



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Adult Services**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Tuesday, 31 October 2023 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillor S M Jones (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M S Tribe
Y V Jardine
M W Locke

Councillor(s)

V A Holland
A J Jeffery

Councillor(s)

P R Hood-Williams
J W Jones

Co-opted Member(s)

T Beddow

Other Attendees

Louise Gibbard

Cabinet Member for Care Services

Officer(s)

Teresa Edwards
Amy Hawkins
David Howes
Liz Jordan
Sian Rowlands

Team Leader, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
Head of Adult Services & Tackling Poverty
Director of Social Services
Scrutiny Officer
Principal Social Worker

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C A Holley
Officer(s): Helen St John

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the Minutes of the meeting on 5 September 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23

David Howes, Director of Social Services attended to brief the Panel and stated 2022-23 very much focussed on recovery following Covid. Services adapted to try and recover and respond to changes in how people are presenting. Extraordinary efforts made by staff to adapt and be as resilient as possible.

Discussion points:

- Panel commended excellent performance by staff but noted high levels of sickness. Informed it is a combination of working conditions, demographics of workforce and staff in many areas unable to work with certain illnesses. Strategies in place to try and keep staff well and in work. Director to bring update on strategies to a future panel meeting.
- Panel queried if micro and macro social enterprises will be considered as a way of taking pressure off services. Heard there is a need to start remodelling all services to try and get upstream of critical care demand. Council wants more of a generic open access wellbeing offer to its population.
- Panel noted prevention and early help is dependent on grant funding and if it failed these areas would suffer. Panel queried if there is any contingency plan to overcome this. Heard it is a concern the way national funding works, but no more of a concern than overall restriction on public service funding. Anticipate in short term grant funding will be cash flat and the Service is working up a contingency for this.
- Report mentions 'Regional big systems'. Panel asked what this entails, and if consideration has been given to several local authorities sharing legal expert capacity. Heard the Council is not just concentrating on its own responsibilities in terms of finding solutions to make social services and the social care system work. It needs to be outward looking and look at the health system locally and regionally, nationally and in wider UK. Informed there are a number of services with finite resources across the region which would be better off sharing capacity including legal services.

Actions:

- 'Update on Wellbeing Strategies for Social Services Workforce' to be added to work plan.

6 Briefing on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services and relevant officers briefed the Panel on the current situation stating volume and capacity of casework has increased, currently a backlog of applications, looking at introduction of revised application forms to screen and prioritise cases more effectively, and introduction of new legislation 'Liberty Protection Safeguards' has been delayed by a number of years.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried if there is any pattern to the increasing and decreasing numbers of referrals across timespans. Informed there is an increase in winter months as more people are admitted to care homes at that time. The challenge going forward is to identify trends and be more proactive.
- Panel asked if the regular flow of referrals is likely to be stable over the next three to four years. Heard in terms of care homes, there is no particular reason in terms of overall demand why numbers should increase over this time.
- Panel queried if changes in demographic of the population is likely to increase demand. Heard the type of person going into care homes compared to a number of years ago is a very different demographic.
- In terms of referrals, Panel wanted to know if the numbers we deal with in Swansea are broadly in line with the rest of Wales. Officers agreed to provide information on this.
- Panel asked about the situation before the Cheshire West legal case in 2014. Informed if people were objecting to being in a care home, they would be taken forward for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), but people who were not objecting were not taken forward. Following the case in 2014, everyone in a care home who lacked capacity, even if they were happy, had to have DoLS authorisation which led to a massive influx of applications.
- Panel queried who else the new legislation Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) will cover if/when it comes in. Heard it will also cover 16/17 year-olds, people living in supported living and people living in the community in their own home. It will be a very different process to the DoLS process. For under 16s currently, the application is made straight to the High Court and the introduction of LPS would not change this.

Actions:

- Further information to be provided to Panel on how Swansea compares on a regional and national footprint in terms of numbers of referrals for DoLS.

7 Work Plan 2023-24

Panel considered the work plan.

Item 'Update on Adult Services Transformation and Improvement Programme' to be moved from 12 December 2023 to 30 January 2024 meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm