

ADULTS, CHILDREN AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Simon Bond, Carole Da Costa, Maureen Hunt, Julian Sharpe (Chairman) and John Story (Vice-Chairman)

Also in attendance: Councillor Stuart Carroll, Eveline Hackney, Janet King, Mark Jervis, Derek Moss and Kieran Rabbitt

Officers: Andy Carswell, Nikki Craig, Lynne Lidster, Kevin McDaniel and Vernon Nosal

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Tony Wilson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bond – Declared a personal interest in item 8 as he was a trustee of the Recovery College, which was mentioned in the report.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on June 20th 2019 be approved as an accurate record.

HEATHERWOOD HOSPITAL UPDATE

Janet King, Director of HR and Corporate Services and Deputy CEO at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust, introduced the item and informed Members that the redevelopment project had a total budget of £98.8million but she had set herself the task of completing the project under budget.

Janet King explained that the new Heatherwood Hospital would provide 6 new Laminar flow theatres, day care and endoscopy facilities, new treatment rooms for procedures that did not require use of theatre in order to free up capacity, and 48 inpatient beds, which included eight private patient beds. There would also be extended hours in theatres and outpatients in order to maximise efficiency. It was projected that there would be 4,336 day cases and 3,192 elective cases seen to at the orthopaedic theatre on an annual basis. It was also anticipated there would be 1,592 outpatient procedures and 6,828 appointments per year, in addition to 1,592 day cases and 265 elective cases in the private patient facility.

Members were advised that, at the time of the presentation, the construction project was on week 33 out of a total 123 on site. Concrete pours had been completed on the lower ground, first and second floors, and utilities work was due to start at the end of the month. The works on the internal roads were due to start from the 7th October, with works to the main Heatherwood roundabout likely to begin after the 2020 Royal Ascot week. Members were advised that the new road layout at the roundabout would create additional lanes and a safer driving environment. Janet King stated that the topping out ceremony was scheduled for February 3rd 2020 and contract completion was due on June 11th 2021. The first patients were anticipated in December 2021 or January 2022, and it would take a further three to four months before the hospital was fully operational. Members were reminded that the planning application included 230 new homes, although construction on these was not due to start until 2022.

It was confirmed that staff accommodation would be included as part of the new hospital, and that the existing Heatherwood Hospital would continue to operate as normal until the new hospital was fully opened. Responding to a question from Cllr Da Costa, Janet King stated that she was not anticipating any issues relating to staff recruitment, and that she would be going all out to recruit the right staff. She added she would be happy to explore opportunities for jobs or apprenticeships for young people in the Royal Borough.

Members were advised that staff were already undertaking site tours. It was agreed that the Chairman would look to arrange a site visit for Members of the Panel.

Members thanked Janet King for giving the presentation.

PROVISION OF HOME CARE SERVICES

The Head of Commissioning – Adults and Children introduced the item and gave a presentation on care at home for older people and those with physical disabilities. Members were told that care at home services for older people and people with physical disabilities were commissioned by the Council in order to enable those residents to stay at home and to maximise their independence. Examples of care at home included personal care, domestic tasks, helping people to take medication correctly and helping with outside activities and socialisation. An average of 12 hours per week per person was provided, although this varied; some people required only short visits whereas others had more complex needs. As of the end of August 2019 the Council's weekly spend on care at home was £69,000, although there were many more people supported at home who funded their own support.

Members were informed that the Council had six main contracts with providers of care at home, with each company required to be registered with the Care Quality Commission and to undergo regular inspections. Of the six providers, one was rated outstanding, one required improvement and others were all rated good. Five of these were smaller, locally-based care providers. The Head of Commissioning – Adults and Children advised that nationally only three per cent of care providers had an outstanding rating. All providers contracted to the Royal Borough were monitored quarterly as a minimum and more frequently if needed. The Quality Team within Optalis undertook visits and provided support, and the Care Governance Framework was applicable if there were quality concerns regarding providers.

In addition to the main contracts, there were a number of 'spot' contracts to provide home support for 17 people living outside the main conurbations in the Royal Borough. However providing support for people outside the main population areas was a particular challenge, as was attracting people to work in the care sector. There had been an increased demand for home care services due to the provisions available, and there were more people leaving hospital who were medically fit for discharge who needed intensive support at home instead.

Regarding Britain's exit from the European Union, Members were advised that all registered providers of home care had received guidance from the Department of Health and assurances in terms of access to medication. None of the registered providers had raised concerns over the settlement status of any staff members who were citizens of an EU country.

The Head of Commissioning – Adults and Children stated that the Council was committed to working with existing providers who were delivering a good quality service, and to attract new providers to work within the Royal Borough, particularly in service areas where capacity was an issue.

As part of the presentation on home care service provision, Kieran Rabbitt, director, and Eveline Hackney, registered manager, of the Leading Care Company – one of the providers of home care services in the Royal Borough – had been invited to speak to Members. The Panel was told about the company's background and informed that it had been working with the Council to provide home care services since December 2016. Eveline Hackney said there was a family ethos to the company and one of its core aims was to provide continuous professional

development to staff. Services provided by the Leading Care Company needed to be customer centric and care plans were considered as contractual documents. An immediate response would be given to any new requests, suspensions or restarts of care cover, and assessments and confirmation of whether a customer's needs could be met would be confirmed within 48 hours.

There were 38 members of staff employed, who would give an average of 25 hours of care per week. A minimum of 30 minutes of care would be provided per appointment, although there were a handful 15 minute appointments where the customer had explicitly requested it. Customer information was stored and updated using an app.

QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT

Members were reminded that the Council had set a number of performance indicators to monitor service area performance. Overall 95 per cent of indicators were on target, above the national average of 70 per cent. Of the performance indicators relevant to the Panel, 12 were meeting their target, one was just off target but within an acceptable range, and two required improvement.

The Director of Children's Services advised Members that the performance indicator relating to the percentage of children subject to a child protection order for two years or more was off target due to an unusual circumstance where three children in the same case were all subject to the same order, which had inflated the percentage figure. The Director of Children's Services advised that these three children were no longer subject to a protection order and stated he was confident there was nothing systemically wrong. He stated that cases were constantly reviewed, and at 18 months serious consideration had to be given to continuing a protection plan beyond the two year target or ceasing it. He said that in this case of the three children, the social work team were satisfied that it would be prudent to allow the order to continue beyond two years.

Members were informed that in the first quarter the indicator for assessing or reviewing carers over a 12 month period was 48.4 per cent, below the target of 60 per cent. However Members were advised by the Director of Adult Services that the target was now being met, although it remained to be seen how the average balanced out. This was attributable in part to a need to fill vacancies. The Director of Adult Services informed Members that two social workers had recently left after receiving their full training in order to pursue employment opportunities nearer to home.

The Director of Children's Services reminded Members that 91 per cent of schools in the Royal Borough were rated good or outstanding, and none were rated as inadequate or had been placed into special measures. He also said that the 81 per cent of eligible children receiving a 6-8 week review within the correct timeframe was significantly higher than the average for the south east. It was noted that the percentage of delayed transfers of care was nearly zero. Members were informed that this was important as delayed transfers of care could, in some cases, lead to increased patient frailty and subsequent increased care needs.

The Director of Children's Services said however that there was increased demand for services, which had led to additional agency resources being used. The sustainability of this was something for the Panel to consider in future. The Lead Member for Adults, Children and Health stated that recruitment and retention of social workers could be considered at a future meeting, and that a long-term approach was needed in order to reduce the reliance on agency staff usage. Cllr Da Costa asked if more could be done to reduce the cost of housing for care staff in order to make the Royal Borough a more attractive proposition for people looking for employment. The Director of Children's Services said there was a pressure on housing, although there were some properties available where rents were 80 per cent.

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

The Head of HR and Corporate Projects introduced the item and explained that the report, which covered all services provided by the Council, covered the period from April 2018-March 2019.

Members were informed that of the 1,600 contacts made to the Council's compliments and complaints team, 437 were progressed as complaints. Of these, 19 were for Adult Services and 38 for Children's Services. Of the Children's Services complaints 28 were statutory complaints, which were invoked when made by or on behalf of a child in care or child in need; the remaining 10 were corporate complaints, where the young person involved does not receive a statutory service.

The Head of HR and Corporate Projects explained that the Council's complaints process is made up of various stages depending on the type of complaint. Adult Services and Children's Services complaints are investigated by Optalis and Achieving for Children after being processed through the Council's compliments and complaints team. A complainant is able to refer their case to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman at any time for them to consider their complaint; however the LGSCO will not normally review a complaint if it had not exhausted the council's complaints process. A total of 46 complaints and enquiries were made to the LGSCO. Of these 12 related to Adult Services; 3 were referred back for local resolution as the complaints process had not been exhausted, 1 was closed after initial enquiries, and the remaining 8 were upheld. There were 8 complaints relating to Children's Services; 2 were incomplete, 5 were referred back for local resolution and 1 was upheld.

Members were informed that a quarter of complaints relating to Adult Services were due to being unhappy with how a situation/incident was resolved, whilst attitude or behaviour of staff was the second highest complaint theme. For Children's Services complaints the three main themes which were failing to follow policy, lack of action, and situations being handled incorrectly. This gave the opportunity for learnings from complaints to be made and these had been included in the main report.

Members were informed that timeliness in responding to stage 1 complaints had improved for the council. The overall figure for responding to a complaint within the correct timescale 2018/19 was 64 per cent, up from 51 the previous year. For Adult Services 74 per cent of complaints were dealt with within the timescale compared to 55 per cent the year before; for Children's Services the rate was 47 per cent, up from 27 cent. There were four stage two complaints and one stage three complaint, which were all partially upheld.

The number of compliments received had increased from 456 to 555. For Children's Services the number of compliments was similar to the figure for the previous year (93, compared to 97); however compliments for Adult Services had fallen from 57 in 2017/18 to 19 in 2018/19. It was not clear why this was the case.

The Head of HR and Corporate Projects said compliments or complaints were not actively sought, and those referenced in the report were collated from unsolicited responses that had come through online forms, emails and letters. The Head of Adult Social Care said that when an assessment had taken place during an Adult Services case, a customer would be asked how they felt about the process in order to create a learning outcome. Members were informed that the complaints received did not all necessarily relate to incidents that had occurred in 2018/19 and that some from the LGSCO were historical matters. It was also noted that some complaints were as a result of residents' wants not being positively resolve, rather than needs.

It was noted that overall the number of complaints was reduced, suggesting improvements in performance, and that some of the complaints that were not being resolved in a timely manner were complicated with many issues that needed to be resolved. The Director of Children's Services informed Members that managers were now sent email reminders from the compliments and complaints team at the end of each week setting out which complaints were

imminently due for resolution, in order to support them in resolving issues in a more timely manner.

ANNUAL REPORT ON COMMISSIONED SERVICES

The Head of Commissioning – Adults and Children informed Members that this was the second Annual Report to be produced. Feedback from Councillors from the first report suggested there was a desire for a focus on efficiency effectiveness and value for money of service providers.

The contracts and spending areas relevant to the Panel were outlined in table 9 of the report, with a further breakdown in table 10. The Head of Commissioning – Adults and Children said it was important to build relationships with partner organisations who provided services for the Council and a lot of work was being done in this area. It was highlighted that of the five companies awarded the block contracts for residential and nursing care, three had an outstanding rating. This was significant as only three per cent of providers nationally had an outstanding rating. Members were also informed there was an additional spend of around £20million on adult social care services, in addition to the spend on adult social care provision through Optalis.

The Vice Chairman noted the report stated that Achieving for Children's budget overspend was partly attributable to the continued use of interim staff, and asked if more could be done to combat this. The Director of Children's Services stated that a high proportion of qualified social workers preferred to work for agencies as their terms of employment did not compel them to work out of hours or do duty work, and in some cases they were able to earn more money doing this. In addition neighbouring authorities were able to offer greater salaries compared to the Royal Borough. There were numerous examples of social workers from out of area receiving training within the Royal Borough but then returning home once their training had been completed. The Director of Children's Services stated there had been investment in a strong management team in order to reduce risks faced by permanent social workers, as this made the Council an attractive employer. At the same time however it was not considered good practice to have too many newly-qualified social workers working for the Council at the same time. The Director of Children's Services reiterated that there was a desire for children to be allocated a full-time social worker in order to guarantee continuity of care and stability.

The Vice Chairman noted that one of domiciliary care providers had been given a 'requires improvement' rating and asked if any action was being taken in relation to this. The Head of Commissioning – Adults and Children said the number of people whose care was supported by the provider was decreasing, and was not aware of the company having any private clients in the Royal Borough. The care provider had been awarded the contract four years ago but since that time a decision had been made to bring in several more suppliers, rather than relying on a single supplier. The contract was due to expire next year. No concerns were raised over the Council's ability to fulfil services if the decision was made not to renew the contract. The Lead Member for Adults, Children and Health stated that in future he wanted the procurement process for new providers to unequivocally state that contracts would only be awarded to companies with a good or outstanding rating.

It was confirmed that the rate of pay for social workers was set by each individual Local Authority. It was also confirmed that there was no clause in any training contracts for social workers that compelled them to work for the Royal Borough for a set period of time after completing their training.

JOINING UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS, EDUCATION, NEET AND APPRENTICESHIPS

The Director of Children's Services informed Members that there was a misconception that youngsters were legally obliged to continue studying up until the age of 18. There was no statutory requirement for colleges, schools or Local Authorities to hold places for pupils.

However there was a requirement for the Council to monitor what education or training young people were undertaking and to identify those not taking part in order to re-engage them. The number of pupils in the Royal Borough whose status was not known had dramatically decreased from previous years after additional resources were invested in.

There was a view that more needed to be done to support care leavers and children in care, and to investigate streams of funding. It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group be set up to look into this, and for an item to be included on the next Panel agenda. It was agreed that the Director of Children's Services would draft Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group.

WORK PROGRAMME

Members confirmed the additional agenda item regarding the outcome of the Task and Finish Group. The contents of the work programme was noted.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the forthcoming meetings.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.43 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....