

Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 13 October 2015, County Hall, Worcester - 1.00 pm

Present:

Minutes

Mr T A L Wells (Chairman), Mr R C Adams,
Mr C J Bloore, Mrs A T Hingley, Mr C G Holt and
Mr J W Parish

Also attended:

Mrs S L Blagg, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Anne Clarke, Head of Adult Social Care

Kathy McAteer, Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults
Board Chair

Lynne Taylor, Interim Board Manager

Suzanne O'Leary (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny
Manager) and Jo Weston (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handouts (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 June 2015
(previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the
signed Minutes).

196 Apologies and Welcome

Apologies had been received from Mr P Grove.

197 Declarations of Interest

None.

198 Public Participation

None.

199 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2015 were
confirmed as a correct record and signed by the
Chairman.

200 Update on the Future Lives

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Head
of Adult Social Care had been invited to provide an
update on 'Future Lives', the Council's major change

Programme

programme for adult social care.

By way of presentation, Members were provided with a summary of progress made to date and ongoing work for the various strands of the programme.

Promote health and independence

- The 'Your Life Your Choice' website was launched in April 2015 to provide information and advice and although not yet completed, was proving very useful in signposting individuals and groups to support their needs
- There was a review planned to ensure information provided was kept up to date
- Work was ongoing to develop community resilience and volunteering, although this area of work was now being undertaken by a different Directorate
- The Digital Inclusion Strategy had not yet been implemented, although it was widely acknowledged that there was a need to ensure full community engagement
- Well-being was now embedded in social work practice since it became a duty of the Care Act from April 2015.

Reduce the need for adult social care

- In general, adults are living longer after retirement and work is ongoing to keep older people independent as long as possible, without the need for adult social care
- A review of the base budget for prevention services had taken place and there had been a review of integrated recovery services, which was part of the Better Care Fund
- Work was ongoing in relation to the cuts to the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant. This was an unexpected in year budget reduction which was causing some concern for the Council as a whole
- Integrated Recovery services were in the process of being recommissioned as part of the Council's intention to become a strategic commissioning authority. This included provision such as the Timberdine Rehabilitation Centre.

Allow greater choice and control for service users

- 32% of people take a direct payment with more residents expected to do so over time
- The 'Your Life Your Choice' resource had over 300 services available on it, with the intention that

- more services become available
- There would be a need to review personalisation systems.

Maximise the quality and productivity of services

- For both internal and commissioned services, quality assurance policy and procedures had been established
- Projects had been completed in the areas of supported living and extra care
- Oxford Brookes University was carrying out research on the local care market and the impact of the introduction of the Living Wage for social care workers and would report shortly
- New technologies was an area of work which would need to be constantly reviewed due to the ever changing market and opportunity.

Comply with our legal duties

- It had already been noted that the Care Act changes had been embedded since its introduction in April 2015, however, it was noted that phase 2 changes had been deferred until 2020
- Time had been invested in informing Social Workers of their new legal obligations.

Savings

- For the current financial plan 2013 – 2016, the expected £30 million of savings from the Directorate was on target to be achieved, with approximately £4m still to be realised
- The plans for the Directorate's medium term financial plan savings of £13 million between 2016 – 2018 were yet to be finalised
- The County Council was yet to determine whether any further savings were expected from the Directorate to contribute to the overall savings gap.

In the following discussion, the main points were made:

- In relation to the resilience of the local care market, it was explained that there was a routine review of rates paid to residential care homes; payments for service users with learning disabilities were assessed on a case by case basis
- Members were pleased that the proposal to reduce the layer of decision making was being actively pursued, which in turn may mean

decisions are made in a more timely manner

- The Cabinet Member was confident that the Council was compliant with its duties of the Care Act
- Support available through technology was progressing well and increasingly available. There was good practice both around the UK and abroad and the area was seen as a way forward for achieving savings
- Panel Members praised the 'Your Life, Your Choice' website and shared positive comments received from constituents
- One Member referenced recent media coverage of standards for staff in homecare and was informed that the Worcestershire position was not comparable to that in urban areas, such as London. The Cabinet Member referred to the research being undertaken into the implications of the minimum wage and living wage on care workers. The final report would be considered by the Panel in due course

When asked about the use and quality of agency staff, it was explained that constant monitoring was undertaken and acted upon. The Cabinet Member was clear that there was a role for agency staff, especially with redesign of services being undertaken, and the Local Authority would prefer to recruit into positions, rather than make redundancies at this time. The Council used Matrix as a partner to procure temporary staff, which ensured best value. There was no comparison to be made with the NHS where there was a limit on the number of people going into nursing training, for example. In relation to social workers, there was no such limit

- The Head of Adult Social Care stated that the Authority was fortunate that Social Workers were committed to their work and would go the extra mile for the residents of Worcestershire. It was important their time was freed up to enable them to spend more time with service users and make more decisions at the front line.
- There would always be support available and the Rapid Response Team was available 365 days a year to ensure immediate need was assessed. Longer term planning would be available at a later stage, but immediate response was a priority
- The Better Care Fund amount was not known from 2016 but central Government had assured Authorities that monies provided to support the Care Act would not be clawed back next year

201 Safeguarding Adults

- The Council would now know the details of the reduction in the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant until the end of November. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being would need to determine the detail of how any reduction was to be implemented.
- The New Models of Care project had redesigned adult social care for all groups, and included changes to social work with new processes to assess and plan people's care. A triage team had been created and area social work teams had been split into assessment and care and had staff aligned to GP practices.

The Independent Chair of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) had been invited to discuss progress and developments over the past year, including the Board's Annual Report 2014-2015. Accompanying the Chair was the newly appointed Interim Board Manager.

The presentation revealed the following main points:

- The Annual Report for 2014/15 had been published before the introduction of the Care Act and highlighted the need to ensure the WSAB was compliant from 1 April 2015
- Board Membership had changed in April 2014, and would continue to be refreshed to see it shift from being operational to strategic
- New governance arrangements were put in place and a new Chair had been appointed from October 2014
- Of the 9 objectives listed for 2014/15, there had been some notable successes, including the development of partnerships and stakeholder events. These provided the opportunity to conduct quality assurance and share knowledge and best practice and raise the profile of the work of the WSAB
- Learning from previous work was another area where progress had been made and sharing learning from serious case reviews was developing well and seen as good practice
- Developing a multi-agency Mental Capacity Competency framework was a further notable success
- During the reporting period, the number of alerts had increased, however, the number of cases being referred had decreased. This suggested increased public awareness which was a positive step forward

- In the main, data was provided by the County Council, however, moving forward, the Board would wish to include data from other agencies and would wish to do more triangulation to ensure information was credible
- New multi-agency threshold guidance had been introduced, meaning low level concerns were not actioned
- The trends seen generally reflected the demographics of the County in terms of age and gender, however, cases within ethnic groups were under-reported
- Nationally, physical abuse and neglect were the highest types of abuse and Worcestershire was no different
- Due to new Care Act duties, self-neglect reporting was now necessary
- The number of referrals from the public, hospitals and the independent sector had increased, suggesting that it may be linked to the impact of the Winterbourne View enquiry
- Worcestershire was in line with other authorities in relation to cases of mental capacity and deprivation of liberty

Moving forward the Chair highlighted that the 2015/16 Strategic Plan was well developed and would include:

- Further opportunities to hold partners to account, especially given the introduction of the Care Act from April 2015
- Awareness raising with residents, with opportunities for public involvement in decision making
- Assurance from partners that policies, procedures and practice were fit for purpose
- Greater involvement in learning lessons from previous cases
- Improved working relationships with agencies such as Worcestershire Children's Safeguarding Board and the Community Safety Partnerships
- Developing an understanding of local risks to Worcestershire

In relation to the next Annual Report, its focus would report back on the delivery of the Strategic Plan, with opportunities to make the report easier to read and more accessible, including a summary for wider circulation.

The Panel Chairman thanked the Chair for the

presentation and during the subsequent discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Members were pleased that the Chair appeared to have a grasp on the local situation and had a vision for the future
- With reference to a presentation slide where 'local risks' was mentioned, one Member enquired what these were. In response, it was clarified that as Worcestershire was a diverse County, there was a need to further understand the demographics
- When questioned as to how well adults are safeguarded, the Interim Manager was happy to report that Worcestershire was not being picked out as an area of concern
- The increase in the number of alerts was seen as a positive step as it suggested that public awareness was high, although it was acknowledged that there would continue to be cases not reported, especially if abuse was occurring in the home
- There was a desire to gather evidence from more agencies, rather than relying on intelligence from the Local Authority
- The implementation of the Care Act has meant a number of areas of work becoming statutory, including the areas of self-neglect and modern slavery
- When it was suggested by one Member that the Annual Report stated that 15% of neglect alerts happened in Care Homes, it was clarified that the location of the alert did not mean the abuse occurred there, but that is where it was reported from – in the case of Care Homes, perhaps from a new resident
- Everyone acknowledged that communication was an issue as often the language used was confusing. It had been suggested by one stakeholder group that the word 'Safeguarding' was not straightforward and 'Stop Abuse' was generally easier to understand
- In relation to Board membership, Healthwatch was no longer a member for statutory reasons, and Worcestershire Voices had joined. Further alignment was needed in due course

The Panel Chairman concluded that there was a long way to go but was pleased with the progress made to date.

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairman