

REVIEW OF ADULT CARE SERVICES DURING COVID TASK AND FINISH GROUP

**2:00pm - Friday, 14 January 2022
Via Microsoft Teams**

PRESENT – Councillor Holroyd (in the Chair); Councillor Mrs. Culley, Councillor Curry and Councillor Layton.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Joss Harbron, Assistant Director - Adult Social Care, Christine Shields, Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance and Transformation, Yvonne Hall, Services Manager, Contracts and Brokerage, and Paul Dalton, Elections Officer (Democratic Services).

The following issues were discussed:-

- An overview of work, to date, was provided, with Members advised that the agreed Adult Social Care Commissioned Staff Survey had been circulated to commissioned partners in late-October 2021, however as at the established deadline of Monday, 13th December 2021, no responses had been received. Members were advised that this meeting had been convened to establish the next steps.
- Discussion ensued on how the Group could best publicise the Survey further, and encourage staff to complete the Survey, if the Survey was sent out again.
- The Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Transformation suggested that the Survey could be promoted during the next ‘Provider Forum’, however did highlight that the providers of Commissioned Services were still working in highly-pressured and challenging situations, with many staff isolating, and that nineteen settings were currently managing outbreaks of Covid infection. The Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Transformation suggested that staff focus was very much elsewhere at the moment.
- Councillor Holroyd stated that she was very keen not to overload staff with additional work, however asked whether the Survey could be undertaken in bite-sized chunks.
- Councillor Mrs. Culley, attending her first meeting of the Group, enquired as to the purpose and value of the Survey, and what the Group hoped to be able to do with the responses. The Chair suggested that the Group hoped to ascertain whether there had been any service improvements through alternative ways of working, or identify areas where improvements could be made. Councillor Mrs. Culley cautioned that Survey Monkey sometimes posts directly to ‘Spam Folders’ in inboxes.
- The Services Manager, Contracts and Brokerage, advised that whilst the Group hoped to contact multiple members of staff, the reality was that the

circulated Survey was sent to a number of generic e-mail address, with the requirement then being for providers to circulate/distribute wider amongst their staff. The Services Manager, Contracts and Brokerage, expressed great concern in relation to the current pressures around the Omicron wave, explaining that whilst there was not wholesale staff absence, there was a continual 'dribble' of absence and isolation, which increased work pressures.

- The Services Manager, Contracts and Brokerage also expressed concerns that, should a Survey be circulated at the current time, it may illicit a 'reactive response', rather than a 'measured response', and advised waiting a further month before re-circulating the Survey.
- The Services Manager, Contracts and Brokerage advised that a Provider Forum was being held on 16th March 2022, and that this may provide an opportunity to have a further dialogue with Commissioned Services providers.
- Councillor Layton recalled that this was a similar piece of work to the work undertaken by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, however recognised that this situation was a 'moveable feast', and wondered rather than putting a timescale on the Survey, could it be requested on an ad hoc basis so that staff could complete it when they felt appropriate. Further discussion ensued, and Members felt that this wasn't a good time, and that it may be more appropriate to wait until the next lull in infections.
- Members gave consideration to approaching commissioned services providers for a steer on what and when might be the best approach, and it was reported that the Strategic Commissioning Manager had regular meetings with the two primary Commissioned Services providers, and it may be useful for her to have a discussion at such a meeting to gain an insight as to the best approach and the timing of this, and encourage 'buy in'.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the Strategic Commissioning Manager be asked to liaise with the two primary Commissioned Services providers to gain an insight as to the best approach and the best timing in terms of circulating the Survey, and encouraging 'buy in' from Commissioned Staff.