



To:
Councillor Louise Gibbard
Cabinet Member for Care Services

Please ask for: Scrutiny
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637314
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 23 May 2023
Dyddiad:

BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Care Services following the meeting of the Panel on 2 May 2023. It covers Adult Services Complaints, Update on Policy Commitments, Commissioning Reviews and Panel Review.

Dear Cllr Gibbard

The Panel met on 2 May 2023 to discuss the Adult Services Complaints Annual Report 2021-22, receive an update on how the Council's Policy Commitments translate to Adult Services and a Progress Update on Commissioning Reviews and to discuss the Panel's review of the year 2022-23.

We would like to thank you, David Howes, Amy Hawkins and Sarah Lackenby 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.

Adult Services Complaints Annual Report 2021-22

You stated that the Report is for 2021/22 so the impact of covid is very much evident, however, it did not lead to a significant increase in complaints. We heard that it is also important to note the compliments the Service receives.

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www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

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We queried how the complaints process actually works, for example, how does a request for a home visit evolve into a request for service. We heard the complaints process for Social Services is defined in legislation so it is very specific and is quite a detailed and lengthy process. Usually there is an initial acknowledgement but also a meeting with whoever is complaining to ascertain exactly what the complaint is about and if it can be resolved at that point.

We wondered why there is an effect from Covid on Adult Services but not so much on Child and Family Services. We heard capacity to deliver direct care and dramatic impacts on the workforce played out differently in Adult Services to Child and Family Services and that you might have expected worse in terms of numbers of complaints. We also heard that Adult Services is much more impacted by pressure in the health service, whilst beginning to see recovery in adult social care to pre-covid level, the health service is a long way from that. We were informed that there are some areas where Child and Family Services is impacted in a similar way to Adult Services – shortage of registered social workers and placement sufficiency. However, this has not shown through in the number of complaints as looking at much smaller numbers.

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

We noted that there is a commitment for better care within the City and there is a vision for Adult Services. However, in the report there is a distinct absence of the mention of homelessness and those who may be suffering from drug or alcohol abuse. We queried if anything is done to help the homelessness problem, for example recovery programmes, because these people need further support. We were informed that homelessness comes under the portfolio of Service Transformation but there is overlap with Social Services and Adult Services. We heard that the Commissioning Reviews Update (item 8 on the agenda) talks about a temporary accommodation pathway for homelessness support, which is part of Adult Services commissioned activity. You offered to circulate to the Panel, reports on housing and homelessness which have gone to other Committees.

We asked if there are any plans to revisit the qualifying period and qualifying entry into respite and into residential care. We heard that it is all part of the Transformation Programme, which will be looking at use of day services and recommissioning and looking at the approach being taken with day opportunities. We were informed that the criteria will potentially be looked at but you are not anticipating any changes. Also, in terms of planned respite we heard that there are no changes planned. We heard that the Department wants to maximise the amount of availability of planned respite and that this might be what is offered internally but also what is commissioned from the external sector to provide for the Authority.

Commissioning Reviews Progress Update

We feel that not all the original commissioning reviews were successful and there is an opportunity now to revisit them, particularly respite and day care services to see if they can be changed to work better, being mindful of what we have learnt from the past and the pandemic. You stated the commissioning team, and everyone involved value co-production. We heard that things have changed and in terms of day services, they are hugely valuable but not everyone wants the traditional day service model, and that you

are looking at how it is delivered, using the Local Area Coordinators and making use of things in the community.

Officers confirmed you are not looking at it the same way as for previous commissioning reviews but through the Transformation Programme, Improvement Programme and commissioning cycle. The Director added that regular updates on the Transformation Programme and Improvement Programme should be factored into the work programme and there will be an opportunity to look at the detail of some bespoke pieces of work for the Panel to help influence and shape.

The report states work on the commissioning review of the catering service was concluded in December 2019 and there were 14 outcomes, of which 7 were reductions. We queried if this work was finished given the pandemic at the time, and if so, if it has been revised since. We received confirmation it was closed as a commissioning review and was embedded into business as usual in December 2019 and the efficiencies that were found were all implemented.

We queried what capacity you have got internally to support the discharge through step up step down from hospital, and when you reach capacity if you use the private sector, or if you use them already. We were informed the Council has approximately 150 beds across all services – a mixture of planned respite, long term complex, reablement and step up step down temporary placements. We heard you currently use temporary beds across all of residential services to provide support with pressures in hospital and you are revisiting this now to see if this is a long term plan.

Panel Review of the Year 2022-23

Panel Members reviewed the year 2022-23 and discussed four questions. The comments are noted below for your information:

What went well?

- Engagement with Social Services officers and Cabinet Members has been good. Cabinet Members and Director have attended most meetings.
- Social Services officers and Cabinet Member have been quite honest with the Panel.
- The quality of presentations has greatly improved over the year. This has made it easier for the Panel to get a fuller understanding of the principles it been talking about.

What, if anything, could be done better?

- Need to have a more in depth look at some of the items that came up eg commissioning reviews.
- Concerns around Social Services provision by the Authority for people. Onus on people providing more and more for themselves. Think the Panel needs to look in more depth at this issue.

Has the Panel's work focused on the right things?

- Think it has focused on the right things.
- Need to keep in mind the relationship between Health and Social Services and how this is working and whether there are any tensions.

What have we learnt that will help us to improve and develop future scrutiny?

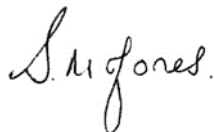
- The role of the Panel is to see that the operation of the Council is fair and equal and for the benefit of the people of Swansea.
- As a Panel we listen to things, we debate things, and we understand what Social Services is about as opposed to relying on officers telling us what it is about.
- The benefit that has been gained by the introduction of Local Area Coordinators. It seems to be working well and that is good to hear.
- How Social Services manage through these difficult times. The Council cannot provide everything it would like but see officers seriously looking at issues, and it is not just about cost, but what is best for the individual.
- To improve scrutiny could do with some more members joining the Panel.

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 but please provide the following:

- Reports on housing and homelessness to be circulated to the Panel for information.

Yours sincerely

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

SUSAN JONES
CONVENER, ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.SUSAN.JONES@SWANSEA.GOV.UK