



To:
Councillor Clive Lloyd
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and
Community Health Services

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Date 18 May 2021
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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 20 April 2021. It covers Performance Monitoring and Update on Policy Commitments.

Dear Cllr Lloyd

The Panel met on 20 April to discuss the Performance Monitoring Report for February 2021 and to receive an update on how the Council's Policy Commitments translate to Adult Services.

We would like to thank you, Dave Howes and Amy Hawkins 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:

Performance Monitoring

We heard that the general position was beginning to improve overall in February 2021 and is looking even better now. We were pleased to hear this.

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We heard that slightly less enquiries were received at the Common Access Point with safeguarding referrals going directly to the safeguarding team, however, cases are much more complex – approximately 50 per month more going to social work teams. We wanted to know what data the Common Access Point (CAP) captures in order to build up a picture. We were informed that people are given as much time as they need in order to get all the information required from them on housing, attendance allowance etc. However if it is not captured at CAP it is picked up when referred through to the Initial Assessment Team.

With regards formal reviews we heard that the WCCIS System has gone live since middle of April, and that in the months to come the information in the report around reviews will look different. We also heard that reviews information is good for the Mental Health Team but there is more work to do on the Learning Disabilities Team and you are focusing on this to ensure it is up to date.

We heard that for Carers Assessments, you are not seeing much difference in terms of statistics but that you are more focussed in this area and that work will develop in the coming year. We thought that Social Services no longer provide the same service as years ago, with much more onus on people living independently and greater pressure on carers. We queried if the decline in assessments was due to the pressure carers are under and were informed that you do not know. We were pleased to hear that there is an active group looking at support for carers, an action plan is being put in place and you will be proactively identifying carers. And that the priorities will be recognizing support to enable individuals to continue to care; support to live alongside their caring responsibilities; and information, advice and guidance to ensure appropriate support for carers. We heard it is a whole service responsibility for carers. You suggested it might be useful for the Panel to look at Carers in more depth at a future meeting and we will add this to the work programme.

We heard that Care Home data is much improved, that the position is more stable and that a number of vacancies across the provision are currently being advertised. This is good news.

We queried the current provision for day services and how this compares with two years ago. We were informed that, in terms of residential, it is very much what the whole market looks like; the Authority has vacancies but so does everyone else. For day services, we heard that emergency provision is still being offered, that the same service is being provided but numbers are limited due to social distancing; at 30% capacity. We noted that generally, less people come in to the service now and there is some concern about this. We heard that some of the preventative work has really increased and there are many more complex cases. We feel it is important to look at occupancy levels in Domiciliary Care and Residential Care and safeguarding; a snapshot every six months would be good.

We heard that the pathway between hospital and Bonymaen House is working really well. In February/March they had 14 beds available; now up to 19. We also heard there was a big increase in February in the amount of reablement hours being offered, in terms of domiciliary care support, with it taking six days on average to find support for people.

Regarding residential reablement, we queried from the report, an issue around the in-house medication process, which is going to be revised. We heard it is linked to the complexity of need now being seen in terms of reablement beds; Ensuring right processes are in place and everything is linked.

We were informed of the brokerage figures currently – only two people waiting as of 20 April. This is excellent.

In respect of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, we heard that you are beginning to see improvements in the backlog. We were pleased to hear this.

We queried how the current position compares to last year and the year before, in terms of data in the report. We were informed that comparative figures to last year have been given where possible and the year before figures have also been given where possible. However some information is not comparable.

We mentioned that we believe that for Council housing stock, particularly sheltered housing, that care support plans are produced for every resident who wants one, and queried if you know the number of plans already in place, as a starting point in terms of assessing needs. Officers agreed to provide a response regarding care plans outside of the meeting.

We wanted to know what factors will influence the Integrated Care Fund and uncertainty about funding and when. We heard that the Authority wants an understanding of what new scheme or arrangement might be put in place to support regional working, as early this year as possible, to plan ongoing programmes for next year. The Director told us he believes the Welsh Government has a good understanding about all of the different work Local Authorities and the Health Board have been doing that cannot be absorbed within core funding.

We raised the issue about the withdrawal of Health Board staff from managing Learning Disabilities. We queried how this was justified, how it was managed and who in the Health Board took this decision. Officers confirmed it changed in 2016 and was to do with change of personnel and change of focus. We heard it is being looked at again with the Health Board. Officers agreed to look into it more and provide a fuller response.

Update on how Council's Policy Commitments translate to Adult Services

You informed us that producing this report had acted as a reminder of how the policy commitments have become embedded in everything the Department does.

You told us that the workforce is at the centre of everything you do in Social Services and that there is a lot of planning to take place to ensure Social Services has a sustainable workforce going forward. You told us you would like to bring a briefing on well-being to a future meeting and we will add this to the future work programme.

The Director stated that the commitments continue to inform Social Services adaptation and recovery going forward, that they are embedded in service plans as headings to focus on and that he is really pleased with the process they can evidence.

We queried how this fits in with the commissioning review undertaken a few years ago and the procurement exercise you went through recently. We heard from officers that the Council has signed off the optimum model for Social Services and it is consistent with the policy commitments. We also heard there has been no change of direction and that there is always more work to be done but everything still fits and informs the thinking going forward.

Regarding the commissioning review, we remembered issues surrounding domiciliary care and day services – the level at which the Authority would put the service and how much of day services the Authority would carry on doing. We told you we were expecting feedback on the level of care and intervention rates, especially on day services. We heard that this was previously known as the fourth commissioning review, that it is being picked up and carried on as a review and it will have to take account of everything that has happened in the last year. We received confirmation that level of care and intervention will be looked at.

We told you that we felt that Local Area Coordinators (LACs) changed their job profiles substantially during the initial lockdown and that what they did was excellent. We also felt this should be acknowledged at some point in the future, as well as people who stepped in from other services to help out; this should be celebrated.

We queried how secure the Authority is about funding for LACs from housing associations etc; if there is any way they can be tied in for longer; and if there is any other external funding we can get to fund LACs. Officers confirmed that funding has been received from numerous sources this year – RSLs, University, Health - and that you are looking this year at how you can diversify funding streams. We heard that an evaluation is being undertaken with Swansea University to identify the financial and social impact of local area coordination. Officers agreed to keep the Panel updated on funding for LACs.

We asked three questions about Promoting Independent Living. We queried if the housing service in the Authority is as committed to this programme as Social Services. You confirmed that you would absolutely expect this.

We queried if the extent of additional independent living achieved would be something the Department would link to outcome budgeting. You confirmed it is part of the initial outcome strategy when setting the budget but there is no methodology from finance for outcome budgeting that the Social Services budget is built on. We stated that we felt that at some point you would have to have a list of draft outcomes to which resources are attached.

We also queried if independent living has been included in the University's evaluation of the impact of local area coordination. Officers confirmed there is still a lot of work to do in terms of fine-tuning what the evaluation will cover. We heard that as one of the objectives they are looking at specific challenges that have faced individuals and that LACs are focussing on ie food, poverty, housing, social isolation and mental health, and how local area coordination has responded to that. Officers stated they could highlight the particular issue to the University when they next meet.

We queried how well the Assistive Technology Strategy is developed at this present time. Officers confirmed it is an item on a future panel agenda; delayed but not off the agenda.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised, but please provide a formal written response by Tuesday 08 June 2021 to the following:

- Information on care support plans in place for residents of Council's housing stock to be provided to Panel
- More information on Health Board staff being withdrawn from managing Learning Disabilities to be provided to Panel.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Jones'.

SUSAN JONES
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