

At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in Committee Room 1 of the CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on TUESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER, 2023 at 5:30pm.

Present:-

Councillor Usher in the Chair

Councillors Bond, Haque, Jones, Speding, M. Walker and Walton

Also in attendance:-

Janice Armstrong – Deputy Director of HR & OD, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Nigel Cummings – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Andrea Hetherington - Director of Corporate Affairs and Legal, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Julie Johnson – Head of Workforce Development, OD & Learning, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Karen Sheard – Deputy Director of Nursing, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Joanne Stewart – Principal Democratic Services Officer, Sunderland City Council

Gemma Taylor – Workforce Development and Education Manager, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Gerry Taylor – Executive Director Health, Housing and Communities, Sunderland City Council

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were given on behalf of Councillors Burnicle, Graham-King, Heron and Hunter and on behalf of Mr. Scott Watson.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 31 October 2023

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 31 October 2023 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

Councillor Jones made an open declaration as an employee of the North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS (NECIC) and Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trusts (CNTW).

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust – CQC Inspection Plan

The Deputy Director of Nursing, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with an update on the Foundation Trust's action plan following inception by the Car Quality Commission (CQC).

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Karen Sheard, Deputy Director of Nursing, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust took Members through a presentation which was attached at appendix one to the report and covered key points from the action plan, including:-

- Must and Should Do Actions;
- Action Plan;
- Progress to Date; and
- How Do We Get Back to 'Good'

(for copy presentation – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Ms. Sheard for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Councillor Bond asked when the CQC inspectors were physically on site and how long the procedure had been to provide documentary evidence and when this had finished; to allow Members to date the report from 3rd February; and he was informed that usually a lot of the evidence was requested whilst on site throughout the inspection in June, then they would plan their visit based on the well led visit protocols. They would then hear very little following the inspections until the report was published in February; so the report was prepared on information from 8th – 11th August; including any further evidence and/or information they requested.

Ms. Hetherington also advised that it had been a targeted inspection in a number of areas; and not the whole organisation; they combined the previous scores to those of these visit so currently there were three areas rated outstanding, eighteen good and nine requiring improvement. It was acknowledged that the inspection had been undertaken very quickly after CoVid restrictions and that they did not know if they had a few more months to get the organisation back to normal that the result may have been slightly different but they accepted the findings and were now working on making improvements.

Councillor Bond then referred to the slide within the presentation on 'positive feedback'; specifically in relation to senior leadership, and commented that according to the report, leadership had gone backwards and this was not good news to be reported. Ms. Sheard commented that there were different elements of leadership and the CQC had recognised and commented upon the visibility of the Executive Team and Board Members.

Councillor Speding commented that it was not a particularly good report and asked where the process sat with the Health and Wellbeing Board? It appeared that the amalgamation of Sunderland and South Tyneside was not working as it should; given the comments raised around governance. He raised his serious concerns as

the Committee were responsible for questioning and challenging the findings of the report and stated that it was not an issue to be taken lightly and should be investigated in more depth. Councillor Usher agreed that they should look to share action plans with the Committee and information around the improvements being made going forward to give assurances to Members.

Councillor Bond agreed and commented that it was particularly important if they were moving to a system that was more self-assessment.

Ms. Hetherington advised that it may be helpful for Members to see what the new inspection regime would look like; whereby it was intended to be more targeted to specific areas rather than carrying out whole scale reviews. Previously, they used to be able to state that action plans had been completed and request a further inspection but there was not the capacity for that now.

Ms. Hetherington commented that they would have conversations with the Scrutiny Officer to discuss when was best to submit further reports to the Committee and have them added to the work programme.

Councillor Jones referred to page 13 of the report and the progress to date in relation to actions and commented that it would be useful to have a short overview of what each recommendation / issue was and the action against it, along with progress to date to refer to.

In response to a further query from Councillor Jones and whether mock reviews would be internal or if an agreement would be made with other organisations in the region, Ms. Sheard advised that they needed to get familiar with the new single assessment framework from CQC. Therefore, they would start internally but once embedded and developed they would welcome peer reviews with other organisations to help benchmark. She did advise that even when the mock inspections were internal they would not have staff from the same area and different specialities would be assessing each other.

Councillor Jones referred to paragraph 2.1 of the report and asked that the year 2022 be included after 'June and August' to be more specific as to when the inspection was undertaken.

In closing, Mr. Cummings advised that the item would remain on the work programme and going forward they would have Officers submit more detailed reports on the action plan to give the Committee those assurances requested and provide information on the new inspection regime from the CQC along with details of any future inspections.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Ms. Sheard and colleagues for their attendance, and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) future reports around the action plans for submission to the Committee be included on the work programme; and
- ii) the information within the report and presentation provided be received and noted.

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust – Developing Our Future Workforce

The Workforce and Development Team, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided an update on the Trust's work on developing its future workforce.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Janice Armstrong, Deputy Director of HR & OD at South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust and her colleagues, gave a presentation which covered key points from the workforce development plan, including:-

- Partnerships;
- Work Discovery Events,
- Work Placements; and
- SWAP Programmes.

(for copy presentation – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Ms. Armstrong and colleagues for their presentation and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Councillor Walton commented that it was good to see other routes in to nursing and other roles rather than just through the traditional higher education and asked if there was a possibility that older people may be suitable for any of these roles and how difficult it would be for them to change course? He was informed that they had specific funding from Prince's Trust which may be why they focussed on 16-30 year olds but that the opportunity was available to any age group and they currently had an apprentice who was 57 years old who had decided to take up a completely different career. The average age was 30+.

In relation to a question from Councillor Walton on international recruitment and any issues they may have experienced, Ms. Hetherington commented that they had a member of staff who had been in the organisation for over twenty years and was instrumental in building community support for international members of staff. The organisation helped to set up bank accounts for them and there was also a bigger team to help support them and become settled as part of the community as teams grew and more international staff are welcomed.

Councillor Bond asked if there was any issue in international staff receiving the same pay and conditions as current staff and was informed that this was not an issue as all members of staff worked under the same national terms and conditions. They recognised that some members of staff may have had a more senior role in their country of origin and this was a resource to be tapped in to, encouraging them to look to take on similar roles in the organisation.

Councillor Speding commented that he was very supportive of the new ways of recruiting and retaining staff, and the number of alternative pathways into nursing and other associated roles, and how it was bringing massive benefits to the city. Ms. Armstrong commented that they had the medical school at the University of

Sunderland and they would see the first graduates from it next summer; with the prediction for the intake next Autumn to be 96 students, so it was continuing to grow and they would begin to see locally generated staff coming into the NHS.

Councillor Jones informed the Committee that she had the privilege of working with international nurses for many years but referred to ethical recruitment; by recruiting from countries such as India and the Philippines, where they knew there were already shortages in their workforce, and also asked how achievable they felt it was that by 2035 the Trust would grow their own workforce as was targeted? Ms. Armstrong commented that some of the work the team did in engaging with young people in schools from the very beginning, showed them the opportunities that were available to them in the organisation and would hopefully help to build more homegrown staff.

There was a target within the NHS long term workforce plan to recruit more locally and the more they could tap into local resources and get local people interested in starting careers with the NHS the better, but it would be a challenge. One of the main areas was around the marketing and PR for the NHS in line with the more positive adverts that were currently being shown for positions in the armed forces and other services. There was a need to promote the NHS as a more attractive organisation to work for.

In relation to the University fees, Ms. Armstrong advised that they had found this year places were under subscribed for the first time on university courses and across a number of subject areas. They found that the apprenticeship schemes were popular where people could get trained up into roles and positions without the amount of debt they would have if they went the University route.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Ms. Armstrong and her colleagues for their attendance, and it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the information provided be received and noted.

Work Programme 2023/24

The Scrutiny, Members and Mayoral Support Coordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which briefed members on the development of the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2023/24 and appended a copy of the programme for Members' consideration.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer presented the report and briefed the Committee on the current position regarding those items already scheduled on the work programme and those waiting to be programmed in on a suitable date.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Scrutiny, Members and Mayoral Support Coordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from the 8th November, 2023.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Committee was advised that if Members had any issues to raise or required further detail on any of the items included in the notice, (that were within the purview of the Committee), they should contact Mr Cummings for initial assistance.

5. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

There being no further items of business, the Chairman closed the meeting having thanked members and officers for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) J. USHER,
Chairman.