

ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 24 August 2021

PRESENT – Councillors Tostevin (Chair), Mrs Culley, Curry, Holroyd, B Jones, M Nicholson and A J Scott.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Donoghue, Layton and Renton.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Joss Harbron (Assistant Director - Adult Social Care), Christine Shields (Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation), Elaine Taylor (Programme Manager) and Paul Dalton (Elections Officer).

AD9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AD10 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of this Committee held on 22 June 2021, be approved as a correct record.

AD11 COVID RESPONSE - VERBAL UPDATE

The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation provided a verbal update on the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically in relation to care providers.

It was reported that there were outbreaks at two care homes at the time of the meeting – one Covid-related, and the other in relation to diarrhoea and vomiting – and that these outbreaks were being managed. The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation advised that Care Home providers now had a mandate to ensure that all staff and contractors visiting a home had received two Covid vaccinations, and that all homes, apart from the two with outbreaks, were open in terms of visiting from friends and relatives.

The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation reported that staffing in Care Homes had been manageable, however that Home Care providers had undergone a more difficult period, but had managed well. It was reported that staff recruitment remained challenging, however Members were informed that this was a national issue, and that officers were looking into the possibility of future support with this issue from the Darlington Care Collective.

Members were keen to establish whether Day Services had now returned to pre-Covid provision, and were advised that services were being offered with safe working practices in place, however that it was noticeable that some service users had made alternative arrangements during the pandemic, and that the People Group would be reviewing the offer.

RESOLVED – That the content of the update be noted.

AD12 ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Group Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the progress of the Adults Social Care Transformation Programme, which was last reported in April 2021.

The submitted report stated that the Care Act provided the context to review and implement a new operating model for Adult Social Care services to support the delivery of good quality services at a sustainable cost, and that the Transformation Programme was enabling the delivery of modern services which are Care Act compliant, and work in partnership with people to maximise their individual strengths and assets.

The submitted report highlighted that this was rolling programme, and that there were currently several projects in progress, with varying degrees of complexity. It was also reported that the majority of work was now complete, with all outstanding deliverables on track to be delivered by the end of 2021. It was noted that the only exceptions to this were the Liberty Protection Safeguards Implementation which will run to 2022, due to a delay in national legislation, and the Intermediate Care Provision Review, which had been delayed due to a reconfiguration of the Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Discussion ensued on the reasons for the delays to projects and preparations for the White Paper, with confirmation provided that a draft project plan was in place. Members were keen to learn about the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic had on the work of the Mental Health Services Team, and were advised as to the slight delays in the project, however were reassured to discover that plans were in place to be on track again by the end of the year. Members noted the good service user feedback, enquired as to the response rate, and were informed that the response rate was 100% as the survey was conducted as part of the closure procedure. It was commented that future projects should seek to have an impact in terms of reducing carbon emissions, through shared transport, housing and renewal energy schemes.

Members received further information on the progress of the RIACT Project within the Transformation Programme. Further discussion took place on the use of surveys, cross-referencing this with the work of the Adult Social Care during Covid Task and Finish Group, and the input of, and feedback received by, staff.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

AD13 HOME CARE AND SUPPORT BRIEFING

The Group Director of People submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the current Framework Agreement for the Provision of Home Care and Support.

The submitted report stated that the Framework Agreement for the Provision of Home Care and Support commenced on 2 October 2017, and will end on 1 October 2023, and confirmed that the annual budget for the Home Care and Support Contract is £ 10.9m. It was reported that since implementation in 2017, the model has worked extremely well and that this was

particularly evident during the challenging times of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The submitted report informed Members that a Service Review was currently underway to inform the future tendering of the contract, which would include feedback from providers, service users (via Healthwatch engagement sessions) and operational colleagues.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Transformation, highlighted that the majority of packages (90%) were provided by two primary providers, with the remaining packages, including some specialist packages, allocated into specific 'lots' and picked up by other providers.

Members entered into discussion and enquired whether there was any specialist support available for ex-Forces personnel. It was explained that there was no specialist support available for that specific category, however any ex-Forces personnel would be viewed by 'assessed need' and may fall within one of the established categories.

Discussion ensued on vacant positions, and in particular the competition from other sectors in terms of recruitment; the differing experiences received by service users from the primary providers; service user awareness of the composition of their care package, and how this might be addressed; the pay arrangements for the primary providers, including terms and conditions of employment; and the number of packages within each 'lot'.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

AD14 WORK PROGRAMME

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report requesting that Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

Members highlighted that the People Group submitted a self-assessment overview report to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, and whilst Members recognised that this report was also produced for use as part of Ofsted's ILACS Annual Engagement Meeting, Members were keen to see something similar coming to this Committee in the future.

RESOLVED – That the current status of the Work Programme be noted.