

**At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER, 2019 at 5.30p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor D. Dixon in the Chair

Councillors Butler, Cunningham, Davison, Essl, Heron, Leadbitter, MacKnight, McDonough and Mann

**Also in attendance:-**

Mr Nigel Cummings – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council  
Ms. Ann Dingwall – Commissioning Manager, Sunderland City Council  
Ms Gillian Robinson – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council  
Ms Joanne Stewart – Principal Governance Services, 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 McClennan and O'Brien

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2019**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to Councillor MacKnight's apologies being added and Ms. Gillian Robinson being removed from being in attendance.

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**Managing the Market**

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

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Ms. Ann Dingwall, Commissioning Manager, took the Committee through the report informing Members that it included the on-going work undertaken by the Commissioning Team with regards to working with and developing a diverse care and support market and an update on quality and adult safeguarding matter. The report was one of a series of regular updates to the Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Butler as to the reasoning behind their being thirteen home care providers, Ms. Dingwall advised that the model was divided into zones around the city, with two providers per zone, to reduce the risk, should there be a failure in one of the providers. Looking at the current market, both regional and national providers, Ms. Dingwall advised that the number felt just right and that there were good relations between them and the local authority which further helped to reduce the level of risk.

Councillor Butler referred to the ten beds available for victims of domestic violence and asked if it was felt that this was adequate, Ms. Dingwall advised that those ten beds were always in use but added that there were also places in refuges outside of the city or alternative provision available if these were deemed to be the safest option for the victim.

Councillor Heron commented that she was please to see the approach taken with adult social care, public health and together for children services working together to help with families who have suffered through domestic violence and hoped that this joined up approach would continue.

Councillor MacKnight asked if there were any programmes or intervention schemes in place or being developed to work with the perpetrators of domestic violence, and was informed by Ms. Dingwall that she was aware that Northumbria Police did have some intervention strategies but they would be separate to anything the local authority may offer through the safeguarding service. She would look to ask the relevant teams what, if anything, the local authority had in place and provide the information to Committee Members.

In a follow up question, Councillor MacKnight, asked if there was a similar bed provision for male victims of domestic violence and Members were advised that the ten bed provision was a suitable facility for both men and women but if this was not appropriate there was still outreach and alternative provisions available in the same way it was provided for females.

Councillor Davison referred to the finances of victims of domestic violence and asked if there was a provision to help victims arrange this. Ms. Dingwall advised that the contract provider had good relations with the DWP and Housing Benefit and would work with the victims to ensure they were in receipt of their entitlement(s) and work through the best solution for their particular situation. Members were informed that by the time individuals left the refuge or provision they would not be financially disadvantaged and that this was something the team worked hard to get in place for them.

In relation to the CQC inspection of Sunderland Care and Support Ltd., Members raised concerns as to how the service had not adhered to the the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005; asking how such a fundamental area could have been missed? Ms. Dingwall advised that staff had thought that they were carrying out assessments in the right manner but that when CQC had carried out their inspection it had been found that supporting documentation completed by staff was not robust enough. An action plan had been immediately developed to address the issues of concern and was implemented, with updates being sought from the Council on the improvements being made. Members were informed that at times it could take an inspection visit to tighten up processes but that this did not mean that service users were not safe.

Councillor Mann commented on the Short Break Services, stating that there was not a lot of detail within the report and requesting more information as to whether there was enough provision to cover demand in the city. Ms. Dingwall advised that each individual was assessed to ensure that their level of need could be met in their preferred short break venue but that they were seeing some individuals with a level of need which was over and above what the short break service could provide, particularly in relation to mental health. They were working on ways to address this and initial discussions had been held with Sunderland Care and Support and she would look to provide more detailed information in future reports to the Committee.

Councillor McDonough referred to the number of families with multiple and complex needs that the service were working with, and how this figure had not changed since the last report and asked if there was anything further that could be done to move families on, if appropriate, or how families staying in these properties was affecting the waiting list. Ms. Dingwall advised that turnaround times for families were typically between six and twelve months but explained that this was dependent upon a multi-stakeholder buy in of all parties involved with the family having been able to work together. Members were informed that the provision was a short term accommodation service and partners would start an exit plan to get families the support they need to move on but that it could take some time to get all of the services lined up.

In relation to waiting lists, the Committee were advised that there were always families waiting to access the provision and the main way for referrals to the service was through the housing options team. If the service was full then Officers would look to find alternative provision for the family but obviously they had usually been referred as it was felt they needed that level of wraparound support that the service provided so it was important to monitor that partners were engaging with families.

Councillor Cunningham referred to paragraph 4.4.2 of the report which highlighted the new contract with the care home sector and asked if this contract would be mandatory for all care homes and how once agreed the new standards would be monitored. Ms. Dingwall advised that the contract had been issued to providers and if there were some that were not willing to sign up to it then they would need to take a view of what the risks would then be. She commented that having worked with providers she did not believe that any would not sign up to the contract, they had looked to provide clarity and lessen any ambiguity with anything that may have been causing providers any problems so she was confident that they would continue to sign up to the contract without having to be heavy handed or make any contract mandatory to agree to.

Ms. Dingwall went on to advise that Officers were out, visiting service providers on a weekly basis and they would look to monitor standard levels as part of these visits. There would also be formal management meetings which would be set out as necessary and formal contract meetings where standards would be monitored on a regular basis.

In response to a question from Councillor Cunningham as to whether there were any reasons for the increased volume of safeguarding concerns and whether this had been following the Panorama tv programme, Ms. Dingwall advised that Panorama had brought the issue to the forefront and they had encouraged staff to watch the programme if they had not already, so that they were aware of what public perceptions may be. Members were informed that an incident like this would

heighten awareness and have an impact on the number of reports being made but staff had received training and could answer questions when asked about safeguarding concerns. Ms. Dingwall advised the Committee that they felt that an increase in the number of safeguarding concerns being made was a positive sign as it meant more people were aware of how and when to raise concerns and explained that a large majority of those raised had been stopped at the concern stage and did not progress any further.

Councillor Dixon asked what work was being undertaken to prepare for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards, which he welcomed as it looked to include services which may have previously been excluded, and Ms. Dingwall advised that it was too early to say what impact, if any, it would have; but that at present there were different processes in place for those individuals who were cared for in their own home to those that were in a care home and that this would go some way to addressing that. Discussions had been held with partners and through regional meetings and services they felt that they were prepared as they could be for the changes but that ultimately they would have some impact until the new procedures were embedded with staff and those who had previously not been involved, such as governing bodies.

In relation to the care home which had received a 'requires improvement' rating following the CQC inspection in February, 2019 Councillor Dixon asked why the drop in standards had happened and queried how self-aware providers were that the services were below inspection standards and how receptive they were to the action plans and interventions to be made. Ms. Dingwall advised that Officers had visited the home in January / February and had found no issues or areas for concern so the inspection rating had come as somewhat of a shock. Ms. Dingwall stated that historically, their own inspections and monitoring had run alongside those outcomes of the CQC inspectors and that it had been rare to have discrepancies between the two and they had found themselves questioning if they had missed something in previous visits.

Officers had revisited what they had undertaken with the service, as they did not want to become complacent, but had come to the decision that they had not missed anything and that the issues had been as a result of a rapid decline which had tied in with the CQC inspection visit. Members were advised that the provider was welcoming of and requesting support to make the improvements necessary and they were confident that it would be just as speedy a return in getting them back up to where they need to be.

Councillor Cunningham referred to the paragraphs around EU Exit Planning and asked if there was a particular reason as to why providers felt there would be less disruption to services and workforce than there may be in other areas and was advised that a lot of service employees in the city were Sunderland born residents and therefore there was not the dependency on the EU market for staff as other providers may have. Ms. Dingwall advised that they would continue to monitor the market as there may be a pull for staff to move away from Sunderland for higher paid, similar jobs in other areas of the country that were affected but they would remain mindful of this over the coming months.

In response to a further question regarding medications being provided following the exit from the EU, Ms. Dingwall explained that they relied on colleagues in the CCG to have this in hand and she understood that contingency works had been undertaken.

There were implications on some particular medicines but she was aware that this was more around brands of than the actual medication itself.

The Chairman having thanked Ms. Dingwall for her attendance, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the information within the report be received and noted and the Committee agree to received regular updates from the Commissioning Tema in relation to the market position.

### **Oral Health in Sunderland : Progress Report**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided Members with an ongoing progress report in relation to the review into oral health in Sunderland.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report advising that Members had met on two occasions; firstly, to set the context for future review activities and then to meet with a number of oral health professionals, which provided an informative and interactive discussions to add to the review's evidence base.

Members were advised of three further planned activities for the review and advised that the review remained on course for completion by December, 2019. Mr. Cummings advised that it would be necessary to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Committee to formally agree the final report prior to it being submitted to Cabinet in January, 2020.

Members having considered the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the progress in relation to the policy review be received and noted.

### **Annual Work Programme 2019/20**

The Strategic Director of People, Communications and Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) which set out for Members information the current work programme for the Committee's work during the 2019-20 municipal year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Cummings presented the report to the Committee advising that the Care and Support Annual Report scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 meeting would be moved to 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2019; and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the work programme for 2019/20 be received and noted.

## **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Strategic Director of People, Communications and 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 16 September, 2019.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Councillor Cunningham requested further information be provided on item no. 190906/404 – 'to reprocur "Building Public Health Capacity" contracts; and it was:-

5. 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 contribution to the meeting.

(Signed) D. DIXON,  
Chairman.