SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

TASK AND FINISH WORKING GROUP: STATE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN SUNDERLAND

Report of the Scrutiny, Mayoral and Members Support Coordinator

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to establish background information, set the scene and set out an approach for a task and finish group looking at the state of adult social care in Sunderland following the pandemic.

2. Background

2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Work Programming session held on 13 June 2022 provided Members, officers and partners with the opportunity to discuss a variety of scrutiny topics, compiling a shortlist of potential issues for task and finish work during the coming year.

2.2 The first of these topics will be to investigate the state of adult social care in Sunderland following the Covid-19 pandemic. The task and finish working group will aim to conduct a focused, clearly scoped, and time-limited piece of work with clear objectives.

3. Context to the Issues

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Adult Social Care in Sunderland

3.1 The Council currently operates a range of commissioning arrangements for the provision of adult care and support services. The Council's preferred method of securing services is via a formal procurement process whereby the Council enters into a contractual arrangement with care and support providers. There are services that are commissioned that sit outside of a formal contracted arrangement whereby services have been arranged on an individual basis. Individuals are also able to commission services directly with providers via Direct Payment arrangements.

3.2 Within Sunderland there are different provider markets which support the health and social care agenda. These can be broken down into the following:

I. **Accommodation based services for older people** – Residential and Nursing Care; Extra Care Accommodation
II. **Accommodation based services for people with disabilities** – Residential Care; Independent Supported Schemes; Core and Cluster Schemes.
III. **Accommodation based services for people with mental health needs** – Residential Care; Independent Supported Living Schemes; Core and Cluster Schemes.
IV. **Community services** – Care and Support into people's homes; Day Care/Opportunities; Preventative Services.

3.3 There are 50 older person's care homes across the city, with an occupancy rate of around 88%, that deliver a mixture of general and dementia residential care, general and dementia nursing care, support for younger people with dementia and

people with enduring mental health needs. There are also currently 12 Extra Care schemes in the city providing 848 apartments, of which 766 (90%) are currently occupied.

3.4 The Council currently has a framework in place with 39 providers who deliver home care having been accepted on to the framework, having successfully completed some quality and assurance checks and they more often than not, operate city wide. This includes 7 providers who are formally contracted to deliver care and support at home in zoned locality areas across the City. The framework providers are commissioned to provide care and support at home to all service user groups including adults with complex needs. There are a small number of spot purchased providers who aren't on the framework but who have been directly commissioned by Adult Social Care following the completion of a number of quality assurance checks. These spot purchased arrangements are used mainly when there is an urgent need for support and the home care market has been unable to respond within the required timeframe.

3.5 Sunderland also commission a variety of other adult social care services including, independent and health complaints advocacy, support and accommodation for people with learning difficulties and mental health, short break services and day opportunities that are delivered in both a building and community setting.

Covid-19 Pandemic and Social Care

3.6 COVID-19 has had a major and sustained impact on social care in England. There have been 27,179 excess deaths among care home residents since 14 March 2020 (a 20% increase compared with recent years), and 9,571 excess deaths reported among people receiving domiciliary care since 11 April 2020 (a 62% increase). Social care staff have been at higher risk of dying from COVID-19 than others of the same age and sex. The wider health impacts – from reduced access to care, social isolation, increased burden on carers – are harder to measure but significant.

3.7 The Kings Fund reported on a number of significant factors and challenges that Covid-19 has exacerbated in adult social care generally. In summary, The Kings Fund reported that social care was emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic with:

- A sector, and those working in it, struggling to come to terms with excess deaths;
- Services trying to get back to some semblance of normality – or even just stay in business;
- Local authorities facing increased levels of demand but uncertain finances;
- Most likely wide local variations in demand, access and provision of care with little reliable data.

3.8 The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were kept informed, throughout the pandemic, of the adult social care situation in Sunderland through updates to the Committee. It is also important to note that there despite this dire situation there are some positives including increased recruitment into the sector, wider public

recognition and a greater willingness from government to tackle the fundamental issues of social care.

People at the Heart of Care

3.9 With this in mind the government has firmly committed to reforming adult social care. The white paper, ***People at the Heart of Care*** sets out an ambitious 10-year vision for the transformation of support and care in England. The intention is to put people at the heart of care and to do that there are three key objectives:

1. People have choice, control, and support to live independent lives.
2. People can access outstanding quality and tailored care and support.
3. People find adult social care fair and accessible.

3.10 The white paper sets out a range of policies that are to be implemented over the next three years. These include:

● At least £300 million to integrate housing into local health and care strategies, with a focus on increasing the range of new supported housing options available.

● At least £150 million of additional funding to drive greater adoption of technology and achieve widespread digitisation across social care.

● At least £500 million so the social care workforce have the right training and qualifications, and feel recognised and valued for their skills and commitment.

● A new practical support service to make minor repairs and changes in peoples' homes to help people remain independent and safe in their home.

● Up to £25 million to work with the sector to kick start a change in the services provided to support unpaid carers.

● £30 million to help local areas innovate around the support and care they provide in new and different ways, providing more options that suit peoples' needs and individual circumstances.

● A new national website to explain the upcoming changes and at least £5 million to pilot new ways to help people understand and access the care and support available.

● More than £70 million to increase the support offer across adult social care to improve the delivery of care and support services, including assisting local authorities to better plan and develop the support and care options available.

4. Title of the Working Group

4.1 The title of the review is suggested as 'The State of Adult Social Care in Sunderland'.

5. Overall Aim of the Working Group

5.1 To look at the state of adult social care services in Sunderland post-Covid-19 pandemic and understand the impact that Covid-19 has had on the sector including the lessons learned and how this is driving improvement and innovation across social care.

6. Proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group

6.1 The following Terms of Reference for the working group are proposed:-

(a) To understand the adult social care sector in Sunderland;

(b) To consider the impact of Covid-19 on adult social care services in Sunderland;

(c) To look at how issues of sustainability and resilience are being addressed in the adult social care sector;

(d) To consider the implications of new legislation on adult social care for commissioners, providers and

(e) To explore areas of innovation and development in adult social care and how they can support the sector going forward.

7. Gathering the Evidence

7.1 The task and finish working group will gather evidence from a number of sources and this will be coordinated, on behalf of Members, by the scrutiny officer. Every effort will be made to involve Members in the research, data collection techniques will include a combination of the following:

- Desktop research;
- Use of secondary research e.g. surveys, questionnaires;
- Evidence presented by key stakeholders;
- Evidence from members of the public at meetings or focus groups;
- Site visits.

7.2 The review will gather evidence from a variety of sources. The main evidence will come from information provided by council officers and external partners likely to include, though not exhaustive, the following:

(a) Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder(s);
(b) Director of Adult Services and Chief Operating Officer Sunderland Care and Support;
(c) Head of Commissioning and Market Oversight Adult Social Care;
(d) Key Service Providers incl; frontline staff;
(e) Service Users.

8. Scope of the Review

8.1 The review will consider, as part of the review process, the following issues related to adult social care:

- What is adult social care and what does it encompass?
- What impact has Covid-19 had on adult social care?
- How has Covid-19 changed service provision?
- What barriers or challenges has Covid-19 created in adult social care?
- How is market sustainability being addressed post-Covid?
- How resilient was the sector pre-Covid and how has that changed now?
- What is being done across the region to support the sectors resilience?
- How will forthcoming legislation support adult social care?
- How will legislation impact on Sunderland in particular?
- What current innovations are supporting or being considered for adult social care in Sunderland?
- How has the Covid-19 pandemic driven innovation and development in the sector?
- Has collaborative working developed as a result of the pandemic?

8.2 As the review investigation develops Members need to remain focused on the key terms of reference to ensure the review is conducted within the time constraints, as well as being robust and based on the evidence and research gathered.

9. Timescales

9.1 Attached for Members information is a draft timetable (**Appendix 1**) for the piece of work which outlines the short and focused process for this working group. Members of the working group will be invited to attend all the meetings. It is also worth noting that the timetable is subject to amendment in line with developing lines of enquiry.

10. Membership of the Working Group

10.1 In order to conduct the task and finish project it is suggested that the membership of the working group should consist of no more than 6 Members drawn from the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

10.2 The Chair of the working group can be decided by either the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee or left to be determined by the Membership of the Working Group.

11. Recommendations

11.1 That the working group agrees the title of the review as ‘Cabinet and Scrutiny Protocol’.

11.2 That Members agree the terms of reference for the task and finish working group.

11.3 That membership of the working group is agreed by the Committee and consideration given to the appointment of Chair for the working group.

12. Background Papers

People at the Heart of Care – Adult Social Care Reform White Paper (Department of Health and Social Care Dec 21)

How Covid-19 has magnified some of social care's key problems (The Kings Fund Aug 20)

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APPENDIX 1

Timeline	Review Task	Aims & Objectives	Methodology	Contributors
Session 1	To gain an overview of the current adult social care sector in Sunderland	To provide the working group with an understanding of how the social care market operates in Sunderland	Working Group Meeting	Working Group Cabinet Member(s) Director of Adult Services and Chief Operating Officer Sunderland Care and Support; Head of Commissioning and Market Oversight Adult Social Care Scrutiny Officer
Session 2	The impact of Covid-19 – looking at issues of sustainability and resilience	To understand what the impact of Covid-19 has been on the sector in Sunderland and look at how this has influenced market sustainability & resilience	Working Group Meeting also potential visit to care home	Working Group Head of Commissioning and Market Oversight Adult Social Care Key Providers Service Users Scrutiny Officer
Session 3	Look at innovation and development within the sector	What part is being played by technology on the sector and how have recent challenges brought about further innovation	Working Group Meeting	Working Group Head of Commissioning and Market Oversight Adult Social Care Sunderland Care and Support – Assistive Technology Scrutiny Officer
Session 4	Implications of new legislation and other challenges facing the sector	A look at the impending new legislation as well as other key opportunities and challenges factors and what this could mean for the sector in Sunderland	Working Group Meeting	Working Group Director of Adult Services and Chief Operating Officer Sunderland Care and Support; Head of Commissioning and Market Oversight Adult Social Care
Session 5	Reflection of evidence and development of draft report and findings	A look at all the evidence gathered and the development of a draft report	Working Group Meeting	Working Group Scrutiny Officer