

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held remotely via video-conferencing on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

**Present:** Councillors Bryan Davies, Gethin Davies, Marc Davies, Odwyn Davies, Peter Davies MBE, Keith Evans, Hag Harris, Alun Lloyd-Jones, Dan Potter, John Roberts, Lynford Thomas and Ivor Williams.

**Cabinet Members Present:** Councillors Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Gareth Lloyd, Ray Quant, and Alun Williams

10am – 12.17pm

- 1     **Apologies**  
Councillor Paul Hinge apologised for his inability to attend the meeting due to being on other Council business. Councillor Elaine Evans apologised for her inability to attend the meeting.
- 2     **Disclosure of Personal / Prejudicial Interests (including Whipping declarations)**  
None
- 3     **Trading Standards (Scams)**  
The Trading Standards & Licensing Manager updated the Committee on scams and doorstep crime issues and the work undertaken by Trading Standards.

In common with most trading standards authorities across England and Wales, Ceredigion's Trading Standards Team (TS Team) uses, as a first point of contact for members of the public, the Citizens Advice Consumer Service (CACS) which has been set up and funded nationally by central government to offer consumer civil advice and to act as a portal for referrals to local authority trading standards teams. Relevant information is then passed to each local authority on a daily basis for them to take any appropriate action. The TS Team requests that 100% of scam and doorstep crime complaints are passed through.

The Service also uses the National Intelligence Operating Model to identify priorities based on consumer detriment and vulnerability and scams and doorstep crime consistently features in its top 5 priority areas.

In 2019/20, the TS Team received 552 reports from CACS, 40 of which were specifically related to scams and doorstep crime. The Team also receive referrals from National Trading Scams Team (NTS Team). During the same period, the TS Team dealt with 48 scam victim referrals from the NTS Team; each report is triaged and the intervention depends on the level of risk associated with that individual.

It was explained that during the pandemic, with people having to stay at home, many households became reliant on good internet connectivity for online shopping, working from home, home schooling, online entertainment subscriptions, etc., and the typical online and delivery scams that fraudsters used to attempt to make money out of the unsuspecting public included:

- Texts and emails being sent to people to lure them to apply for the Covid-19 vaccine
- Automated message saying that BT were going to suspend your broadband because your IP address had been compromised, and the message asking the recipient to 'press 1' to continue.
- Automated message saying the call is from Amazon Prime claiming that they would charge the recipients card £79 for Amazon Prime.
- Text messages purporting to be from Royal Mail stating that there is a package that needs to be rescheduled, or an item is waiting to be collected and asking the recipient to press on a 'bit.ly' link.

Out of the 740 consumer complaints/reports received by the TS Team since the beginning of the pandemic, 67 cases related to Ceredigion consumers having experienced directly some form of unfair trading practice as a result of Covid-19 e.g. breach of contracts, traders refusing to refund and return deposits relating to cancelled holidays/weddings/events, or failure to provide a service, etc.

Doorstep Crime were outlined to the Committee. It is often elderly and vulnerable people that are targeted by rogue traders offering home improvement or gardening services, etc. Doorstep crime often results from an initial cold call. Unscrupulous traders will carry out unnecessary, substandard and sometimes even dangerous work and then use strong arm tactics to persuade consumers to part with large sums of money for poor workmanship. The TS Team works closely with partners such as Dyfed-Powys Police to try to maximise the impact locally of its activities and avoid duplication. All intelligence related to scams and doorstep crime is added to a central intelligence database which is disseminated to the Police and other enforcement agencies as appropriate.

The response of the TS Team to doorstep crime incidents is more enforcement based and the Team attempts to respond to all reported incidents including, where possible, with the assistance of the police. Investigating this type of rogue trader activity and protecting vulnerable consumers from them continues to be a priority for the TS Team. The Service currently has a number of ongoing investigations with one prosecution pending. Results of the most recent prosecutions of rogue/unscrupulous traders were provided to the Committee.

Committee members emphasised that additional resources for the team would be beneficial, as the majority of enforcement partners are struggling with resources.

The Committee considered the content of the report and AGREED to note the report and take account of the issues described.

#### 4 **Ceredigion Carers Unit Annual Report 2020-21**

The Cabinet Member and 'Team Manager – Through Age Carers and Community Support' reported the achievements of the Ceredigion Carers Unit and progress against their agreed targets and objectives during the year 2020-2021.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act gives Carers an equal right to have their needs assessed as those they care for. Under the act, local authorities must provide a support plan to help Carers to secure the outcomes that matter to them. Taking forward actions to ensure that these enhanced rights are recognised and actively delivered upon. The 3 national priorities were:

- Supporting life alongside caring - All Carers must have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain their capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring.
- Identifying and recognising Carers - Fundamental to the success of delivering improved outcomes for Carers is the need to improve Carer's recognition of their role and to ensure they can access the necessary support.
- Providing information, advice and assistance - It is important that Carers receive the appropriate information and advice where and when they need it.

It was stated that Ceredigion County Council remain committed to providing the best possible outcomes-focused service to enhance the lives of Carers, and to continuously improve support, services and recognition of Carers in Ceredigion. The Act provides a definition of a Carer as "a person who provides or intends to provide care for an adult or disabled child". This removed the requirement that carers must be providing "a substantial amount of care on a regular basis".

Members enquired about the respite provision that is available. The Carers Development Officer explained the various options that are available. Members emphasised how important the dissemination of information is especially in schools and doctor surgeries.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

#### 5 **West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Development Group Annual Report 2020-2021**

The Cabinet Member and 'Team Manager – Through Age Carers and Community Support' presented the report that had been produced by the West Wales Carers development Group for Welsh Government to outline the progress that has been delivered to meet the Welsh Government Carer priorities by the West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Development Group (WWCDG).

In April 2017, the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) agreed to include Carers as a key work stream, reflecting the importance of this

population group within the responsibilities of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The report presented summarised the activity of the West Wales Carer Development Group (WWCDG) during the period 1st April 2020– 31st March 2021. The WWCDG is a formal sub-group of the West Wales Regional Partnership Board (RPB) which includes representatives of Hywel Dda University Health Board (Health Board), the three Local Authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, as well as Third and Voluntary sector organisations, and representatives of Carers in West Wales.

2019/20 reflects the Welsh Government's transition phase between the Carers Information and Consultation Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. In their budget letter dated 14th March 2018 Welsh Government set out their expectation that health, local authorities and the third sector will work in partnership to support carers under the Act by:

- Supporting life alongside caring - providing opportunities for carers to have reasonable breaks from their caring role to enable them to maintain capacity to care, and to have a life beyond caring.
- Identifying and recognising carers - improving Carers recognition of their role and ensuring they can access the right support.
- Providing information, advice and assistance - providing appropriate advice where and when Carers need it.

Members wished to highlight the importance of the Welsh language when caring for someone who's first language is Welsh. Also, to ensure the links are there between health boards when a patient is discharged from a neighbouring health board, in order that the appropriate care is in place for the patient at home.

Following questions from the floor it was AGREED to note the report.

**6 To confirm Minutes of the Special Healthier Communities meeting held on the 22.09.2021 and any matters arising therefrom**

Item 5 - The Committee noted that Cabinet members and officers had met with Lampeter Lions Netball Team and the Town Council and are now in discussions.

It was AGREED to confirm as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22 September 2021.

**Confirmed at the meeting of the Committee held on xxxx 2021**

**Chairman:**