director noted that work was ongoing to look at tolerances as they were not wholly comfortable. The Strategic Director informed Committee that they hoped by next year, they would be better placed for discussion. The Strategic Director highlighted that data in Social Services needed to be reflected better.

Appendix 2 – Adult's Services

The Head of Adult's Services presented this report.

The Cabinet Member for Social Services highlighted the resilience of staff and their continued work to transform services to ensure sustainability. sustainable.

Questions:

The Committee commended the work of staff and noted the national recognition.

- The Head of Adult's Services highlighted that the Chatty Café relaunched in 2022 and noted the importance of working in partnership with other service areas in Social Services to ensure the best service delivery.

The Committee asked what progress had been made for the reablement services for those with dementia.

- The Head of Adult Service noted that Step Up, Step Down beds were solely for those with dementia in the hospital community and they were looking at the need for expansion. The Head of Adult Services highlighted that the dementia project is based

on one from Swansea and aimed to be informative, and to be a place for people with early diagnoses to get help and support.

The Committee noted the Learning Disability Accommodation and commended the work. The Committee asked if service users were involved in this work.

- The Head of Adult Services confirmed that they have transitions in place from Children's Services to Adults Services and that these tended to come through at age 18. The Head of Adult Services noted that these tended to be 3-5 people but that they had had 25 people this year. The Head of Adult Services felt that it was important to have a good offer of services available and to involve not only service users, but their families in next steps for the best outcomes.
- The Head of Adult Services highlighted that they had worked with Pobl and other supported living environments on a number of projects that have worked well. The Head of Adult Services noted that it was important to build on these relationships to provide the greatest flexibility for those involved.

The Committee asked what innovative technology, assistive technology and smart house technology was.

- The Head of Adult Services offered to put on a display of some items used. The Head of Adult Services gave examples including computer units on TV's which can video call in and out, technology to open blinds, door entry systems and animatronic pets and babies to soothe those with dementia.
- The Committee asked for further information on this and a demonstration.

The Committee felt that this assistive technology could be beneficial for residents with agoraphobia and asked what outreach had been done in this area.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that these had only been available for a few months and there were plans to expand it. The Head of Adult Services felt that if there were a dementia hwb, it would be the perfect place for it.
- The Committee asked what was available for those who were unable to leave their homes.
- The Head of Adult Services assured Committee that work was done closely with mental health teams which would enable innovative use of the technology available to these people.
- The Cabinet Member encouraged Members to visit the Swansea Dementia Hwb to see what is available. The Cabinet Member highlighted that technology was evolving rapidly and it would only help people to live better, more independent lives.
- The Cabinet Member highlighted the impact on carers and young carers as assistive technology allowed them to engage with and care for their family members while freeing up more time for themselves to help avoid burnout.
- The Head of Adult Services noted the impact the pandemic had on caring ability and the difference now when people were getting back into work. The Head of Adult Services noted that this innovative technology allowed for carers to check in with family while being able to work. The Head of Adult Services also noted that this technology would have an impact on budgets going forward but would also delay or avoid full care, which would be beneficial.

The Committee asked for more information on the Carer Friendly accreditation.

- The Head of Adult Services explained that sits in the Prevention and Inclusion service area but was started by Adult Services. The Head of Adult Services informed Committee that it looked at the offer to caring staff. The Head of Adult Services highlighted that grant funding had been applied for to fill a post working toward this accreditation.

The Committee asked whether staff must have valid and up-to-date DBS checks and training before working with service users.

- The Head of Adult Services assured Committee that this was the case and that there was an onboarding process to ensure everything is done and up to date. The Head of Adult Services explained that this was an error in how it was recorded as it was the way data was taken.

The Head of Adult Services wanted to update Committee on the move from DOLS to LPS. The Head of Adult Services explained that this had now been postponed due to challenges of codes of practice and there was no due date currently. The Head of Adult Services suggested sending an update out to all Members on this to which the Committee agreed.

3. Appendix 3 – Prevention and Inclusion Services

The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing introduced the report.

The Head of Prevention and Inclusion gave a summary of the report.

Questions:

The Committee asked for clarification between Objectives 1 and 2.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion explained that Objective 1 focused on working with individuals within their own community with place and community based support to enable service users to remain within their own communities. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion explained that Objective 2 focused on meeting the needs of service users, with a range of what this could entail. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that the key difference between the two was firstly supporting those in their communities, while the second highlighted meeting needs.
- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that the two could be confused as they were both about prevention and delivering services.

The Committee commended the team for their accomplishments and asked whether the rating on interactive technologies was unfairly presented as the same action in the Adult Services report was marked as more complete.

- The Cabinet Member agreed.
- The Service Manager for Integrated Family Support explained that Adult Services lead while Prevention and Inclusion assist.
- The Committee asked whether this could be looked at to present the action in a fairer way.
- The Head of Adult Services stated that this demonstrated the relationship between service areas and noted that they needed to work more efficiently for these reviews to demonstrate that relationship.

The Committee asked what challenges were preventing the expansion of the Sport and Play service.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted that the traditional way of delivering this services was through holiday clubs. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that a review had been done to understand the issues and as a result the scope had been widened. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that the main issues were workforce and capacity issues as they had to work within CIW regulations about staff ratio to children.
- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that they have looked at remodelling the service delivery to be able to deliver more with what resources they have currently while working towards a sustainable workforce and this will be presented to the Cabinet Member for discussion.

The Committee asked for an update on Youth Clubs going forward.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that they had gone under review to look at altering delivery as they were traditionally very geographical. The

Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that it was an aim of the service area to ensure that they are reaching city wide.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted that there was a lot of work going into reviewing and recruiting, as well as joining up with other projects. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that they were remodelling the number of areas and wanted to be innovative. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that they wanted to link in with sports activities and the outreach team. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion acknowledged that it was an ambitious plan but that it was still in early development and the vision for the service was expanding and growing.

The Committee asked what kind of future development they would like for Youth Clubs.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted a move away from traditional youth clubs, and acknowledged that they did have a role but that many children who can't or don't use these. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that they must think innovatively about how to engage children in communities and that it must be led by what service users want.
- The Service Manager highlighted the importance of partnership relationships in this area.

The Committee asked what areas current youth clubs were in.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that there was a lot of work ongoing in youth clubs and that work was ongoing to join up with other projects. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted the importance of youth clubs to get experience for service users, to prevent offending etc. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted that it was their aspiration to have city-wide provision and agreed to provide information outside of the meeting on what was available throughout the city.

The Committee asked how action 2 on page 70 was being monitored as it was only at 17%.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that this percentage was an error which needs to be rectified as it is now completed and a new action has arisen.
- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that they were involved with workshops with professional and that they were recommissioning for a specialist.

The Committee asked for clarification on what Carbon Home Adaptations were.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that it supported the Carbon Reduction Plan and that discussions with the Adaptations team and were looking at initiatives and who they were working with. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that this action had been marked complete as they wanted the teams to think differently about how they support this plan.

The Committee asked how the merger of Prevention and the Resilient Communities Team has been received.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that it has had very little impact to the teams and they were settled. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that the actual impact of this merge was that more families are seen.
- The Committee asked for a further update on this.

The Committee asked for an expansion on the Identifying the Triggers and the Models of Parenting initiatives.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Committee that the Identifying the Triggers project had been in pilot for 3 years and a report was devised as a model that responded to local issues to report to the OPCC to look at factors behind exclusions and service responses. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that

this report had identified some key factors. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that the model is about identifying children sooner to build a relationship with them and support them through transitioning school years. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted the importance of moving away from exclusion and of moving towards a wrap around plan. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted that the pilot in Llanwern school had been robust and saw some powerful outcomes for children. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion also highlighted that it was not about resource or needing more funding, but about looking at what resource is available and how it is utilised. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that they were waiting on evaluation reports so that this could be revisited and relaunched across Newport.

- The Service Manager highlighted that parenting groups are provided by the team and have a range of what's available to service users.
- The Committee noted the importance of early intervention and highlighted that primary schools could be beneficial in identifying children. The Committee highlighted that there must be balance between the safety of other children and staff in schools and the needs of the child, but that this balance could be achieved with good working relationships and partnerships.
- The Head of Adult Services highlighted that work was done with Gwent Police, whereby if any incidents are reported from home, schools are informed so that they can alter their approach to the child.

The Committee highlighted the performance measure on page 77 and asked whether they were looking at developing Welsh medium schools to help improve the development of this area. The Committee also asked whether there would be improvement in six months' time.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed Members that this was outside of the service area remit and that this measure was regarding the Flying Start programme, which is not in place yet with Welsh provision. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that they would be growing and developing Welsh medium provision to be able to offer placements.
- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion agreed with Committee that more data would be available in future as it is still early on.

The Committee asked for clarification on what "QOL" referred to regarding substance users.

- The Head of Prevention and Inclusion informed committee that it stood for quality of life and that the system of measurement for this and the projects' impact was very complicated and it needed to be broken down further in the report. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion noted that reviews are done with service users to see what changes in their lives have occurred. The Head of Prevention and Inclusion highlighted that work was being done to simplify and clarify this.

The Committee wanted to highlight the work being done within Social Services for succession planning and upskilling for staff and the importance this has on sustainability within the service.

5 Conclusions of Committee Reports

The Committee were content with reports and wanted to note their thanks to all staff for their continued hard work.

The Committee recommended that in the interest of presenting fairer and more accurate information, the Action regarding Prevention and Inclusions' data for assistive technology (Objective 1 Reference 1) be altered to reflect their collaborative working with other service areas, which show a higher completion percentage of a similar Action within the Adult Services' Report (Objective 1 Action 4).

The Committee recommended sharing an all-Member communication regarding the current position of Deprivation of Liberties Safeguards (DOLS) and Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS).

The Committee welcomed and accepted the Officers' suggestion of a setup session for Members on the assistive technology available and asked for a site visit to Newport Market be arranged.

The Committee asked for an update in writing regarding the status and work of the Rapid Response Team and on Specialist Fostering Placements.

The Committee asked for an information report regarding Child Exploitation be provided.

The Committee asked for further information regarding youth provision be shared with Committee to show what services are available in all wards.

The Committee asked that information regarding the upcoming tournament be shared with all Members as soon as possible.

The Committee asked for further data to be shared with Committee to demonstrate the impact on service users of the merging of the Prevention and Resilient Community teams.

6 Scrutiny Adviser Reports

The Scrutiny Advisor noted that there were no actions to report on.

7 Live Event

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified