
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20.06.13

Present: Councillors: Huw Edwards, Alan Jones Evans, Elin Walker Jones, Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Peter Read, Liz Saville Roberts, Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Elfed Williams and Hefin Williams.

Observer: Councillor Annwen Davies

Also Present: Morwena Edwards, (Head of Social Services), Dafydd Owen (Commissioning Manager), Ann Lloyd Jones (Senior Manager Adult Services), Marian Parry Hughes (Senior Manager – Children’s Services), Gareth James (Members’ Manager Support and Scrutiny) and Glynda O’Brien (Members Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Apologies: Councillors Alwyn Gruffydd, Chris Hughes, Llywarch Bowen Jones, Robert Townsend (Church in Wales) and Siôn Amlyn (Teachers’ Union).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED: To re-elect Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn as Chairman of this committee for 2013/14.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED: To re-elect Councillor Peter Read as Vice-chairman of this committee for 2013/14.

3. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) The Chair extended a welcome to:

(i) Miss Glesni Williams who was studying a Sociology and Social Policy course at Bangor University and on work experience in the Council’s Strategic and Improvement Department.

(ii) Mr Mark Roberts from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW) – for Item 10 on the Agenda.

(b) A Member made reference to Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd’s illness and the committee wished him a full and speedy recovery.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

5. MINUTES

5.1 The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 11 April 2013, as a true record.

5.2 In response to a query regarding updating contracts to include a clause regarding the language choice of individuals who receive a home care service, an assurance was given that the new contracts for employees would include a language clause.

6. SCRUTINY REVIEW – HOME CARE

Submitted the report of the Cabinet Member - Care regarding the possibility of establishing a Scrutiny Review in areas of Home Care and Day Care.

The Cabinet Member – Care drew attention to the Older Persons Commissioning Plan 2011-2016 which includes:

- An analysis of the needs of older people in Gwynedd, in terms of the nature of services and quantities/numbers
- The vision, outlining how we wish to see these needs being met
- A summary of the services that were provided internally or procured by the Council at the time the plan was written, and the intentions in terms of providing/procuring over a period of five years.
- A summary of the budget for related services and an analysis of the budgetary split between different types of services over a five year period.

The Commissioning Manager explained that the main principles of the commissioning plan, adopted by the Council Board in January 2012, was to promote independence by ensuring the required support to enable people to continue to live at home as long as possible, reduce loneliness and social isolation, concentrate on dignity in care and the quality of services, work in partnership and recognise the role of carers and ensure support for them to be able to continue to care. Over the last year they had collaborated with Mantell Gwynedd, Age Concern Wales and social initiatives in order to address loneliness amongst older people. If this was not done people would contact the service earlier and in terms of demography it was presumed that there would be a huge increase in this population over the next decade.

In 2010/11, the budget was over £20m and 6,700 older persons had received a service at an average cost of over 3,000. In terms of the level of service, it was noted what type of services would increase and it was presumed that over the next few years the budget would increase to £21.5m with 8,347 individuals receiving a service with the average cost reducing to £2,500.

Reference was made to the action plan and some points had been achieved such as the telecare scheme and the remainder required attention such as re-modelling the day care provision to enable individuals to live independently.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted by individual Members:

- (a) It was suggested that Members should attend meetings of the Gwynedd Older Persons Committee as from those meetings it was evident that there was a need to encourage older persons who did not receive care to contact Social Services

earlier as more often than not they did perhaps try to live independently for too long before asking for help from the service.

- (b) It was asked if the Service had taken into consideration the assumption of budgetary cuts to services by the government especially because of the increase in people 65+ in coastal villages. It was noted that Gwynedd was a huge county geographically and these services were a significant cost to the Council compared with the counties in south Wales.

In response, the Commissioning Manager recognised that the above was a huge challenge, however, the purpose of the commissioning scheme was to create less dependence on the services with more emphasis on home care and living independently. Reference was made to the enablement scheme that offered home care for 6 weeks to older persons and in some cases they did not require home care to enable them to do things for themselves, but on the other hand some required more care. Over 300 cases had been on the scheme in 2011/12 with over 450 last year and the scheme was one way of managing the demand on the budget. They would look at the trends and a different way of prioritising may be required.

- (c) That more collaboration was required with those persons who were eager to be independent and joint working between Council Departments especially to assist older people to complete forms.
- (d) In response to a query regarding the future of Frondeg and the Day Centre at Maesincla, the Senior Manager Adult Services explained that from the initial meeting it was proposed to implement a work programme and proceed to discuss the aspirations of residents and users for both sites.
- (e) In response to a query regarding the opening hours of the Day Care Unit at Maesgeirchen that the unit was open 2/3 days a week for adults and 2 days for a new joint specialist service with the Health Board that had been very successful and the intention was to expand this throughout Gwynedd.
- (f) In terms of the relationship between the Health Board and Social Services it was noted that there were examples of good cooperation and others that were not as good. However, it was trusted that the Health Board had an arrangement to appoint one Manager for Ysbyty Gwynedd that would alleviate the situation. The Head of Social Services added that the Hospital Manager held monthly meetings to discuss and resolve problems and by so doing it was envisaged that Social Services would be part of the decisions early on within the process.
- (g) It was asked if it would be possible to look at the work contracts of home carers to be able to extend their hours for those who would be anxious to do so by assisting persons in the homes for older persons.
- (h) That there was a need to ensure current data at all times

In response to the above comments, the Head of Social Services noted the importance for the Scrutiny Review to establish a brief that would focus on separate issues namely the commissioning part and the financial challenge that would influence this, together with the expectations of the communities. The second part focused on the internal and external provision and if it was fit for purpose in the future and in terms of training staff appropriately, staffing rota, language etc.

Resolved: (a) Establish a Scrutiny Review of the care field to include the following membership and the Review will consider its remit and draft a work programme in the first meeting:

Councillors: **Huw Edwards**
 Elin Walker Jones
 Eryl Jones-Williams
 Linda Ann Jones
 Peter Read
 Ann Williams

Cabinet Member – Care (Observer)

(b) That the Care Scrutiny Review drafts a report to offer useful recommendations to the Cabinet Member – Care.

7. RESPITE CARE

Submitted the report of the Cabinet Member – Care outlining the main aim of Social Services when commissioning services for adults.

The definition of respite care was expanded upon and how respite was currently provided in Gwynedd, what are the difficulties and the future plans for respite. Reference was made to short term respite care provision together with extra care housing provision and the type of residential care offered in sites such as Awel y Coleg, Bala.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the report and they highlighted the following points:

(a) The Committee's wish to air the weaknesses and difficulties experienced by the Service when providing respite care.

In response, the Senior Manager Adult Services explained that the service could cope with respite care provision for people with physical needs as there were sufficient resources and choice within the county. Difficulties were experienced to provide respite care to individuals with memory difficulties despite the development of specialist units at Maesincla, Bryn Blodau (Llan Ffestiniog) and Llys Cadfan (Tywyn). It was noted that these units had made a huge difference to the lives of users. It was further noted that more of this type of provision was required in order to address the needs of individuals.

In terms of needs at a residential care level, problems had been experienced with commissioning respite care for nursing needs due to the need for joint-commissioning with the Health Board and in the past they had failed to get the Health Board to agree. However, it was trusted that in the future it would be possible to jointly commission beds in specialist nursing homes.

In the context of learning difficulties, they did try to make more use of individuals who offer to open their homes to users and it was trusted that this model could be built upon.

(b) Serious concern regarding the lack of resources for respite care in Pen Llŷn as the nearest resources for the residents of Dwyfor were in Llanberis/Llangefni. Whilst it was accepted that there were two beds at Plas Hafan and Plas y Don in Dwyfor, concern was expressed that if these beds were being used for longer periods than a fortnight it meant

that the beds were not available for respite care. Several members supported the above and reference was made to examples of the difficulties of individuals to be able to receive respite care for their families at specific times due to the lack of provision within the county.

In response, the Senior Manager Adult Services stated that two beds had been allocated for respite care at both homes stated above, and they were used for a few days up to a fortnight. It had to be borne in mind that individuals may be referred to the homes and their condition may deteriorate which meant a longer stay. It appeared that it wasn't a problem to keep two beds for respite care and a bed for individuals who require longer term care. However, it was noted that if individuals suffered memory difficulties (dementia) it had proven difficult to find a specialist placement.

(c) It was understood that older persons could not go to Plas Ogwen, Bethesda from July this year and they would have to go to Llanberis. Serious concern was expressed about this considering that families had to travel up to 3 hours there and back to visit their loved ones. It was also questioned if centralising the provision was necessary, suitable and effective and the Elected Members should be aware of any changes in provision.

In response, the Commissioning Manager explained that the intention, via this pilot scheme, was to centralise respite care at Plas Pengwaith, Llanberis in order that the centres could support carers as well as make the best possible use of resources without additional costs.

(ch) The importance of considering the needs of carers who care for individuals with autism and persons with mental health problems.

In response, the Senior Manager Adult Services noted that the intention partly was to consider developing the centre at Fron Deg, Maesincla. It was noted that there was very little demand for respite care for individuals with mental health difficulties, however, the Health Board intended to consider strengthening the support to carers in the Community.

(dd) The extra care housing provision model at Awel y Coleg, Bala was congratulated and welcomed and any area was encouraged to consider this if a similar model was offered. The need for respite care was recognised, however, it was also important to recognise the role of carers and to clearly establish their role and value of the work undertaken by them.

In response, the Cabinet Member – Care noted that the Council was progressive and had established a Welfare Reform Panel with finance earmarked to promote this.

(e) In response to a query regarding the support/training of carers, it was noted that the Carers Outreach group held training sessions as well as offering support.

The Senior Manager Children's Services noted that there was also a provision for young carers. She elaborated that Social Services had a statutory responsibility to assess the needs of young carers and that a great deal of work was currently on-going between the Education Department and Social Services via the schools. Young carers can register by self-referral to Action for Children or through a Social Worker. It was noted that information was available in schools, surgeries, pamphlets etc.

(f) In terms of resolving care for individuals who suffer from memory difficulties, the Senior Manager Adult Services explained that some specialist units had already opened with some places for individuals in homes in the independent sector. However, the

Service was striving hard to ensure that individuals received respite care and were anxious to proceed with a review of nursing and residential homes as the provision was not currently suitable for the needs. It was noted that more specialist beds were required for dementia as well as more enablement beds.

(ff) In response to the above, it was expressed that private care homes tended to refuse individuals for respite care for a period of a week and they favoured patients for a longer term.

(h) In response to a query regarding attending a meeting recently set up by the Health Board, the Senior Manager Adult Services confirmed that the Older Persons Mental Health Group had met and a Sub-group was established to consider respite care and the hope was to have a joint-commission with the Health Board to ensure that beds were purchased in nursing homes for respite care.

(i) In terms of receiving the support of a specialist psychiatric nurse to help with dementia, it was explained that patients with nursing needs could not be placed in a residential home, however, the Service could ensure the best possible support for individuals in the communities.

(g) That the recent decisions of the Health Board to close units and Hospitals placed more pressure on Social Services in rural areas and the Health Board should not make decisions without thoroughly consulting local authorities.

(h) Shouldn't the cost of the service to the Council be considered and compared with other provision

To conclude, the Chair summarised the above observations and supported the need to Social Services to respond to the challenge of considering schemes to address the needs of individuals with dementia, the need for more respite care provision in suitable and more convenient locations within the County.

Resolved: To accept and note the above observations.

8. DRYLL Y CAR, BARMOUTH

A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member – Care outlining the options for the future of the sub-acute in-patient 8 bed service at Dryll y Car, Barmouth which served the populations of Gwynedd and Anglesey.

(a) The Cabinet Member – Care reported that very little use was made of the service and a Task and Finish Group had been set-up by the Health Board to develop options for the unit. The four options were discussed and it was resolved that Dryll y Car would close on 19 July 2013, and to establish and strengthen community mental health services. It was noted that the Local Member and Social Services supported this option as the resources that would be released would be used to serve more patients in a more flexible and safe manner.

(b) A Member noted that it appeared from the report that the provision was old fashioned, however, he did sympathise with the families who would not now be able to have respite care.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report.

9. ANNUAL REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE 2011-2012 (CSSIW)

Submitted a report by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales outlining the main findings and recommendations regarding the performance of Social Services during 2011-12.

The Cabinet Member – Care took the opportunity to thank Social Services staff for their work and the marvellous progress achieved in a challenging time with a challenging budget. Members were reminded that areas had improved and there were areas that required further attention.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the report and the following points were highlighted:

- (a) It appeared that the weaknesses noted stemmed from the limitations between the relationship of the Health Board and Social Services.
- (b) The importance that the Department returns calls to individuals who telephone the Department with any queries. It appeared that 76% were unhappy with the situation.
- (c) It was welcomed that the report was constructive and positive with signs of improvement continuing.

In response, Mr Mark Roberts from the Inspectorate explained that evidence had been received that many fields had improved, however, three main risks had been identified for Gwynedd namely

- The need for impetus and effective support to deliver modernised, preventative adult services combined with a lack of capacity to deliver the changes required
- A history of weak management reporting systems resulting in a lack of effective performance management and oversight
- Continuing ability to influence locality-focused strategic planning with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

Concern was also noted regarding the credibility of data that receives an annual audit by the Inspection Office.

The Cabinet Member – Care gave an assurance that in terms of data the Service was safe and the main concern was the requirement to record and reconcile the data as was undertaken in other Counties.

(ch) It was noted that there were some elements where the performance was worse than last year such as timely reviews for looked after children that had reduced from 83.4% to 75.4% together with the performance of arrangements of personal education plans had been reduced.

In response, the Senior Manager Children Services explained that there was an increase in the number of looked after children, which had been a huge challenge for the Service. In terms of personal education plans, it was recognised that there had been a deterioration in performance this year yet historically the performance had been good. It was noted that the Education Department was responsible for the plans that were to be completed within 20 working days. The Education Department was requested for an improvement scheme that will receive the attention of schools.

In terms of medical examinations of looked after children, it was recognised that the County's performance was one of the worst, however, the Senior Manager Children's Services was in negotiations with the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board since last August and it was trusted that following a meeting already arranged for next week, that the processes would improve.

In the context of statutory reviews of looked after children, the Senior Manager Children's Services recognised that the performance was unacceptable and this had caused concern to the Service for many years. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of looked after children which was now over 200, and the institute of independent review officers responsible for chairing statutory reviews had not increased. A bid was submitted to the Council three times consecutively for funding to increase the number of officers, but unfortunately the bids had been unsuccessful. It was expressed that the rehabilitation work programme was in place with a system within the service and the Scrutiny Committee was assured that no review was deferred or cancelled unless a Senior Officer agreed that it was suitable to do so. In order to alleviate the situation, one worker was moved from his/her daily duties to try and increase the reviews and monthly reports on the reviews were received. An increase to 87% was seen in the first quarter performance and assurance was given that the matter would receive weekly attention in order to ensure the importance of prioritising this matter.

(d) A Member noted that unfortunately no officer was present from the Education Department at the meeting to report on the education plans. Whilst accepting that the Corporate Parent Panel monitored the results of GCSE of looked after children, the importance of monitoring the progress of pupils having moved to further education was noted.

(dd) The importance of referring to the language needs of looked after children was noted. It was understood also that the GCSE results of looked after children were especially good. The Corporate Parent Panel at its previous meeting had received a presentation from two young persons who had received a service as looked after children in Gwynedd. One had submitted a list of recommendations on how to improve the service and it would be beneficial for members of this Scrutiny Committee to see that list at the next preparatory meeting.

(e) A Member referred to a specially good care scheme seen in Finland some years ago and she asked the Council to submit a request for dual registration for care homes that would give an opportunity for a care home to act as a residential and nursing home. This meant the home could offer several services within one home and the residents would not have to move from one home to another in accordance with their condition and needs. She was anxious for the Council to consider such a scheme, however, the answer every time was that CSSIW did not allow dual registration in Gwynedd.

In response, the Head of Social Services explained that technically it was possible for any home to be designated as a dual home however it had to be considered if the Council was eager to go down this road or develop more extra care housing/use private homes and Council residential care homes. Whilst accepting that it was not possible to submit an application for dual registration this meant that the Council would have to employ specialist nurses which could be a complex matter for the Council.

In terms of extra care housing, individuals could stay in these homes and the Council could offer continuous nursing care. It was felt that this model was suitable for the County if more of them could be developed.

(f) Stemming from the response above, the Member asked where it was not possible to develop extra care housing would it be possible to consider dual registration care homes. Another Member added that as the Health Board had resolved that patients would receive home care and this meant that there was less need for nurses in hospitals, couldn't nurses be employed to assist the Council in homes.

(g) In response, the Head of Social Services stated that any home where a request for dual registration was made had to be of a sufficient size to be viable.

(ng) The Scrutiny Committee were reminded by the Cabinet Member – Care of the need to give attention to the Social Services Bill (Wales) which aims to establish a cohesive legal framework for Social Services in Wales and the transformation of services.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report together with the above observations.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.20 pm