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GOHEBIAETH YN DILYN CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR

Pwyllgor PWYLLGOR CRAFFU GWASANAETHAU OEDOLION A CHYMUNEDOL

**Dyddiad ac amser
y cyfarfod** DYDD LLUN, 17 HYDREF 2022, 2.30 PM

Gweler isod gohebiaeth anfon gan Gadeirydd y Pwyllgor ar ôl y cyfarfod , ynghyd ag unrhyw ymatebion a gafwyd

Am unrhyw fanylion pellach, cysylltwch â scrutinyviewpoints@caerdydd.gov.uk

11 **Gohebiaeth yn dilyn Cyfarfod y Pwyllgor**(*Tudalennau 3 - 12*)

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Date: 19 Oct 2022

Cllr Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member, Housing & Communities



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Correspondence Sent via e-mail.

Dear Cllr Thorne,

CASSC Scrutiny Committee 17 October 2022: Implementation of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

On behalf of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, my sincere thanks for attending Committee on 17 October 2022 to present how the council intends to implement the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016. Please also pass on our appreciation to Sarah, Jane and Helen.

For ease of reference, the observations made by the Committee following our consideration of the item are captured in this letter. We asked a number of questions regarding the following, and were satisfied with the responses we received.

The Committee noted that new contracts have been drafted and that they are currently with both internal and external legal services to ensure they are fit for purpose.

We were told about the “29 matters” that ensure that a property is fit for human habitation, and that processes are being developed to ensure that these are recorded accurately when properties are being let to avoid contract holders withholding rent payments. It was noted that officers hoped that few cases would need to be taken to court, but that is was possible during the transition period. Although it was noted that the legal cost for a private tenant to take a landlord to court would be prohibitive.

Members raised concerns about the new repair standards and recurring ‘damp and mould growth’ issues that are not being resolved which could lead to withholding of rent. Officers noted that ‘damp and mould growth’ concerns were a perennial issue and that often this was the result of ‘lifestyle’ choices i.e., drying clothes indoors,

showering and cooking with insufficient ventilation. We were informed that a short video and a fact sheet are available to help reduce condensation that causes this problem. However, we also noted that in the current economic climate residents may be less inclined to open windows when they are trying to keep their home warm.

The Committee noted the important role that private landlords have in the rental market; however, the new requirements of the act may make this a less attractive option. We asked if any modelling had been done in relation to a reduction in the number of properties available from the private rented sector and what mitigating actions will be put in place. Officers informed us that they were aware that landlords are giving notice to tenants, however, the reasons for them wishing to leave the market are not known, although Cardiff Landlords Association have recently undertaken a survey to understand their concerns. It was noted that in order to support landlords the Council is operating a leasing scheme, offering up to £5,000 in a renovation grant, undertaking the management role in return for a lease of at least 5 years. This was seen as a positive by the Committee though it raised further questions in relation to the mortgages that landlords may have and their ability to be able to enter into a lease agreement. We were informed that the Welsh Government were aware of this concern and are reviewing the scheme.

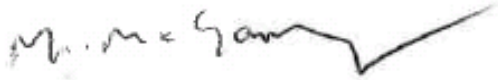
Regarding the provision of information to tenants it was noted in the presentation that 'different formats/languages' would be available, including 'Welsh, English, large print and braille. Members asked what other language would be available given the demography of the city. Officers confirmed that the information would be available in other community languages including Somali and Arabic.

The committee asked that given the demand for properties, how many abandoned or unfit properties are there currently in the city. Officers confirmed that there are very few 'unfit' properties only those that were undergoing structural repairs. The issues with 'abandoned' properties is more difficult as action can only be taken when the authority knows about the property, therefore reporting is encouraged. It was noted that the new requirements mean that the Council will no longer need to go to court to repossess a property, however it may remain void for a longer period as 'proper investigations' will need to be carried out and 4 weeks' notice served.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my thanks to all who attended the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee. A response to this letter is not requested.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary McGarry', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

COUNCILLOR Mary McGarry

Cc Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director People & Communities
Jane Thomas, Director Adults, Housing & Communities
Helen Evans, Assistant Director, Housing & Communities
Cllr Arian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives
Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground
Cllr Rhys Taylor, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
People & Communities Performance Leads.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

Date: 19 October 2022

Councillor Norma Mackie
Cabinet Member for Social Services (Adults)
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW



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Dear Councillor Mackie,

CASSC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 OCTOBER 2022: COMMITMENTS TO UNPAID CARERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

On behalf of the Community and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, our sincere thanks for attending Committee on 17 October 2022 to present the Cabinet reports on Commitments to Unpaid Carers and the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2021/22. Please also pass on our appreciation to Sarah, Jane, and Cath Doman from the RPB.

The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

We commend both reports to Cabinet for consideration.

In relation to specific issues, Members would like to comment on the following:

Commitments to Unpaid Carers

Members were very supportive of both Charters and commitments proposed for recognising and supporting the significant role unpaid carers play in our communities. We asked a number of questions regarding the following, and were satisfied with the responses we received;

- Engagement and involvement of carers in the further development of the Charters and Action Plan;
- Ensuring the workforce is suitably skilled to deliver the commitments;
- Implementation of the commitments and Action Plan, including;
 - Key challenges
 - Changes to processes and procedures
 - Monitoring, evaluation and review of the Charter and Action Plan and the inclusion of Carers in this
- Low levels of take-up of Carers Assessments to date
- Financial Implications of the proposals

Further issues raised:

Consideration of the Carers Action Plan

During the questioning relating to the development and implementation of the Carers Action Plan, Members requested an indicative timeline for this. Officers responded that the Action Plan would be developed within the same timelines as the Directorate Delivery Plan, and Members would therefore **request** that the Carers Action Plan be brought to this Committee for consideration at the same time we consider next year's DDP.

Types of Conditions Carers are dealing with

Members also enquired about the types of conditions that carers are dealing with (e.g. dementia, physical disability etc), and a breakdown of this. Officers stated that, whilst they did not have a detailed analysis of this available at the meeting, it could be provided. Therefore, Members would **request** this information - Members acknowledge that carers do care for loved ones that have multiple needs, so if you are able to provide some context to aid our understanding, it would be very welcomed.

Equalities Monitoring

Members asked a question about equalities monitoring, which would be critical in assisting in identifying and targeting individuals and communities that may not currently identify as carers and access to support. Whilst this detail was not available at the meeting, Members were offered a report on this issue, and therefore **request** that a profile of the ethnicity of current known carers be provided, linked with the profile of the City as a whole.

Respite Survey

Members were made aware of the Respite Survey that is currently underway and would **request** that the output report from this survey be provided, when available. Please provide an indicative time of when this will be available to ensure that we can add it to our work programme accordingly.

Carers that are aged 50+

Members enquired about those carers that are aged 50+ and whether any specific targeted work was being done with this cohort. Members were informed that this had not been considered, but all carers (including older carers) would be part of the overall awareness raising and engagement activities. Whilst Members do not have any specific recommendations on this issue at this time, we wish to flag that we have raised this issue and would **request** that the needs of this group be considered and included in the development of the Action Plan.

Local Authority Social Services Annual Report (LASSAR) 2021/22

Members welcomed the opportunity to consider the LASSAR for 2021/22. Members asked a number of questions on the following issues:

- Your vision and aims as the new Portfolio holder
- Improving performance in relation to the review of care plans
- Progress towards meeting the Welsh Government's plans for Integrated Care

Members also asked further questions on the following;

Workforce Pressures

Members asked a number of questions on a range of workforce issues, including sickness absence (including monitoring long/short-term sickness; assessments on return to work; and support for staff to come back to work); problems relating to the recruitment of staff, particularly social workers; the use of agency staff and what roles or gaps in provision are these in; the need for joined-up working to give staff more flexibility in their work (hours, assistance with transport etc); and were reassured that the QA Manager had been recruited and would be joining the Team soon.

Members were informed that a Workforce Plan is being developed and **request** that this be shared with Committee when available. We would also wish to ensure that information relating to the use, type and numbers of agency staff be included in the Plan. Please indicate a timescale for this, so we can add to our work programme accordingly.

Safeguarding

Members asked about the rise in numbers in relation to safeguarding referrals and requested a breakdown of what the safeguarding issues relate to (i.e types of safeguarding concerns referred), and some commentary in the reasons for the rise. Whilst this information was not available in detail at the meeting, it was suggested that this could be provided, and we would therefore **request** this information.

Discharge of Patients and Transfer of Care

Following a question on the collection of statistics and setting of targets in relation to this issue, Members were informed that the collection of statistics had been suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic period, but there had been a recent Welsh Government Review on targets for this area, which has resulted in the decision for their reintroduction. Officers informed Members that they had yet to have further information of when the reintroduction was likely to happen, but this Committee

requests that it be kept informed of progress on when these targets are to be reintroduced and these be reported to Committee accordingly.

Members were also informed that a “deep dive” into this issue was going to be undertaken and would therefore **request** that the output report be provided to this Committee, when available. Please indicate a timescale for this, so we can add to our work programme accordingly.

A response to this letter is requested, and to recap, the Committee **is requesting:**

Commitment to Unpaid Carers

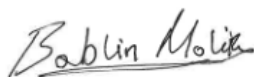
- i. Agreement that the Carers Action Plan be brought to this committee for consideration at the same time we consider next year’s DDP.
- ii. Provide a breakdown of the types of conditions that carers are dealing with (e.g. dementia, physical disability etc). Some further narrative relating to those carers who are dealing with multiple needs and what these are would also be welcomed.
- iii. Provide a profile of the ethnicity of current known carers, linked with the profile of the City as a whole.
- iv. Provide a copy of the output report from the Respite survey to this Committee, when available. Please provide an indicative time of when this will be available to ensure that we can add it to our work programme accordingly.
- v. Give assurances that the needs of Carers Aged 50+ be considered and included in the development of the Action Plan.

- vi. A copy of the Workforce Plan be shared with Committee when available. We would also wish to ensure that information relating to the use, type and numbers of agency staff be included in the Plan. Please indicate a timescale for this, so we can add to our work programme accordingly.
- vii. Provide a breakdown of what the safeguarding referral issues relate to (i.e types of safeguarding concerns referred), and some commentary in the reasons for the rise.
- viii. That this Committee be kept informed of progress on when targets in relation to the discharge of patients/delayed transfer of care are to be reintroduced and assurances that these be reported to Committee accordingly.
- ix. That the output report on the deep dive into discharge of patients/transfer or care be provided to this Committee, when available. Please indicate a timescale for this, so we can add to our work programme accordingly.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my thanks to all who attended the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR BABLIN MOLIK
CHAIR, COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People & Communities
Jane Thomas, Director Adults, Housing & Communities
Cath Doman, Regional Partnership Board
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
Cllr Rhys Taylor – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations
People & Communities Performance Leads