



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and
Community Health Services

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BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health Services following the meeting of the Panel on 2 March 2022. It covers West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, Performance Monitoring, Management of Covid and Panel Review of the Year.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 2 March 2022 to receive an update the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, the Performance Highlight Report for December 2021, an update on the Management of Covid-19 and to discuss the Panel's Annual Review of the Year 2021-22.

We would like to thank you, Dave Howes, Amy Hawkins, Helen St John and Kelly Gillings for attending to present the items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learned from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response.

The main issues discussed are summarised below:

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Update on West Glamorgan Transformation Programme

Kelly Gillings presented an update to the Panel including a summary of what has happened over the last year and a few examples of key work undertaken such as Work with carers; Support given to Children and Young People; Work around workforce; Patient Flow and Community Resilience and ongoing work in response to the pandemic.

In the report it mentioned that one of the key priorities for West Glamorgan remains making sure there is a particular focus on support for carers. We queried if the move to more people living in their own homes meant there were any problems or issues that we need to give particular support to carers for. We heard that there has been huge pressure on carers throughout the pandemic and going forward there is a transformational programme around carers involving the Regional Partnership Board and partners to ensure they are supported all of the time.

We queried why people are being given more direction on how to access direct payments and heard that some people did not understand how to access the payments and also the remit for accessing direct payments was widened through the pandemic to make them more widely available for different purposes.

We asked about the “cohorts” referred to in the report that were used to help shape the plans for Winter. The Programme Director agreed to provide the detail of how many cohorts were used and what each cohort consisted of.

We queried if in terms of the new funding regime for the Board, if anything alters the dynamics underpinning the process of transformation and heard that the new regime gives proper programme and project management which the previous regime did not have.

Regarding remodelling of acute health and community services, we asked if there is anything in the work the Partnership is doing so far that extends the right of fast and direct access to selected services that, after careful consideration, particular professional staff deem more appropriate for individuals / clients in their care and that are preferred instead of directing the individual to an acute hospital A & E or medical assessment service. We were informed that a lot of work is being done around prevention that will stop people entering services in the first place. We heard about developmental work currently being undertaken regarding GP clusters and virtual wards accelerated cluster development, which is working around surrounding GP practices with a multi-disciplinary team and links into services required for admission to hospital. We also heard about a pilot being trialled through the Authority’s commissioning team in 2 zones in Swansea. When a call comes in, if required, a team of rapid response individuals will go out and visit, so rather than people requiring an ambulance for hospital admission a team goes to them immediately to support them. This pilot seems to be working well and a third zone is being added. We would like, if possible, to see either an early draft of the evaluation or an outline of the scheme plus the likely date when the draft evaluation might emerge. It would be especially interested to see how the client assessment process went and whether the ‘flying squad’ was able to reduce the use made of acute hospital assessment facilities.

We noted that joint recruitment of domiciliary care staff has taken place, whereby staff are employed by the Health Board and seconded to Local Authorities and queried why

employment arrangements were set up this way. We heard it was a pilot system to try and attract more staff, as there was a view that there was more kudos with working for the Health Board. However, this was not as successful as hoped, not helped by a national migration out of health care generally, and the Region has since moved back to recruiting locally. We also heard a piece of work on workforce planning going forward is currently being developed to try and attract more people.

Performance Monitoring

Amy Hawkins and Helen St John briefed the Panel on the Performance Highlight Report for December 2021. They also provided verbal feedback on January's performance data.

We heard that December was one of the most challenging months for the Service during the pandemic. We also heard that operational services were still in emergency planning mode in January, but the position had improved by January and was more positive.

We were informed that the number of individuals leaving the Service in January with no ongoing care needs was high for January which is excellent. This is learning the Service must use to challenge the support it offers.

We heard that the Carers Centre has been commissioned to carry out some carers assessments for the Authority.

We heard that Bonymaen House recently received an unannounced CIW visit and inspection and the feedback was excellent. The report will be shared with Scrutiny.

Update on Management of Covid

We heard that in terms of Covid, it is an improving picture. We also heard that it is expected that the current community Covid rates will continue as they are currently (still quite high but manageable) with all contingency plans still in place and a further drop off expected in April. As well as Covid, there have been several storms recently and you were very pleased to inform us that despite this, all calls scheduled both internal and commissioned were made. The Director stated that he was pleased to see the two Heads of Service back attending Adult Services Panel meetings. We heard that both Heads of Service took up their roles just as Covid started and they have, together with their senior management teams, brought the Service through this as well as a further period of extreme pressure.

Panel Review of the Year 2021-22

Panel Members reviewed the year 2021-22 and discussed four questions. The comments are noted below for your information:

What went well?

- Scrutiny was able to carry on during the pandemic, even though it was at a limited level, and to work with officers to enable them to come and support Scrutiny at a time when they were under extreme pressure.

- The degree of trust between officers within the organisation and between officers and elected members shone through.
- One concern of the Panel was the installation of the WCCIS system at the same time as Covid. The way staff coped with this has been incredible. A lot of recording work had to be undertaken manually because of the problems with the system and it is a real credit to staff that they still managed to cope.
- The positive development of the relationship between private care providers and our providers.
- How councillors have worked better together across parties. There was a job to do and everyone did it. Found different ways of working and learnt new things and all Members improved their IT skills.

What did not go so well?

- Nothing that did not go well. Could not have asked any more of staff.

Has the Panel focussed on the right things?

- Did not have a choice. Had to focus on Covid.
- As a Scrutiny Panel we have supported as much as we could. We recognized from a scrutiny point of view that we needed to minimise workload put on officers, and we were able to bring joint meetings where it was appropriate to reduce the workload and ensure the Panel saw the essential items it needed to see in terms of its scrutiny role. The Panel does have an important role to play, and the areas it concentrated on were the really important areas from a Service point of view. The Panel was happy it could see that these areas were not deteriorating to an extent that would cause concern from a safeguarding point of view.
- Receiving updates on the management of Covid gave Panel Members hope and enabled them to see how hard everyone was working in hugely challenging times. The staff have been amazing.

What have we learnt that will help us with future AS Scrutiny?

- Might be useful to test the Panel's own performance against other scrutiny panels eg Cardiff/Wrexham, to find out how much work they have done and the topics they have looked at and what improvements to the service they have delivered.
- Support for carers is very important including carers assessments. Relied on them so much during pandemic. Panel would like to have some feedback from carers about their experience of taking on this additional workload. Item for the Panel's future work plan.
- Important to look at the situation of appointing staff and promoting the importance of care staff, as without these staff going in to care for people the Authority would have really struggled.
- Important to recognize the important role that Local Area Coordinators play.
- Scrutiny Panel has been really reactive to the situation. This is very positive.
- Increase in mental health issues is really important to be aware of. Need to be reactive to need right now. It is affecting all ages.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised, but in this instance, a formal written response is required by 6 April 2022 to the following:

- Detail to be provided to Panel of how many 'cohorts' were used to help shape the plans for Winter and what each cohort consisted of.
- Panel to see, if possible, either an early draft of the evaluation or an outline of the 'flying squad' pilot scheme being trialled plus the likely date when the draft evaluation might emerge. The Panel is especially interested to see how the client assessment process went and whether the 'flying squad' was able to reduce the use made of acute hospital assessment facilities.
- Inspection Report on Bonymaen House to be shared with the Panel.

Yours sincerely



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