



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and
Community Health Services

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BY EMAIL

cc Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Adult Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health Services following the meeting of the Panel on 02 June 2021. It covers Adult Services Transformation Programme, Wales Audit Office Report actions and Director's Annual Review of Charges.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 02 June to discuss the Adult Services Transformation Programme, Actions from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report 'Front Door to Adult Social Care' (Recommendation: Impact of Preventative Services) and the Director's Annual Review of Social Services Charges.

We would like to thank you, Dave Howes, Amy Hawkins and Lucy Friday 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.

The main issues discussed are summarised below:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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Adult Services Transformation Programme

We heard that it is not a usual year and as such, the Programme is looking at living with Covid, including contingency and recovery but that it is also aspirational.

We queried what developments / changes / additions have occurred in relation to assistive technology, what further possibilities are emerging, and what volume of items are currently in play. Officers responded that assistive technology plans are still in development and a briefing will be brought to the Panel later in the year. We heard that there has been significant investment to date and that we have always had the telecare offer but Smart Hubs have also been introduced and pager alerts. In terms of volume across telecare/community alarms stock, we heard that the Authority has approximately 300 kits out in the community and 100 smart hubs in stock. In addition, to telecare we heard that investment has been made in 'just checking' kits and that currently we have approximately 50 in stock but would like more and there has also been investment in chair and bed sensors.

We queried what the co-budget savings are and were informed they have been identified and taken into consideration in the budget this year. Officers agreed to provide more information.

Direct payments were discussed and we queried what proportion of direct payments come directly to the Authority, and if the payments come to the Authority, what service is provided. We were informed that direct payments are used by individuals to purchase day provision from the private sector, or to employ someone independently for provision, or to use the Third Sector for provision. If someone wants to use the Authority's in-house provision, they do not need to use direct payments as they can access the service directly through the Authority.

We asked about domiciliary care in rural areas, the problems associated with this and development of social enterprises. Officers confirmed the re-commissioning of domiciliary care in 2019/20 improved expansion and coverage in rural areas. Use of the in-house reablement service and in-house long-term care service improved coverage in rural areas to deal with this issue. We also heard that a number of new providers have been taken on during lockdown and this has improved coverage even in rural areas. Alongside this, we heard that you are trying to support development of appropriate social enterprise models or other approaches. We heard that a programme started last year with Co-production Wales and the Third Sector called 'Communities Together' Programme. This focussed on hyper local solutions being community-led, using resources on the ground to understand where there is need and gaps in provision and identify opportunities to support local businesses and individuals grouping together, to make best use of direct payments or help start-ups for local business.

We queried if in addition to hospital to home discharge schemes there is scope for proactive inter agency assessments of people still living at home, that might prevent the use of emergency admission hospital facilities in the first place and supply residents with the services they might get after a period of care in hospital. Officers gave reassurance that a lot of the Directorate's work has a multi-disciplinary team focus in the community, for example, the front door to Social Services and the mental

health single point of access. Also for residential the Authority offers some step up provision from the community. We heard that you are considering doing more assessments within The Authority's residential settings around peoples' most appropriate at home package of support. Officers also confirmed that in terms of regional work streams, working alongside this is the 'Home First' and 'Keep me at home' programmes, which are working towards the same outcome, to prevent people going into hospital at all, or if they have to, making sure they can return home as quickly as possible and be reabled to remain at home.

We asked if there was any data available on how many referrals have been prevented by anticipatory care and were informed that this is difficult to answer as anything preventative, by definition, does not touch the Service's formal recording system. We heard however, that there are figures on sign posting but in terms of outcomes there is work to be done in terms of understanding this better.

We raised a query about the complaints process, asking if there is any independent input into it. We requested a report showing a recent summary of the number and type of complaint received and action taken. Officers agreed to share information and links outside of the meeting.

Actions from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) Report 'Front Door to Adult Social Care' (Recommendation: Impact of Preventative Services)

We were informed that the audit was conducted on a Wales-wide basis. Swansea was not one of the Authorities who received a visit, but did provide some information. We heard that the recommendations are broad and apply to the whole of Wales and that key recommendations from the audit report are being taken forward as part of the Transformation Programme.

We heard that work around all areas highlighted to the Panel in March 2020 have progressed significantly or been completed. In addition we heard that further development of preventative services and access to the Service's own 'front door' have been expanded in response to the Covid pandemic and this has presented further opportunities for change and improvement particularly in respect of the Services carer's information, access and support.

We queried what connection the Authority has with the Third Sector/SCVS, if it is contractual and if it is funded. We were informed that there are a couple of funding avenues to SCVS including a number of external grants and the Authority gives SCVS core funding in terms of the volunteering service aspect and also for core work SCVS undertakes under the Compact Agreement and that the Authority also has other projects with them. We heard that the proportion of ONA funding to SCVS has increased to reflect activity over the last 12 months. We also heard that exit planning post funding is now the Authority and SCVS' focus as there is a need to understand the benefit of all models to determine how we commission going forward.

We wanted to know how the Advocacy Service is operating, how it works and receive feedback on how it performs. Officers confirmed the independent advocacy service is available to any person or carer where there is a barrier to them receiving the support they need. Officers agreed to provide more information on this to the Panel.

Director's Annual Review of Charges

We heard from the Director that his recommendation to Cabinet was that new charges should not be introduced, but an inflationary uplift to existing charges of 1.75% (advisory figure from Welsh Government) should be applied. We noted that the Director's recommendations were accepted by Cabinet.

We were informed that subsequent to the report going to Cabinet, the Service looked at learning from a test case and as a result have undertaken a review to ensure the Authority's charging regime is not discriminatory. We heard that officers are confident the Authority is fully compliant. We also heard that it has highlighted that the Service could do further work around transparency, in particular the mechanics of how financial assessments are carried out. We requested to see the information around this. The Director agreed to bring a further update when the work is finished, sharing what they intend to publish.

Work Programme

We heard that Care Inspectorate Wales are undertaking a Local Authority Assurance Review, that it is covid related and that it was taking place on 07 June 2021. As a result the following items have been added to the work programme:

- Initial Feedback from CIW Assurance Visit – scheduled for 14 July 2021 meeting
- CIW Assurance Visit Full Report – provisionally scheduled for October 2021 meeting

For information, we also agreed to schedule the item 'Feedback on inspection of Domiciliary Care Services' provisionally for the October 2021 meeting.

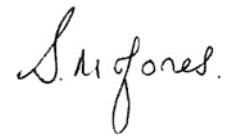
We discussed the possibility of an item on 'Outcomes Budgeting' being added to the work programme this year. The Director said he would discuss with you, and Heads of Service, what it is possible to provide this year and inform the Panel.

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 formal written response by Wednesday 14 July 2021 to the following:

- Information on co-budget savings
- Information and links on complaints process
- Further information on the Advocacy Service
- Update on work around transparency and what you intend to publish to be shared with the Panel once completed
- Confirmation of what can be provide to the Panel this year in relation to 'Outcomes Budgeting'.

Yours sincerely

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

SUSAN JONES
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