



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

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Date 29 January 2018
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Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing following the meeting of the Panel on 16 January 2018. It covers Social Services charges and performance monitoring.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 16 January and looked at Social Services charges, performance monitoring and the DEWIS information system. We would like to thank Dave Howes, Alex Williams and Simon Jones for attending to present the items and answering the Panel's questions. We appreciate their engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt 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:

Notes from previous meeting on 19 December

We were updated about additional money being available to the region through the Health Board to deal with winter pressures (£1.7million approximately). Also that the proposals are being worked up currently with Council involvement to submit to the Welsh Government and that the amounts for social care are still to be decided. We would like to see a copy of the final proposal to the Welsh Government.

Public Question Time

Public question time has been introduced to Adult Service scrutiny panel meetings, starting from this meeting. A number of questions were asked and Dave Howes and

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Alex Williams responded verbally. The questions asked are noted below and we ask that you provide a written response directly to the member of the public:

1. Does the Authority realise already that opposition is mounting at the excessive charges being proposed?
2. Do the Council realise because other Authorities have adopted new strategies that it doesn't make it right?
3. Have they questioned service users and what suits their needs?
4. Have the Council thought that they minority will be paying for the majority. If the majority are going to be exempt?
5. Does the Council realise that day centres will close if such charges of £40 per day and £70 per 2 days (not per week) take place?
6. Is this in the best interests of the clients attending the day centres?
7. By default the day centres will close – isn't this how the Council will shelve their responsibilities, isn't this what they intend?

Performance Monitoring

Alex Williams went through the report highlighting a number of points and we made a number of comments.

Summary report page 4 – Long term domiciliary care. We heard that changes at the Common Access Point and the continuing programme of reassessing care packages have had a significant impact on reducing delayed transfers of care.

Summary report page 4 – Residential care. The Panel was informed that the number of people in care homes appears to be going up. The Department confirmed that the total bed capacity is approximately 1600 and that the vacancy rate is not very high. It is a relatively stable sector in Swansea.

Summary report page 5 – Delayed transfers of care. We heard that delays due to Social Services reasons have significantly reduced. The Panel is pleased that real progress has been made.

Summary report page 5 – Review of allocated clients. We heard that there is an issue with the Learning Disability service reviewing its clients and that the Department has now set targets for improvement. The Panel would like to see the trends on this presented in the next performance monitoring report.

Summary report page 6 – Residential reablement. The Panel heard that the increase in the length of stay may reflect issues in the domiciliary care market. The Panel will want to monitor this going forward.

Summary report page 7 – Timeliness of response to safeguarding issues. The Panel were pleased to see that the percentage within 24 hours and 7 days is improving and that the Department is looking at changing processes in order to improve consistency of approach in relation to thresholding. There is a need to ensure everything is recorded on PARIS to improve reporting.

Summary report page 7 – Timeliness of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard assessments. We heard that there is an issue with timeliness of assessments but that

the Department is pressing ahead with setting up a dedicated team and posts are out to advert.

Main report page 10 – Local area coordination. We were informed that there are issues with recording of data. We were pleased to hear that work has commenced on a new system. We will want to monitor this going forward.

Main report appendices page 48 – Performance indicators Measure 19: Delayed transfers per 1,000 people aged 75+. The Panel was concerned with this figure as the Department is far from meeting the target. The Panel heard that unfortunately performance earlier in the year meant that the target could not be achieved. However, the Panel was assured that performance has improved during the year.

Social Services Charges

Dave Howes went through the Social Services Charges report highlighting the proposals which are currently out for consultation as part of the Council's wider budget proposals. The Panel commented on a number of issues.

We heard that a raft of changes are proposed within Social Services as part of the budget with an overall target of £1million additional income to the Council.

The Panel was informed that the setting of the charge for day services was based on the unit cost of providing the service and that it bears no resemblance to what an individual will pay as this is capped by Welsh Government. We also heard that individuals will be means tested to confirm their ability to pay the charges. This is based purely on an individual financial assessment and is prescribed by Welsh Government.

We asked if demand for day services has reduced and the Department confirmed that demand is not as high as it used to be for older peoples day services and that it is expected that the outcomes of the commissioning review will lead to a redesign of services. The Panel feels that as part of the commissioning review it is important to look at loneliness and ensure people are not more isolated.

We heard that informal feedback from users of older peoples' day services suggests users would rather pay for the service than lose it.

We were told that the Department encourages the public to respond to the formal consultation especially to include their views in the narrative and that information packs have been handed out to day centre users to encourage them to participate in the consultation and feed in their views.

In terms of budget consultation with hard to reach groups, the Panel would like there to be more face-to-face consultation with users of day centres etc.

The Panel was concerned that charging for services could reduce use and eventually lead to day centre closures. We were informed that the Department thinks that charging will have an impact on use but more important is the remodelling of services to meet the needs of more complex individuals and to be fit for purpose for the future.

We heard that the proposals are not about the closure of day services and that the Council will definitely need to have a day service for people with complex needs but that it is not yet known how big this offering will be in future.

No details were shown, as to how the proposed £40 charge, for a visit to a Day Service, was arrived at. Please provide a complete breakdown of the unit cost (cost per person per visit) of providing this service, detailing a breakdown of the costs into the variable and fixed costs elements. Please also provide a breakdown of each category of cost, for example, for the variable costs, the cost of catering, transport, etc., and, for the fixed costs, staff costs, building maintenance costs, overhead costs, etc.

At the end of the meeting there was unanimous concern expressed at the fact that the only way those affected by day centre charges could respond to the consultation was via the online method. Many of the elderly clients affected do not have access to a computer and could be potentially disenfranchised by this process. The council need to take this criticism on board in future.

Work Programme Timetable 2017-2018

We agreed three items to add to the future work programme of the Panel which you may wish to note:

- Adult Services complaints annual report 2016/17 (date to be arranged)
- Presentation on Social work practice framework (date to be arranged)
- Explanation of budget outputs (May 2018)

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised but would ask that you respond to the following issues by 19 February 2018:

- In relation to the proposed £40 charge for a visit to a day service, please provide a complete breakdown of the unit cost (cost per person per visit) of providing this service, detailing a breakdown of the costs into the variable and fixed costs elements.
- Please also provide a breakdown of each category of cost, for example, for the variable costs, the cost of catering, transport, etc., and, for the fixed costs, staff costs, building maintenance costs, overhead costs, etc.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Black', with a stylized, cursive script.

PETER BLACK
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