

**Minutes of the Meeting of Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny
Committee held at the Council Chamber, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely
on Thursday, 13 April 2023**

Present: Councillor Caryl Roberts (Chair), Councillors Ceris Jones, Amanda Edwards, Eryl Evans, Keith Evans, Wyn Evans, Gwyn James, John Roberts, Mark Strong and Carl Worrall.

Cabinet Members present: Councillors Matthew Vaux and Alun Williams.

Officers in attendance: Mrs Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Interim Corporate Lead Officer, Porth Cynnal and Interim Statutory Director of Social Services, Mrs Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer- Porth Gofal, Mr Llyr Hughes, Corporate Manager – Housing Services, Mrs Dwynwen Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic Services and Standards Officer.

(10.00am- 12:20pm)

1 Welcome and Apologies

Councillor Elaine Evans, Ann Bowen Morgan and Sian Maehrlein apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)

Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

None.

3 Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for housing in the County for the next 5 years - 2023-2028

Consideration was given to the draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028. Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities had a strategic role to play in the way the local housing market functions. One of the key ways for this to be delivered was through a Local Housing Strategy. The intention was for the Local Authority to play a lead role in developing an approach to housing across all tenure and ensure the delivery of appropriate housing and related services in order to meet local need.

The current Local Housing Strategy had been in place since 2018 and was a 5-year plan. As a result, the Housing Strategy had been reviewed and updated. The review had involved Senior Officers of the Housing Team, key Partners, and Corporate Managers from across the Porth's together with data collection and analysis.

The updated Housing Strategy sets out the vision for a further 5 years:

‘There will be sufficient, suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents’

Following discussion, it was AGREED

- (i) to recommend to Cabinet the approval of the draft strategy and to begin on its formal consultation; and
- (ii) that Cabinet considered Members recommendation that Cabinet write to Ms Elin Jones, Senedd Constituency Member and to the four Regional Senedd Cymru Members, expressing concern that providing sufficient housing according to need in Ceredigion was not possible due to all regulations requiring LPAs under the Habitat Regulations, to consider the phosphorus impact of proposed developments on water quality within the SAC river catchment. This had a significant impact on the current housing crisis and should be considered.

4 Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Report for 2020-2021, 2021-2022

Consideration was given to the Statutory Social Services Directors Report 2020/2021 & 2021/2022. The duty to compile the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services requirement is defined in Part 8 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 under the ‘Code of Practice on the Role of Directors of Social Services’.

The completion of the reports had been delayed during the Covid-19 crisis. It was reported there would be no reason for delay in producing and publishing the report for the current year.

Following questions from the floor, it was agreed to recommend that Council accept the report for information.

Members thanked Officers for their hard work and commitment during what had been a difficult time.

5 To present to Committee an update on the Porth Gofal Occupational Health Service

Consideration was given to the report update on the Porth Gofal Occupational Therapy Service. A detailed background was given to the Occupational Therapy Service together with an update on the current situation.

The OT service had high numbers on the waiting list which was contributed by the build-up following Covid restrictions as only urgent visits undertaken during restrictions. Inability to recruit into vacant posts for a long period had prevented the service from being able to reduce the waiting list. The service had also had some long-term sickness and the only full time OT has recently returned from maternity leave.

It was reported that the current Challenges for the service were as follows:-

- 1) Recruitment of Qualified OT's Advert for 2 full time OT post has been out for nearly a year with no applicants.
- 2) Integrated OT leads concerns regarding ability to manage team due to IT access and resource availability. Current demands of service exceed what they were able to provide which has resulted in them stepping back from operational management to only providing clinical guidance. Current OT service was operationally managed by Porth Gofal Integrated Triage Manager who was a Social Worker.
- 3) The 2 senior practitioners had given notice. 1 retired on 18.5.2022 and other was working remotely away from Ceredigion and on an extended notice until the 31/3/23.
- 4) Recent advert for 2 senior practitioner post had received no applicants since last May .Current vacancy was being managed by Agency worker while other senior continues to work extended notice period.
- 5) Risk that waiting list would continue to increase, resulting in escalated risk due to extended delays and situations escalating for individuals and families.
- 6) Increased need for care and support due to delay in availability for preventative intervention from OT service.
- 7) Increased complaints and loss of trust in service as service users and families are getting frustrated with delay and no solution or timescale.

Recent outsourcing of waiting list to agency did not go as well as expected due to difficulty in agency obtaining OT'S that would be able to travel to Ceredigion. As only 34 assessments completed in a 4-month period and concerns raised regarding quality of work the contract was ended. Negotiations were taking place with another agency in South Wales who had advised that they would be able to provide numerous OTS to support with reducing the waiting list cost of this is £255 per assessment.

Opportunities for recruitment of OTs through the International recruitment campaign was being explored. Regular meetings were held between managers from Health and Social care to discuss the issues and consider opportunities to support the service.

The team structure WAS currently being reviewed to identify opportunities that may improve recruitment for the team. A service risk assessment was in place and reviewed regularly.

It was AGREED to note the current position.

6 Independent Reviewing Officer Performance Management Report, quarter 3, 2022/2023

Consideration was given to the Report upon the Independent Reviewing Officer Performance Management Report, quarter 3, 2022/2023. This report represents the monitoring and quality assurance of Looked After Children who were reviewed during the third quarter of 2022/23. This information contributes to Members fulfilling their roles as Corporate Parents. The information was based on the monitoring forms completed by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) following each Looked After Children Statutory Review(LAC Review) and was informed by other performance

information held by Children Services. The report includes National and Local standards and targets used to measure outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) at the time of their statutory review, and includes Welsh Government Performance Indicators (PI's) and Local Performance Targets.

On the basis of the information available and the views expressed during the LAC Review Meeting, the IRO makes a professional judgement about the effectiveness of a child/young person's Care Plan in meeting their needs and may recommend changes to the Plan.

During the Review Meeting the IRO considers whether the child/young person who was being reviewed requires assistance to identify relevant other people to obtain legal advice/take proceedings on their behalf. This action was deemed necessary for 1 young person by the IRO in the period. In addition, the IRO has regard as to whether the child/young person's human rights were being breached in any way and, if so, might make a referral to CAF/CASS. This action was not required at any review.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS;

- At the end of quarter 3, there were 122 children being looked after compared to 112 at the end of Q2.
- 116 children were reviewed in this quarter compared to 63 in the previous quarter. The large number of reviews completed in this quarter was due to the commencement of the Innovate Team in the county. LAC reviews that had been due were postponed to a time in Quarter 3 where there was more capacity with Innovate starting and the children's cases were reallocated to new social workers who could participate in the review process. 85.3% of children were reviewed in the statutory timescale compared to 88.9% in Quarter 2.
- 8 children left care in this quarter compared to 6 in Quarter 2. 6 children had their Care Orders revoked, 6 child returned home to family, 1 child went on to a When I'm Ready placement and 1 child went to supported lodgings or independent living or in to a shared lives placement.
- The placement provision for the children reviewed during this Quarter were 13 in Local Authority foster care, 24 in kinship carer placements (19 in county, 5 out of county), 22 were in Independent Foster Agency placements (7 in county, 15 out of county), 15 children were placed with parents (12 in county, 3 out of county) and 12 were placed in residential care provision outside of the county.
- 74 children were being cared for under the legal status of a Full Care Order, 18 were under an Interim Care Order, 4 under a placement order and 20 under Section 76.
- Of the children reviewed in this quarter, 83.6% of children received a statutory visit. This was compared to 93.7% in Quarter 2.
- 42.9% of the care and support plans were recorded as being in place at the first review. The low percentage this quarter was due to staffing difficulties within the Planned Care Team which prevented the plans being completed on time.

- There were only 16.7% of children reviewed in this quarter who had a Permanency Plan in place that had been agreed by the second review. This compared to 57.2% in the previous quarter.
- Length of time in Care for Ceredigion children who are being looked after that were reviewed in Quarter 3 were 27 under 6 months, 9 between 6 –12months, 19 between 1 – 2 years, and 61 over 2 years.
- For children reviewed and their second or subsequent reviews, permanency plans that were in place were, Long Term Foster Care for 37 children, kinship care for 17 children, twin tracking for 15 children, placement with parent for 15 children, residential care for 8 children, adoption for 5 children, independent living for 4 children and rehabilitation back to parents for 1 child.
- The percentage of children (of sufficient understanding) who understand their reason for being looked after were 95.3%
- The percentage of children of sufficient understanding who were involved in or consulted about their review, was 100%
- The percentage of children who were made aware of their right for an advocacy service, was 92.5%
- Number and percentage of Looked After Children of school age who had a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school during this quarter is 95.5%
- Number and percentage of Parents consulted by the Social Workers before the review or who attended the review was 100%.
- 17 Pathway Plans were held in this quarter, compared to 33 in Quarter 2.(70.6%) Pathway Plan Reviews were held within timescales.
- The percentage of Young Persons with allocated Personal Advisor / Social Worker was 100% during this Quarter.
- The Percentage of Young People Consulted for their Review Meeting during this Quarter was 82.4%

It was AGREED to note the content of the report as presented.

7 Our West Wales Adult Regional Advocacy Strategy

Advocacy was recognised, in all recent health and social care legislation, as being fundamentally important in situations within which individuals and marginalised groups need support to have their voices heard and their rights respected. Advocacy is designed and delivered to facilitate participation by individuals and groups within the decisions and processes that affect their lives.

Although not a statutory requirement, the Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy seeks to shape our commissioning arrangements to meet the legal requirements to ensure good quality advocacy was readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

This strategy was based on an extended period of engagement with citizens, especially those who engage with health and social care services, advocacy organisations, health and social care practitioners, statutory commissioners and other relevant stakeholders.

This Adult Advocacy Strategy had five priority areas, all aimed at improving outcomes for people who need advocacy. The priorities had been defined in the light of co-productive activity to date, engagement, the Regional Population Assessment, and in response to legislative requirements. They include:

- Priority 1. Maintain and develop further our co-productive approach
- Priority 2 Raise awareness of, and understanding of, advocacy.
- Priority 3. Ensure advocacy is easily accessible and equitably available
- Priority 4. Ensure advocacy is of a consistently high standard of quality
- Priority 5. Maintain specialisms and non-statutory forms of advocacy

Each priority within the strategy outlines why it's important & what the current situation was in West Wales. Following this each priority outlines the actions that need to be taken to ensure each of the priority areas were met.

It was AGREED to endorse the West Wales Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy as presented.

8 To confirm Minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising therefrom

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 09 February 2023.

Matters arising
None.

9 To consider the Forward Work Programme

It was AGREED to note the content of the Forward Work Programme as presented.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 May 2023

Chairman: _____

Date: _____