



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Care, Health and
Ageing Well

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Date 14 October 2019
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Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Care, Health and Ageing Well following the meeting of the Panel on 24 September 2019. It covers Supported Living Developments and Procurement Practice and Assurance.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 24 September to receive a briefing on Supported Living Developments for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services and to discuss Procurement Practice and Assurance in Social Care. We would like to thank you, Deborah Reed and Peter Field 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 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:

Supported Living Developments for Mental Health and Learning Disability Services

Deborah Reed, Interim Head of Adult Services briefed the Panel on this issue.

We informed you that the Panel had held two informal events with parents of adults with mental health issues and parents of adults with learning disabilities prior to the meeting to get their feedback on supported living arrangements. A note was produced of the issues raised at these events and you agreed to provide comments on it, which

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together with this letter and your response will be shared with the parents who provided their contact details.

We discussed how the biggest concern for parents in terms of the re-tendering of the service was how transition was going to be handled. We all agreed the need to ensure stability for service users. You confirmed that there will be continuity for the majority of service users, particularly as most of the providers will remain the same.

We raised the issue of tenancy arrangements for service users in supported living, and queried whether descriptors of 'independence' were expanded upon in tenancy agreements. We were informed that they are not included in tenancy agreements, but they will be included in care support agreements, as they are to do with support. You agreed to provide us with a blank copy of a tenancy agreement and a care support agreement, and to provide us with the descriptors of independence used.

We discussed co-production and the role of parents in the commissioning review. We were given the impression at the events that parents did not have as much say over their adult child's life when they went into supported living. You told us that parents were actively encouraged to get involved, that there are regular events held with parents and also that they were involved in the tender evaluation process. Officers agreed to circulate the presentation given to parents at the events to the Panel for information.

At the informal events, panel members got the impression that there did not appear to be independent advocacy services available for service users. We were informed that these services are available to service users with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

Another issue raised by parents at the events was that of waiting lists. You told us that there is no formal waiting list for Learning Disability Services, there is a formal waiting list for mental health services but there are less than 20 individuals on it at a particular time. We heard that there may be supported living vacancies but they may not be appropriate for the individuals on the waiting list. Officers agreed to provide further information on the situation with waiting lists to the Panel.

You confirmed there is a lack of single bed accommodation for individuals with mental health issues to move on too in Swansea, and that this is an issue the Authority may have to look at further.

We heard that the Authority has a contract with the provider of the service and has regular feedback from them, although this has not been proactively sought in recent months. We also heard that the Authority is currently producing its own performance assurance framework. We were pleased to hear this.

We heard that the Authority does not prescribe that individual providers meet with parents regularly but that it would expect them to in order to meet their outcomes.

We discussed how some parents at the informal events did not feel there was an obvious point of contact to go to in the Authority if they are having issues with the provider. We were informed that two changes have been introduced to improve this contact. This is good to hear.

We queried the Department's understanding of efficiencies, and were informed it is a reduction in commissioning hours (cost savings).

We heard that the Department relies on care managers (social workers) to ensure care and support plans are being delivered as determined.

We mentioned that in terms of staff in supported living accommodation, parents had concerns about training, experience, age of staff and use of agency workers. We queried whether the Authority is able to do anything about this. We were informed that staff turnover of providers is looked at annually and that providers should provide data on this. We heard that staff employed by providers can access some of the social services training and also access some independent training courses.

Procurement Practice and Assurance in Social Care

Peter Field, Principal Officer Prevention, Well-being and Commissioning attended to brief the Panel.

We queried how well service user feedback is fed into the assurance process and were informed it is not as good as it could be but arrangements will improve as time goes on.

We heard that there have been regular opportunities for service users to feed back on existing services in Learning Disability Services, by completing a survey and face to face. We also heard that for Mental Health Services this has been undertaken by Supported People Services but officers are unsure how frequently this has been done.

We were informed that there is an assumption by the Department that care providers provide information/welcome packs to service users when they go into supported living accommodation.

We were informed that the procurement process does not go through the internal audit process.

We heard that consultation with carers is an area the Department needs to improve on and you will be looking at this and the development of a carers plan over the next 12 to 18 months. We were very pleased to hear this, particularly as it was a recommendation from the recent Equalities Scrutiny Inquiry, and we will want the carers plan to come to the Panel in the future.

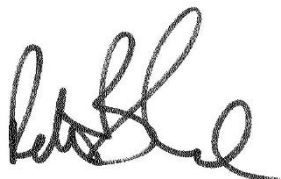
Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your comments on any of the issues raised but please provide a written response by Monday 4 November 2019 to the following:

1. Comments on the issues raised in the briefing note from the informal events held with parents of service users.

2. Information on the descriptors of independence used and provide a blank tenancy agreement and care support agreement.
3. Further information on the situation with waiting lists.

Yours sincerely

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

PETER BLACK
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