

At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY 5th JUNE, 2019 at 5.30p.m.

Present:-

Councillor D. Dixon in the Chair

Councillors Butler, Cunningham, Davison, Heron, Leadbitter, N. MacKnight, McDonough, Mann and O'Brien

Also in attendance:-

Ms Deborah Cornell – Head of Corporate Affairs, Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group

Mr Nigel Cummings – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Mr. Graham King – Head of Integrated Commissioning, Sunderland City Council

Ms Joanne Stewart – Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council

The Chairman opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Essl and McClennan.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 10th April, 2019

The Principal Governance Services Officer advised that the resolution to item three within the minutes had been omitted and informed Members that it should read:- “3. RESOLVED that the information within the report be received and noted and that a further update be submitted in due course.”

Subject to the above amendment, it was:-

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 10th April, 2019 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest made.

Managing the Market

The Executive Director People Services submitted a report which provided information relating to the care and support provider market in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. King, Head of Integrated Commissioning, took Members through the report which included the on-going work undertaken by the Commissioning Team with regards to working with and developing a diverse care and support market and gave an update on quality and adult safeguarding matters. Mr. King advised Members that the Commissioning Team were responsible for facilitating market development, management of demand and supply and ensuring the quality of service provided by the market are of a high standard, appropriate and flexible to the needs of the individual being supported.

Mr. King referred the Committee to paragraph 5.2 of the report and advised that processes had been agreed and systems configured accordingly to allow performance information from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) activity to be generated and included in reporting through the Safeguarding Adults Board. The first reporting would commence at the end of Quarter 1 of 2019/20 and Mr. King informed Members that he intended to submit a report to a future meeting of the Committee on MASH activity.

Councillor Dixon referred to the recent Panorama investigation into abuse at Whorlton Hall in Durham and asked how confident Members could be that Sunderland had measures in place to protect the people living in our care. Mr. King advised that Sunderland had no residents living in that care home and never had as they had checked all available previous records. He also informed the Committee that Sunderland consistently had Officers in and out of care homes where we had residents living either through social workers or monitoring visits, etc. and that wherever a problem had been encountered they worked with the care providers to ensure that it was rectified and that the correct policies and procedures were being followed or that training was instigated if it was felt needed. Poor quality was not tolerated by the authority and where a care home had been previously rated as inadequate they had worked in a professional manner with that provider to make a judgement as to whether they could make the necessary improvements or if not, they worked to move residents on to other residencies before the care home was closed.

In response to a question from Councillor O'Brien as to what measures Sunderland Care and Support (SCAS) could put in place to improve the overall rating of the Community Support Service which had recently rated as 'requires improvement' Mr. King advised that the CQC had found the service to be requiring improvement over two areas: Effective and Well-led. The report had identified issues relating to staff awareness of mental health issues, namely that not all staff could demonstrate a robust knowledge of that area which reflected upon management. A robust improvement plan had been drawn up which would be monitored by the Safeguarding Adult Board and a copy could be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for their consideration. Mr. King advised the Committee that he was confident that the service could gain ground and improve and informed Members that the other areas of Safe, Caring and Responsive had been rated as Good.

Councillor Heron asked for an update in relation to the Seafarers Way Extra Care Scheme and was informed by Mr. King that Housing21 had ceased to be the provider in May, 2019 but that he was confident that Care at Home as the successful bidder would continue and maintain the level of care as the new provider. Care at Home were on the Council's Framework and had experience of providing care in extracare schemes in other local authority areas.

Councillor Butler referred to the increase in safeguarding concerns being received and asked if further information could be provided on how many were carried through for investigation and if the seriousness of those cases had risen? Mr. King advised previously when a concern was raised it would be sent through as of low concern until assessed by Officers. Through training and people becoming more skilled at measuring the level of concern they were now closer in line with those agreed with Operational Safeguarding and concerns were no longer being under reported as low from the initial point of contact. Mr. King advised that a report had recently been submitted to the Safeguarding Adult Board which contained more detailed information which could be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Councillors Davison and Dixon referred to the changing of Housing and Care21's name to Housing21 and asked if this had implications for the future of the company in them looking at re-positioning themselves away from the care aspect of their current business model and were informed by Mr. King that as far as he was aware it was a purely cosmetic change of name and not through any merger or change to the business. He commented that any residents would usually pay a service charge for the aspect of the extra care scheme that they accessed so he could not see the provider moving away from providing those services as this would impact upon their income.

In response to a question around any future challenges which may result from homes in the city running at an occupancy of 90% Mr. King advised that as a commissioner they looked to see occupancy at around 85% and above, care home owners like to see a relatively high occupancy level as this means the business is healthy, whereas if the occupancy falls too low they may struggle to see a return on their investment.

Mr. King advised that they were looking to develop and build a new seventy place nursing home at Ryhope Bank to help with the level of demand, as well as looking at other schemes to help cope with future supply and offered to send Members a copy of the plans for the new development for their information.

Councillor MacKnight referred to those care homes that received outstanding CQC ratings and asked if there was the means for providers to share good practice. Mr. King advised that they use provider forums to share good practice and have open discussions. Care Home Managers also have quite a strong network and discussions between them were quite vibrant with providers being happy to share information across the city.

In relation to the triage process around safeguarding concerns, Mr. King advised that there was a dedicated Operational Safeguarding Team who would process all concerns raised and that they would look to be dealt with initially within twenty four hours. The team would look at the threshold allocated, assess and allocate their

own threshold level and progress it in the correct manner, either through no action or as under section 42 of the Care Act or for more information, etc.

Councillor Cunningham asked if the service expected to see increased or sudden spikes in the number of safeguarding concerns being raised following programmes such as Panorama and was informed that they had not seen a significant change but that they would expect numbers to increase following such events as public concerns were heightened. Mr. King commented that this was the right thing to encourage as concerns around safeguarding should be raised but they had not seen any significant spike to date.

In response to a question from Councillor Davison around the possible extra pressures on intermediate care provision in the city, Mr. King advised that there were two schemes in the city at the moment, providing sixty four beds, and commented that they were used as a step down from hospital for residents who would benefit from intensive therapy prior to returning home. He advised that these were integral services in the system, allowing people to have a chance to be recovered and prepared to return to their homes. Mr. King informed the Committee that they were undertaking a scoping exercise to ensure that the services were fit for purpose in their current position but that there were no plans in place to change provisions at the present time.

Councillor Dixon referred to the increase in the number of referrals and active cases being considered by the Independent Advocacy Service and asked that this be included within the work plan for the Committee to consider at a future meeting.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. King for his report, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the information within the report be received and noted.

Annual Work Programme 2019/20

The Director of People, Communications and Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) inviting Members to consider and agree the work programme for the Committee's work for the 2019/20 municipal year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, took Members through the report referring to the table set out at paragraph 3.2 of the report which summarised relevant single item issues which were likely to be a regular feature of the work programme for the year ahead. The table also included several issues and topics which Members of the Committee had discussed at a recent development session. The Committee were informed that these items would be programmed into the work programme at relevant dates following discussion with the appropriate Officers.

Mr. Cummings drew Members' attention to the three issues which had been raised as potential areas for an in-depth review, namely:-

- Water Fluoridation; a look at the evidence for and against fluoridation of the local authority water supply;

- Timely Access to Mental Health Services; a look at the Mental Health and out of hospital pathways; and
- Transitions; a look at how young people transition from the care system.

Following Members discussions, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- The draft work programme for 2019/20 be agreed and that emerging issues be incorporate as and when they arise throughout the forthcoming years; and
- Water Fluoridation be agreed as the issue for in-depth review by the Committee during the 2019/20 municipal year.

Notice of Key Decisions

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 20 May, 2019.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

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

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and contributions over the course of the last municipal year.

(Signed) D. DIXON,
Chairman.