



To:
Councillor Louise Gibbard
Cabinet Member for Care Services

Councillor Hayley Gwilliam
Cabinet Member for Community

Please ask for:
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Date
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21 April 2023

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the relevant Cabinet Members. It covers West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, Performance Monitoring, Local Area Coordination and Annual Review of Charges.

Dear Cllrs Gibbard and Gwilliam

The Panel met on 21 March 2023 to receive an update on the West Glamorgan Transformation Programme, the Performance Monitoring Report for January 2023, an update on Local Area Coordination and to discuss the Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2022/23.

We would like to thank you and relevant officers 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.

West Glamorgan Transformation Programme

Kelly Gillings, Programme Manager attended to update us on progress including background, governance arrangements, West Glamorgan Area Plan 2023-27, engagement and co-production.

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We queried how the Partnership intends to encourage volunteers in the community and heard that staff within partner organisations already work with individuals who want to volunteer. In addition, Swansea Council for Voluntary Service and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service are developing a framework with people who are already volunteers to try and encourage more people to do it. The framework will give people information on what it means to volunteer including training and support.

The report says there is a move towards providing more care at home. We asked if it is possible to predict what the shift from looking after people in hospitals to looking after people at home actually means in terms of cost of fitting out homes with equipment, providing support etc. We were informed that for the majority of individuals who need 24-hour care, the offer would still likely be a more institutionalised setting, as to look after high numbers at home would be too resource intensive and unaffordable. However, you are currently looking for more opportunities to support more people, who with wraparound and integrated services, including a high level of reablement type interventions etc, could be better enabled with care at home.

We sought clarification on what is meant by 'virtual wards' and heard that it is a Health Board development, and that it is not physical wards. We were informed that it is a step to support people to come out of hospital who still have clinical needs and provide ongoing care at home. The support is provided by multi-disciplinary teams led by clinicians linked to GP practices.

The report states that additional capacity has been created in domiciliary care with 1000 hours credited but 600 hours subsumed. We queried what this means and heard plans were in place to increase domiciliary care capacity in-house and with external providers. Additional hours were created but at the same time there were providers who were struggling with their existing staff leaving domiciliary care, and that often these providers had to hand back packages of care to the Council, which still needed to be delivered. This meant that all of the additional hours created were not able to be used to support people who were not currently receiving domiciliary care, some had to be used to support people already receiving care. We were informed there has been a further net increase in hours since the report, and in the last month waiting lists for domiciliary care have reduced to similar levels to pre-covid which is a sign of recovery.

We expressed concern that there is more and more onus on unpaid carers looking after people in their own home. We heard there is a drive towards supporting a greater level of independence, which creates some issues as resources are limited. We noted that Social Services are struggling to meet this need as quickly as you would like and, in those circumstances, often unpaid carers step in and bridge the gap. We heard it is an issue but a reducing one. You added that we need to support carers to support their loved ones and urged carers in the community to take up the offer of having a carers assessment and to find out what support they can have, as there is support available.

We noted a Dementia Plan for Wales is being developed and queried how this might differ from current arrangements. We were informed that Public Health Wales is responsible for the Dementia Plan and Dementia Standards and that the Standards are being pulled together by lots of individuals caring for people with dementia and from what has been learnt in the past. We heard that these lessons from across

Wales should produce a framework by which individuals can be supported more effectively. We also heard that if they are successful in implementing both, the care and treatment of people with dementia would be much improved and that as a result of the new approach you expect to see changes being made to preventative services and services for people in the community. We were pleased to hear that in Swansea there is a new mental health lead practitioner in community services who is taking a lead role on the dementia support team and there is a much more joined up approach. We feel it would be useful to have a discussion on dementia, including case studies, at a future meeting and will add this to the future work programme.

Performance Monitoring

Helen St John, Head of Integrated Community Services briefed us on the performance report for January 2023 and provided an update on the current situation in March 2023.

We referenced a Welsh Government nursing care document offering interim guidance on nursing matters March 2023, which restates the definitions of funded nursing care. We queried if this is beginning to make any difference to the way resources are able to be brought together, if one is free on the NHS and one is not. We heard that for integrated community services, collaborative arrangements between the Health Board and Local Authority work well on establishing the most appropriate support and making sure the debates around money do not get in the way of putting in place the right care and support, and the financial side is sorted out afterwards. We heard that the Director does not believe the updated guidance will greatly improve arrangements for this.

We were informed that for other cohorts of the population it does not work as well, for example people with learning difficulties. Therefore, if an individual is living in the community and in crisis, they will still get urgent care and support but there is a lot of tension between organisations. We noted that there have been numerous attempts at rewriting guidance and all have failed and that the Director believes the real solution is a pooled fund arrangement.

Local Area Coordination update

We were pleased to hear there is full coverage of Local Area Coordinators (LACs) across Swansea and the central LAC team works hard to provide resilience if there are any vacancies.

We queried how LACs identify people who are isolated and heard the first job of LACs is to get to know people in the community, make connections and get known. They spend time in community locations encouraging people to talk to them about individuals they may be concerned about, people on their own who are isolated and vulnerable. They are then able to make connections and provide support. We were pleased to hear they are working in lots of different ways to make sure LACs are known and are contactable.

We noted that a 'A Local Area Coordination in Swansea Guide' has been produced to raise the profile and awareness of LAC. We think this guide is excellent and is very comprehensive but queried the target audience and if there is a leaflet which can be posted through people's doors and placed on notice boards to try and reach people in

real need. We heard the primary audience for the Guide is elected members, to help us understand more fully the role and how we can work closely with LACs. We noted that it will also be communicated out to other professionals and other team colleagues. We were informed that there is a leaflet which is held by all LACs and is something they use to get themselves know in their areas but building relationships with individuals and making connections is the really vital part.

Annual Review of Charges (Social Services) 2022/23

David Howes, Director of Social Services briefed the Panel on this and informed us that the report has been signed off by Cabinet. We heard the report did not propose any new charges be implemented by Council but did recommend it should maintain an inflationary uplift of around 10% overall. We were informed the Department has not ruled out coming back to Cabinet in-year with recommendations about areas of service not fully charged for. We noted that charges described in the charging policy are not necessarily what an individual will end up being charged for their care as it is based on a financial assessment.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised, however in this instance, a formal written response is not required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S. Jones'.

SUSAN JONES
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