

## ADULTS, CHILDREN AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 11 JUNE 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Christine Bateson, Carole Da Costa, Maureen Hunt, John Story (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) and Amy Tisi

Also in attendance: Councillors John Baldwin, Gurpreet Bhangra, Simon Bond, Mandy Brar, Stuart Carroll, Phil Haseler, David Hilton, Gurch Singh, Chris Targowski and Simon Werner, and Mark Jervis, Derek Moss and Tony Wilson

Officers: Andy Carswell, Lin Ferguson, Hilary Hall, Lynne Lidster, Michael Murphy and Kevin McDaniel

### ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Story proposed a motion to appoint Cllr Hunt as chairman for the municipal year. This was seconded by Cllr Bateson and unanimously agreed by members.

Cllr Bateson proposed a motion to appoint Cllr Story as vice chairman for the municipal year. This was seconded by Cllr Story. A named vote was carried out, which resulted in a tie as Cllr Hunt was unable to take part due to technical issues. Cllr Da Costa proposed a motion to appoint herself as vice chairman for the municipal year. This was seconded by Cllr Tisi. A named vote was carried out, which resulted in a tie. It was agreed to defer the appointment of the vice chairman for the municipal year to the next meeting. It was proposed that Cllr Story should be appointed vice chairman for the duration of the meeting, in order for him to chair the meeting and allow it to take place. This was unanimously agreed by members.

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That the minutes of the meeting held on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

### RESPIRE CARE PROVISION FOR CARERS

Members were reminded that the topic had initially been put forward by a member of the public, who had contacted Adult Services at the start of the year. Input had since also been sought from Children's Services.

Officers were asked to outline the changes that had taken place in the six months since the question had been put forward by the resident. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, said the Local Offer had been revamped in order to improve residents' right for access to information, which in turn had led to a number of services becoming much more accessible. However, he added that it had not been possible to operate some services during the Covid19 lockdown restrictions. Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning,

said a comprehensive list of services support for carers was now available on the Council's website.

Responding to a question from Cllr Da Costa, Lin Ferguson, Deputy Director of Children's Services, said that carers or parents had the choice of accessing services themselves or asking AfC to arrange it on their behalf. In the case of a carer for a disabled child, assessments could be carried out to see what alternative care support the carer was potentially eligible for. This could include a break, including an overnight break, for the carer or child. Lin Ferguson told the Panel that 114 children up to the age of 18 had received a short break; of those, 56 were in receipt of more than one type of respite care. The Panel was told that there were 24 youngsters between the ages of 18 and 24 who were in receipt of an Education Health and Care Plan, and many of these received more than one type of respite care. Assessments had been carried out by social workers to ascertain the most appropriate level or type of support for the children. Lin Ferguson said 11 people aged up to 25 had had an increase in the provisions in their respite care packages during the Covid19 pandemic.

Cllr Tisi asked about the appraisal process for care services. Lin Ferguson said all service users were given a questionnaire to give feedback on their satisfaction on service delivery. She said it was particularly important to receive this based on users' experiences during Covid19.

Cllr Story proposed a motion to thank the resident for raising the topic, but to note that no further review would be necessary as this would result in a duplication of work that was already being carried out. The comments made by Panel members would be noted and passed to the resident. This motion was seconded by Cllr Bateson. Cllr Da Costa requested an addition to the motion, to ensure that levels of success would be measured and asked how this could be done in future. It was agreed that officers would discuss the matter with Cllr Da Costa to agree a form of wording relating to the points she had raised.

**It was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:**

- (i) The resident should be thanked for raising the discussion topic with Adult Services**
- (ii) It be noted that no further review work should be carried out as it would result in a duplication of work for officers**
- (iii) All comments made by the Panel members be noted**
- (iv) Officers should discuss with Cllr Da Costa the specific questions she had raised.**

#### QUARTER 4 AND END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cllr Story congratulated Council staff and officers for the achievements listed in the report, and stated he wanted to highlight the support that had been given to the 2,324 most clinically vulnerable people in the Borough during the Covid19 restrictions. He invited officers to give a commentary on the three 'red' areas listed in the report. Regarding delayed transfers of care from hospitals, Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning, explained that targets for local areas are set nationally. The local target was 1.5 delayed transfers of care per 100,000 population and the national target was 3; however, local performance was 3.6 delayed transfers of care per 100,000 population. In many cases this was due to difficulties experienced in transferring patients out of hospital and back to their homes with an appropriate care package; not all patients were medically fit when the time came for them to be discharged. Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning said performance had improved since October but the figures could be prone to further fluctuation. Since April during the Covid19 pandemic a number of patients had been transferred out of hospital in a timely manner. Members were told that there was strong domiciliary care support to assist with transfers of care.

Regarding cessation of child protection plans, Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, stated that the figures were impacted by two children from the same family being required to

stay under a child protection plan for longer than two years. The social care team had indicated they were satisfied that it was appropriate for the plan to remain in place for longer than the recommended two years. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, acknowledged more work needed to be done but said the views of the social care team indicated that the plan was working. He added he was not concerned at the red rating as he was familiar with the circumstances of the family in question.

Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, explained there was a national target to complete assessments for children potentially needing an Education Health and Care Plan within 20 weeks. In the vast majority of cases where the assessments had not been completed by this time, it had been done with the agreement of the parents in order to make sure the right information was being collated. However some assessments were delayed as there was often a high turnover of SEN staff at the end of each academic year. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, highlighted that although the performance level of having 86 per cent of assessments completed within 20 weeks was below the Borough's target of 90 per cent, it was still significantly higher than the national average of 60 per cent and the south east regional average of 60.4 per cent.

Cllr Story raised the issue of the new medical centre in Ascot and asked what was being done to ensure it would not compete with existing service providers. Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning, said there was an integrated care plan that had been put together following discussions with health colleagues and care providers to ensure the new centre would complement provision rather than providing competition.

Cllr Tisi asked what were the main risks associated with extending an EHCP assessment beyond 20 weeks and asked where the delays mainly came from. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, said delays often came when the schools that were identified as being appropriate settings for a child were asked to respond; they had a deadline of 20 school days in which to respond but many did not reply until just before the deadline. This slowed the process as a draft EHCP could not be created without the input of the schools.

Cllr Tisi asked officers which targets they felt would be the most difficult to meet in the next review year. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, said good progress had been made in recent years regarding therapeutic care but during the Covid19 restrictions there had been an increase in the number of young people who had not been able to access this service. The Borough had been working with the Local Parent Carer Forum to share practice on helping children in particularly challenging situations, but the chairman of this group had had to step down and it had not been possible to work with the group. Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning, said it was anticipated there would be an upsurge in demand for drug and alcohol treatment services post lockdown, particularly low-level support services. She said she was concerned there may be less ability to successfully meet targets relating to treatments. Cllr Carroll said he had been meeting regularly with the Borough's Primary Care Clinical Lead, Dr Huw Thomas, and raised tackling issues regarding substance dependence and related mental health problems, and this had been useful in building an understanding of the local situation. Public Health England modelling would be used to try to implement a longer-term strategy.

Cllr Carroll told the Panel that direction on tackling any second wave of Covid19 would be led by central government and the SAGE committee. Locally, a number of volunteer groups had helped to identify particularly vulnerable residents and it was acknowledged that the volunteers had been important in providing resilience to other services in the Borough. Hilary Hall, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning told members that more than 700 volunteers had been recruited during the pandemic and it was important to embed them into future support networks. Cllr Carroll said the NHS Alliance Board was being used to help formulate an integrated care strategy across different care providers. Meetings were taking place every 6-8 weeks.

Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, said engagement from the public in terms of receiving feedback was generally positive. However feedback suggested working with services relating to SEND needed some improvement.

**It was AGREED UNANIMOUSLY that Panel noted the report and:**

**i) Noted the 2019/20 Adults, Children and Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel Q4 and End of Year Performance Report in Appendix A.**

**ii) Requested relevant Lead Members, Directors and Heads of Service to maintain focus on improving performance.**

### DELIVERY OF SERVICES DURING COVID19 LOCKDOWN

Cllr Story said all staff should be thanked for finding new ways of working and doing a good job in difficult circumstances, and thanked officers for a good report.

Cllr Da Costa said she had seen comments regarding three serious case reviews that had been implemented due to serious injuries or deaths caused to babies or young children, all of which were outside of the Royal Borough. She asked for reassurances that health visitors would still be able to visit people's homes, particularly those who were in vulnerable families, after lockdown restrictions were lifted. She stated that it was harder to form judgements from a virtual meeting. Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children's Services, said health visitors had continued to make home visits throughout the pandemic and reiterated that visits did not require support staff to be in people's homes for long periods at a time. Lin Ferguson, Deputy Director of Children's Services, said of the three children that Cllr Da Costa referred to, one was from a family who had recently moved to Berkshire and was not known to the authorities locally. In a recent Ofsted meeting it had emerged that there had been a pattern of serious injuries happening to young children nationally during the Covid19 pandemic.

Lin Ferguson, Deputy Director of Children's Services, told members that a safe baby project involving the health visitor service and social care services was in the process of being implemented. It would be focussed on new parents and pregnant women in particular, in order to ensure children under the age of 12 months in those families were safe. However it had always been the intention for this service not to use virtual meetings with families, in order to get a better view of how babies operated in their home environment. Members were told that all health visitor clinics would resume from June 15<sup>th</sup>, on an appointment basis and with social distancing in place.

Cllr Carroll said health visitors and social care staff deserved enormous credit for the work they had carried out throughout the pandemic.

Responding to a question from Cllr Bateson about schooling for children in care during the pandemic, Lin Ferguson, Deputy Director of Children's Services, said the Council had access to a vibrant and robust virtual school and this had been an important resource. Members were told that the virtual school had been contacting carers on a weekly basis to ensure children were receiving an appropriate education.

30 per cent of children in care had been attending school throughout Covid19, which was higher than the national average, and since June this had increased to 45 per cent and this figure was still rising. In other locations attendance was 7 or 8 per cent, which tended to be rural authority areas where transport to school was more problematic. Cllr Da Costa said she was concerned at the impact of lockdown restrictions on children's future mental health.

The content of the report was noted by the Panel.

### ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

It was noted that a presentation on Heatherwood Hospital had taken place at the September 2020 meeting and it was agreed this should be referred to in the report. Members also agreed that they wanted an update on the project at the next meeting. Cllr Da Costa noted that a site visit of Heatherwood Hospital had been proposed at the September 2020 meeting but had never taken place; Members agreed they would like this possibility to be explored.

Hilary Hall requested that Optalis staff should be referenced in the 'thanks' section of the report. This was agreed by Panel members.

Members acknowledged they were still on a learning curve in terms of scrutiny, although it was felt a good discussion on the Family Hubs paper had taken place at the previous meeting.

Members unanimously agreed to forward the Annual Scrutiny Report to Full Council, subject to the proposed amendments above.

### WORK PROGRAMME

It was agreed to add the item on Heatherwood Hospital to the agenda for September's meeting. It was confirmed that there were no changes to the timeline regarding preparing the paper on Universal Services.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 7.52 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....