

Minutes of the Adult Care and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

County Hall, Worcester

Wednesday, 29 September 2021, 2.00 pm

Present:

Cllr Shirley Webb (Chairman), Cllr David Chambers, Cllr Lynn Denham,
Cllr Paul Harrison, Cllr Matt Jenkins, Cllr James Stanley and Cllr Emma Stokes

Also attended:

Cllr Adrian Hardman
John Taylor, Healthwatch Worcestershire

Sarah Wilkins, Director of Education and Early Help, Worcestershire Children
First

Paula Furnival, Strategic Director of People

Rebecca Wassell, Assistant Director - Commissioning

Kerry McCrossan, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care

Sarah Rothwell, Commissioning Manager

Laura Westwood, Lead Commissioner

Maria Idoine, Senior Finance Business Partner

Sally Baldry, Principal Management Information Analyst

Samantha Morris, Scrutiny Co-ordinator

Emma James, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 March 2021 (previously circulated).

(Copies of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

393 Apologies and Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations who

would be addressing the Panel as part of Agenda Item 5 (Worcestershire's All Age Carers Strategy).

Apologies were received from Cllrs Jo Monk, Adrian Kriss and Karen May (Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing).

The Chairman further advised that, on this occasion, the Director of People would be present online, as due to the fuel crisis she was unable to attend in person.

394 Declarations of Interest

None.

395 Public Participation

None.

396 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

397 Worcestershire's All Age Carers Strategy

Attending for this item were:

Worcestershire County Council:

- Paula Furnival, Strategic Director of People
- Rebecca Wassell, Assistant Director for Commissioning
- Kerry McCrossan, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care
- Rebecca Rothwell, Commissioning Manager

Worcestershire Children First - Sarah Wilkins, Director of Education and Early Help

Three representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector addressed the Panel:

Anne Duddington (Chair of Worcestershire Parent and Carers Community (WPCC)) was a carer for her son who had a severe learning disability and complex health and care needs and was a longstanding member of the Carers Partnership. WPCC had been founded 15 years ago as a voluntary sector organisation to support parent carers and young people who had disabilities and additional needs, since carers faced intense pressures during a lifetime of caring. WPCC supported approximately 800 individuals (200 member families) and assisted with plans for development of services.

Anne endorsed the principle of an all-age strategy, the main generic outcomes and also endorsed the expertise of Worcestershire Association of Carers and

Worcestershire Young Carers (YSS) which delivered the current contracts for carers.

The draft Strategy in its present form was not yet accessible as an everyday document for both professionals and carers and Anne referred to the fact that it was wordy and difficult to navigate, did not feel meaningful to carers, and lacked a timeline and details for the Action Plan and the key performance indicators agreed by the Health and Well-being Board. There were detailed points concerning inaccurate references to legislation, confusing use of figures and loss of some key features which had been very useful and given meaning. Appendix 5 (Carers Strategic and Engagement Groups) did not feature the Scrutiny Board or the role of WPCCC and Appendix 6 (Map of Carer Support) was useful but incomplete.

However, Anne highlighted her appreciation for the work which had gone into producing the Strategy to date, appreciated there would be further amendments and she assured the Panel of WPCCC's willingness to be part of any continuing work both now and in implementing and monitoring the Strategy.

Judy Adams (Carers Action Worcestershire) spoke as a member of Carers Action Worcestershire Consortium which included the county's five carer focused organisations (WPCCC, YSS Worcestershire Young Carers, Crossroads Caring for Carers, Carers Careline (Redditch) and Worcestershire Association of Carers. The Consortium had contributed to the consultation on the Strategy and the inclusion of consultation comments showed a willingness to engage and listen. The Consortium was very pleased that the Strategy remained all-age, which was so important at transition points for example when young carers became adult carers, as well as recognising that many people have multiple caring roles.

Disappointment was expressed at the lack of opportunity for carers to review this latest version of the Strategy before it was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and it was hoped this could take place before the Health and Well-being Board. Additionally, the fact that funding for the Integrated Carers Hub had remained the same for five years was in effect a budget reduction.

Areas requiring clarification included which organisations would be signing up to the Strategy (the 'we?'), the role of the NHS, whether the outcomes reviewed by carers could be made clearer, whether the section on prevention could be summarised to be clearer to carers, how the action plan would be developed and more explanation about links to other strategies. It would also be very helpful to include an updated version of the 'Strategy on a page'.

Carole Cumino, Chief Executive of Worcestershire Association of Carers (WAC) perceived the Strategy as a 'rough diamond' in that everything was there but needed shaping to be more understandable.

The Chairman thanked the individuals for their attendance and contribution and asked that statements be passed to the Officers present for them to respond to any questions which were not answered during the Panel's discussion.

The Strategic Director of People also thanked the individuals for their contributions which were very helpful and acknowledged that the draft document needed to become more user-friendly, therefore comments from this discussion would be taken on board and there would be further liaison with WAC.

Rebecca Rothwell, Commissioning Manager talked through the Agenda report and explained the rationale for the Strategy, the vision, values, approach, priorities and commitment to carers, stakeholder feedback, governance, monitoring and reporting of progress of delivery and accountability.

The Strategy had been co-produced with a whole spectrum of carers including parent carers, young carers and young adult carers and a range of other key stakeholders, with good, helpful feedback. The rationale was to minimise the gap between Adult and Children's Services and to work in partnership to provide a more integrated offer to carers because the vision and outcomes were the same albeit supported in very different ways. The Strategy was not intended to be static and delivery would be under Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board with multi agency groups to implement. Whilst the Strategy was important, the Commissioning Manager believed the Action Plan would be key to making a difference to carers' lives.

Key outcomes had been retained from the previous Strategy as the overwhelming feedback indicated their ongoing relevance, with carers wanting to be treated as experts, be appreciated and be involved.

Development of the Strategy had included research of good practice for carers support and one of the biggest changes would be incorporation of NICE (National Institute for Health and care Excellence) guidelines. It was also important to make reference to the five key pieces of legislation as carers often did not realise that support for them was a legal responsibility.

While the Council could only fulfil what was within its remit, the expectation was that all partners would sign up to the Strategy and the Action Plan would be on the website. Regarding funding, further to the figures set out in the report, it would be necessary to explore other funding opportunities.

Moving forward, the Strategy would be amended based on feedback from the Panel's discussion and the new version would be more user-friendly.

Comment was invited from the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care, who explained that whilst he was not the portfolio holder for the Strategy (which came under the CMR for Health and Well-being), in answer to the query about who was the 'we' in the narrative, he suggested it referred to everyone who provided support to carers. He also stressed the fact that the Strategy was a work in progress and agreed that a much simpler document was needed for carers.

The Chairman invited discussion and the following main points were raised:

- When asked whether there was a single point of access for carers, it was explained that adults could self-refer to WAC, which would then come through to adult social care contact team – for children, assuming a child was in school, part of schools’ role was to identify young carers requiring additional support and to contact Worcestershire Young Carers (YSS).
- In response to a follow up query that this process may be too much and whether a single access point for all would be preferable, the Officers advised that the Adult and Children’s carer hubs provided support and information and liaised with all the relevant agencies.
- When asked about young carers who were hard to reach, the Director of Education and Early Help acknowledged that while there was data around the number of young carers, there was more that could be done and the Action Plan would help to understand who the young carers were, data would be gathered from young carer providers. Schools had a role in promoting awareness of young carers, understanding their experience was key. It was important to ensure that the impact on their education was minimal and that they had the opportunity to get involved with positive activities.
- Regarding success in reaching carers across diverse communities, schools played a role in this and Officers were not aware of any particular issues.
- A Panel member endorsed the comments made by the carer representatives present and stressed the importance of plain English so that the Strategy was accessible to everyone in particular those new to the system, and the Officers gave assurances that this would be taken on board.
- Members asked whether the Strategy would also be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel (CFOSP), and the Chairman explained that members of that Panel had been invited to the discussion today. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised that the discussion had been set up as joint between the two Panels and although unfortunately the Chairman of the Children and Families OSP was unable to attend, two members present were on both Panels. Further consideration by the CFOSP may depend on the timeline for the Health and Well-being Board.
- A Panel member sought clarification about tender arrangements for the contract for the carers service specification including whether the specification was clear and how potential conflicts of interest were managed. The WAC Chief Executive clarified that the carer hub was currently run by WAC, which was also an independent charity. She was very clear about the specification and explained how the Council held her organisation to account for its delivery of the contract, for example looking at the number of carers being supported in each district. WAC also held detailed statistics.
- The reference to TUPE was queried and whether a service change was involved, and it was explained that this related to an implication of implementation of the Strategy and that professional advice from Human Resources would be followed
- When asked what statistics there were around raising carer awareness, the Director of Education and Early Help explained that one tool was to

look at numbers who had contacted YSS – an organisation which had a long history of supporting young carers in Worcestershire as well as a strong national presence. Additionally, a recent audit of schools indicated they were good at recognising their role in identifying young carers. Linkage of the SEND Strategy and All Age Disability Strategy was also important, as well as raising awareness about identification of need, signposting and the safety of very young carers.

- A Panel member pointed out the disparity between increased need and the fact that the budget for the Carer Hub remained the same.
- The Assistant Director for Commissioning highlighted the huge amount of work undertaken by the Officers involved in co-ordinating the Strategy.

The following actions were agreed:

- The Statements from Anne Duddington and Judy Adams would be forwarded to the People Directorate as feedback on the draft Strategy, and for the Directorate to respond to any outstanding questions
- Sight of the Action Plan was requested, which the Officers advised would follow once the Strategy was finalised, and would be updated annually.
- An easy read plain English version of the Strategy for non-professionals including councillors
- The members of the Children & Families OSP who were present would report back to that Panel in order that any further scrutiny of the draft Strategy be agreed.

398 Care Work as a Career Scrutiny Report - Update on Progress against Recommendations

Attending for this item were:

- Paula Furnival, Strategic Director of People
- Rebecca Wassell, Assistant Director for Commissioning
- Kerry McCrossan, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care
- Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

Introducing the report, the Assistant Director for Commissioning explained that progress against the recommendations of the Care Work as a Career Scrutiny Task Group (STG) had previously been reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board in January 2021, and to Task Group members and the then Chairman of this Panel in February, when this further update was requested. She explained that this work was mainly around how the Council could champion care work, and was therefore mostly outward looking. Everyone acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought huge pressures on the care industry and potential crises of the sector.

The Assistant Director referred to the progress report at Appendix 1 and highlighted the main points against each theme of recommendation.

Regarding recruitment and retention of care work staff (recommendations 1-5), it had been possible to carry forward the unspent element of the £15,000 budget for communications from 2020/21, and effective use would be made of the remaining £4,137.80. A lot of work had focused on promoting the value of care work to young people and celebrating their value, which had been well received. The 'I Care Ambassador' scheme was working quite well which it was hoped would help to dispel the myths around care work. Work to build a closer relationships with Skills for Care and to develop networking opportunities was ongoing.

Exploration of the Council's influence to enhance terms and conditions of care workers through its commissioning process had been a struggle, with lateral thinking needed, for example to promote the Blue Light card benefit scheme to external providers. The Council's refer a friend scheme had been relaunched.

Regarding developing the care worker role (recommendations 6-7), work to scale up provision of care worker apprentices had slowed down due to issues regarding funding of Apprentices – whilst the levy could cover the training, the actual employment of the apprentice and creation of the funded roles remained the main issue to overcome, which would have an impact in the wider community. The Team had also met with stakeholders to share ideas for encouraging care leavers into work or skills programmes and it was hoped to have information soon on the success of this.

The Council had delivered a number of training programmes and decisions could now be taken on when to resume the Learning and Development (L&D) Team's in accordance with covid guidance. Through the new hire incentive scheme, the Council's Provider social care services had been able to recruit two apprentices when they had only planned to recruit one.

In terms of supporting and celebrating the existing workforce (recommendation 8), a range of work had been able to continue throughout the pandemic, and regarding liaison with education and training providers (recommendation 9), much of this work was carried out by the L&D team.

Looking at evidence of what works well elsewhere (recommendations 10-11) it had been agreed that emulating use of primary data to predict future service need, as seen by the Scrutiny Task Group in Shropshire, would be part of wider digital work as the benefits would be council-wide.

The Chairman invited discussion and the following main points were made:

- The Officers were congratulated for their work on this very important area
- A Panel member suggested a further update on the use of primary data to predict future service need would be useful, which the Assistant Director acknowledged
- When asked whether care workers had been asked about what they loved about their job and reasons for leaving, it was explained that such information was tricky to access from independent employers and may

involve personal issues, however the Council was able to look at wider work on what was good about care work

- The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care believed that quite a lot of people saw care work as a stepping stone to wider NHS roles, although those joining at a later stage in their career may be more likely to stay.
- A Panel member suggested a generic workforce survey could be helpful and highlighted the importance of pay rates
- The Strategic Director of People stressed the value of the Scrutiny Task Group's work to the Council, which had helped with developments such as the doubling of the reablement workforce to help people coming out of hospital, achieved through negotiation with the Clinical Commissioning Group. She agreed that pay rates were low but believed that with the right work, positive work environments were possible.

In terms of actions, the Panel agreed that a further update on progress on evidence of what works well elsewhere (use of primary data to predict future service need - Recommendation 10) would be provided, however in view of the cross-cutting nature of this work, the Scrutiny Officers would suggest this to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairman/men.

399 Supported Living Market Position Statement

Attending for this item were:

- Paula Furnival, Strategic Director of People
- Rebecca Wassell, Assistant Director for Commissioning
- Kerry McCrossan, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care
- Laura Westwood, Lead Commissioner
- Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

The Lead Commissioner explained that she had been asked to provide an update on the Council's Market Position Statement for Supported Living, following her report to the Panel about Independent Living Options in November 2020. Supported Living was defined as services for individuals who lived in shared houses with support, in clusters of flats with on-site support, or who lived alone with support – the key purpose of which was support with ordinary living skills.

A needs assessment was carried out, updated annually and a market position statement created which set out what provision was needed and what needed to be built, based on numbers of people. Recent examples of developments included a property in Redditch for lower mental health needs and flats in Worcester which it was hoped to use for mental health needs and complex needs.

The following points were raised:

- The Panel was advised that the Council was fortunate in that a lot of offers to build supported living accommodation were received, however

it was important to check provision was in the right location, of the right type and could be staffed

- It was explained that the Shared Lives scheme was run by the Council and that anyone wanting to provide a shared lives placement needed to be approved by a Panel, would complete training and receive four visits a year.

400 Performance and In-Year Budget Monitoring

Attending for this item were:

- Paula Furnival, Strategic Director of People
- Rebecca Wassell, Assistant Director for Commissioning
- Kerry McCrossan, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care
- Maria Idoine, Senior Finance Business Partner
- Sally Baldry, Principal Management and Information Analyst
- Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care

In-year Budget Monitoring

Maria Idoine, Senior Finance Business Partner referred to the slides included in the Agenda which set out the Quarter 1 (April to June 2021) financial position for Adult Services. There was broadly a breakeven position across the service as a whole, with ongoing implementation of transformational change via the People Services Strategy to support efficiencies and demand management. The Agenda referred to the most significant variances from the budget (underspend in Older People services, increased placement costs for Learning Disability services, underspend in Physical Disability services, Mental Health services overspend on placement costs and underspend in Support Services).

It was confirmed that the one off staff savings in mental health services related to the number of unfilled staff vacancies.

Performance Monitoring

The Principal Management and Information Analyst talked through the performance information included in the Agenda.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- Admission to permanent care (65+) ASCOF 2A (2) – it was noted that for Quarter 1 2021-22, the rate had increased steadily each month to 595.17 (818 people) at the end June-21. There was an initial decrease in long term admissions during 20/21 due to Covid and alternative sources of support were provided through family support and domiciliary care. The recent increase was related to permanent moves for people in pathway 3 beds as a result of urgent care pressures plus an increase in demand. At the moment it was very difficult to predict the demand for permanent care but overall, the demand was rising.
- In response to a Members concern about the general decline in the performance measures reported to the Panel, the Principal Management and Information Analyst explained how performance was

discussed regularly at management level and deep dives were carried out where needed to understand trends.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contribution and attendance at the meeting.

401 Work Programme 2021/22

The Chairman reminded the Panel that Healthwatch had been invited to put forward any suggestions for the Work Programme, with the following received:

- Information about/access to Adult Social care Services (e.g. website and digital/alternatives)
- Progress on implementation of the 3 Conversation model for adult social care
- Mental Health Social Work Services for Adults
- Examination of the effectiveness of Local Homeless Partnerships across Worcestershire (including a focus on rough sleeping)

The Panel was happy to include the suggestions provided by Healthwatch, whilst being mindful of work being carried out by other scrutiny bodies.

Regarding the Council's All Age Disability Strategy, the Director advised work on this new Strategy had started in January with Worcestershire Children First.

A question was asked about a National Disability Strategy which may have an opportunity of consultation for the Panel to contribute to, and the Director agreed to check this.

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm

Chairman