

COUNCIL
24 SEPTEMBER 2020

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Response of Adult Services and Commissioning to COVID-19

2. The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on the response of Adult Services and Strategic Commissioning to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Members heard that Adult Social Care (ASC) had responded proactively to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic since its emergence in early March 2020, that the service had ensured that service users and their families had been supported to remain as safe as possible, and continued to have their care needs met, during a fast moving and complex environment. Members also heard that care providers had received the support needed to enable them to continue to provide care in extremely challenging circumstances.
4. The Committee were reassured to learn that service delivery had been developed, adapted or extended to anticipate and respond to demand, and that ASC had worked closely with key partners including the NHS, police and the voluntary sector to mobilise staff and resources to ensure that core service functions were maintained and individuals safeguarded.
5. Naturally, Members had many questions and sought clarification on both the number of COVID-related deaths in Care Home settings, and the staff absence figures in the Home Care Sector, in comparison with those Home Care staff who had tested positive for COVID-19. Further discussions centred on plans to re-open day services, the allocation and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to care homes, the recruitment and retention of staff in the Care Sector during the pandemic, local testing arrangements in terms of local and regional options, and the testing arrangements in place upon admission to, and discharge from, hospital.
6. Members explored the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the anticipated cost to the local authority.
7. Concerns were raised about potential safeguarding issues, and whilst Members were satisfied to hear that there had been no increase in reported cases of domestic violence during the period outlined within the report, it was worrying to learn that there had been an increase in the severity of abuse within cases. It was also note that there had been a decrease in cases of self-neglect, however as lockdown has eased and home visits increased, it was anticipated that the number of cases would return to expected levels.
8. The Committee were keen to ensure that dignity and emotional well-being were maintained as part of a more qualitative response, and Members concluded

discussion by formally expressing their gratitude to all the staff in the Children and Adults Department, and to those providers and workers within the wider Care Sector.

Adult Social Care Transformation Programme

9. Members received a report providing an update on the progress of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme. The Transformation Programme enables the delivery of modern services which are Care Act compliant, and work in partnership with people to maximise their individual strengths and assets. This is a rolling programme, and the Committee were informed that there are currently 18 projects in progress.
10. We noted that the on-line Financial Assessment tool was now in operation, and had received good feedback, and were pleased to learn that those residents in receipt of a personal budget to facilitate their own care had received additional support and advice throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Members did express concern about a shift to on-line delivery, with Members noting that not all residents had access or the skills to access, on-line systems, however were reassured that face-to-face and telephone options were also still available. Further discussion also ensued on the promotion of on-line facilities.

Performance Indicators Quarter 4 2019/20

11. The Committee received a report providing performance data against Key Performance Indicators for 2019/20 at Quarter 4. It was reported that of the ten indicator reported on at six months, six of the indicators showed performance better than at the same time last year, one indicator showed performance was not as good as at the same time last year, yet this was continuing to be monitored and managed, and that the remaining three indicators were not comparable.
12. We noted that demand for services had fallen during the Covid pandemic and the increased number of Safeguarding Strategy meetings, however were informed that the latter was as a result of greater reporting and awareness, which was positive to hear.

Work Programme

13. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2019/20, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

**Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee**