

Social Care Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

21 July 2020

Chairperson: Councillor L.M.Purcell

Vice Chairperson: Councillor C.Galsworthy

Councillors: A.P.H.Davies, O.S.Davies, J.Miller, S.Paddison, S.H.Reynolds, D.Whitelock, A.N.Woolcock, C.Edwards, W.F.Griffiths and H.C.Clarke

Officers In Attendance: A.Jarrett, A.Thomas, C.Furlow-Harris, S.Burgess, C.Frey-Davies, C.Davies, A.Manchipp and T.Davies

The Chairperson led the Committee in a minute's silence in respect for the recent passing of Councillor Steffan Ap Dafydd.

1. **Declaration of Interest**

The following Member made a declaration of interest during the item:

Councillor S.Reynolds	Re: Minute No. 3 - Verbal Update from the Head of Adult Services, as she is a Board Member of Tai Tarian.
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2. **Recovery Strategy**

Scrutiny members were given an overview of the circulated report, prior to its submission to Cabinet on 30 July 2020. Members welcomed the individual breakdowns being discussed at the relevant scrutiny committees, and felt there were some constructive, innovative suggestions within the report. Members felt the report presented a more joined up approach than before the Covid 19 crisis.

Concerns were raised by members that there might be a doubling up of officers and members time, with certain reports being discussed at both the recently convened Members' Recovery Panel and at scrutiny committees. Scrutiny committee members did not want to adopt the

role of 'scrutinising the scrutineers', and felt that scrutiny committees should continue focusing on scrutinising the decisions made by Cabinet/Cabinet Boards.

Discussion took place around the work of the Third Sector, and whether there was a reliance on volunteers following the pandemic. Officers explained that expectations would be measured, going forward, so that there would not be an over reliance on volunteers. The emphasis would be on coproduction and a collaborative approach.

Senior officers emphasised that they were happy for members to contact them directly with queries.

Officers explained that staff working above and beyond their contractual pay grade would be remunerated accordingly.

Members queried how scrutiny holds the Public Services Board to account – the query would be directed to the relevant officer following the meeting, and a reply would be forwarded to scrutiny committee members.

A report would be presented to members shortly, concerning the remodelling of adult social care, which would answer members' queries regarding mental health provision and respite services.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

3. **Verbal Update from the Head of Adult Services**

Scrutiny members were given a verbal update from the Director of Social Services, Health and Housing and his team, on what had been happening within the service, from the start of the year to the present. This included the formation of field hospitals, to be able to cope with the high death toll predicted by scientists (which thankfully had not reached the projected surge), as well as the role of the Regional Partnership Board in the decision making process.

A summary of concerns around the residential care service, and amount of deaths, was provided. Concerns included confusion about the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), following advice from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, as well as its availability.

Additional funding from Welsh Government, for empty care home beds, was discussed. Members noted that £40 million had been made available across Wales with an additional £22 million of funding having been recently announced.

Members felt that further community, economic, social and cultural impacts of the pandemic would be felt further down the line. Future peaks in the virus could be a possibility going into the winter months. The service would continue to adapt going forward.

Whether care home staff had been affected by the virus was discussed, and it was noted that some care homes had been affected by staff shortages more than others. Homes that had needed to, had employed agency and nursing staff. It was noted that social services had not run the Safe and Well scheme.

'Hospital to home' and rapid discharges were discussed. Due to Welsh Government guidelines concerning transmission of Covid 19, it was noted that Disabled Facilities Grants assessments were on hold, as officers could not currently go into clients' properties.

The provision of homecare and domiciliary care during the pandemic was explained by officers. Members noted that carers were still visiting clients where needed, although some families had taken over their relatives care, and stood the carers down.

A number of clients had been referred from the Safe and Well scheme for domiciliary care help, such as picking up shopping and prescriptions. The £500 Government bonus promised to those working in care during the Covid 19 crisis had, to date, not been paid.

Officers gave an overview of the following, with regards to the impact of the Covid 19 crisis:

- Learning disabilities
- Mental health
- Day services
- Respite services
- Domestic violence and
- Drug and alcohol training

It was noted that some commissioned services (respite care) had now reopened. A number of day service staff who were unable to work within the day care setting during the pandemic, had been

helping to take clients out for a few hours a day, to give families a break. A report of day service provision would be presented to the scrutiny committee shortly.

A spike in the numbers of referrals of older people suffering from mental health issues had been identified.

Homelessness was discussed, and members noted that all rough sleepers had been taken off the streets at the start of the outbreak, resulting in almost double the number of clients in emergency provision, including hotels, than before the pandemic – 115 compared to a previous 60 cases.

Officers had great concerns around homelessness, and felt that the easing of lockdown could result in the breakdown of families, as well as registered social landlords evicting people. Officers emphasised the good relationship they currently had with housing associations.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor S.Reynolds made a declaration of interest, as she is a Board Member of Tai Tarian.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the verbal update be noted.

4. **Children's Services - Pandemic and Beyond**

An overview was given by the principal officer for safeguarding, and members noted that the Youth Offending Team was still able to make visits to young people. Sometimes these took place in their gardens or as a 'walk and talk' exercise. There were various ways of interacting with young people according to need, and what better suited the individual. WhatsApp and virtual meetings had been used, as young people felt comfortable with these methods.

Officers upheld the emergency duty team as unsung heroes.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

CHAIRPERSON