

ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25 October 2022

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Tostevin.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Sukhdev Dosanjh (Head of Commissioning and Contracts), Joss Harbron (Assistant Director - Adult Social Care), Carmel Reilly (Team Manager), Linda Thirkeld (Head of Adults) and Paul Dalton (Elections Officer).

AD12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AD13 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 AUGUST 2022

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of this Committee held on 23 August 2022, be approved as a correct record.

AD14 QUALITY STANDARDS MONITORING OUTCOMES 2022-2023 - AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS 2013-2023

The Assistant Director of Commissioning, Performance and Transformation submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members of the outcome of the Quality Standards Assessment for 2022-2023, and to advise Members that the level of compliance against the quality standards will determine the fee levels for the current year.

The submitted report outlined the results of the Quality Standards for 2022–2023, which demonstrated a reduction in the number of homes who have achieved an A Grade, with 13/19 (68%) achieving an A Grade compared to 15/19 (79%) in 2021. 4/19 had achieved a B Grade, and 2/19 had achieved a C Grade.

Members entered into discussion on the sustainability of the occupancy rate, the timescales for improvement in those homes that were underperforming, the reasons why a home may fail in terms of nutritional provision, the impact of inflationary pressures in terms of the cost of living, the definition and criteria around environmental impact, the lack of evidence as regard the medication process, and staff training and development.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

AD15 TRANSFORMATION OF THE RIACT (RESPONSIVE INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT CARE TEAM) / REABLEMENT TEAM, AND THE CO-LOCATION WITH CDDFT - SIX MONTH REVIEW

Members received an update from the Head of Service and the Team Manager on the work of the RIACT (Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team) / Reablement team, and the co-

location with the CDDFT (County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust).

Members heard about the aims and objectives of the RIACT Transformation Project; the structure of both the Internal Reablement Service and the RIACT Team; the key elements of the service; the partnership work that is undertaken; the performance of the service, including comparisons between 2020/21 and 2021/22; the outcomes, including a summary of needs at the completion of reablement packages and the number of assessments and re-assessments; and customer feedback and stories.

Discussion ensued on the introduction of Reablement, the identification of those elements which did not work quite so well, the management of the expectations of the service users compared to the purpose of the service, the current staffing levels and the experience in terms of recruitment, the potential for partnership working with voluntary organisations, and potential budgetary constraints.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the update be noted.

AD16 REFORMS TO ADULT SOCIAL CARE - UPDATE

The Assistant Director - Adult Services outlined that the activity to plan for the proposed care reforms remained ongoing, and identified three main areas of focus. In terms of the Fair Cost of Care, Members were informed that the draft proposals had been submitted, and that the Council would receive feedback in early December.

Members were advised that work in terms of the CQC Quality Assurance Framework remained ongoing with the narrative, documentation and processes being prepared. Members were informed that the Council would be undertaking a conversation in late November with an ADASS Associate who will act as a critical friend to review our preparation, with a view to planning for the implementation of the inspection framework from April 2023 onwards.

In relation to the Charging Reforms, it was reported that work was continuing to identify the number of self-funders that we may need to offer support to. Members were advised that Officers were also exploring how an on-line offer to provide both a Financial Assessment and a Care and Support Needs Assessment could be developed, as well as work being undertaken to identify the infrastructure required to track the self-funders, the care accounts and finances.

Members entered into discussion on the charging reforms, in particular the work being undertaken to monitor financial thresholds to anticipate when self-funders may access means-tested funding to inform need as regard staff and resources.

RESOLVED – That the content of the update be noted.

AD17 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY UPDATE

The Assistant Director – Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide the Adults Scrutiny Committee with oversight of the updated Disabled Facilities Grant Policy (DFG) and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2022-2025, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

The submitted report outlined that the purpose of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) was to fund adaptations to owner-occupiers, tenants of private rented properties and Housing Association tenants to enable people with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently across the Borough.

It was stated that the current DFG Policy has been in operation since November 2020, and closely followed the legislation and policy guidance that was current at the time of its implementation. There were several proposed changes to the policy which were listed in the main body of the Cabinet report, which was appended to the submitted report.

Discussion ensued on the potential for insulation improvements and checks to ensure that homes are safe for individuals returning home from hospital; complaints in relation to the timescales between assessment and notification of the decision being made; the extension of the scheme to include children with Autism; the oversight in terms of contractors, and the influence to address problems; and signposting of the DFG, especially in relation to those suffering from dementia.

RESOLVED – That this Scrutiny Committee supports the changes to the DFG/Housing Assistance policy prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

AD18 WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

IT WAS AGREED – That the content of the report be noted.