

Date: 19 October 2022

Councillor Norma Mackie
Cabinet Member for Social Services (Adults)
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Correspondence Sent via e-mail.

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.

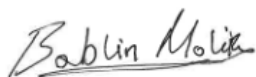
Local Authority Social Services Annual Report (LASSAR) 2021/22

- 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

Date: 20 October 2022

My Ref: CYP/LASSAR_Q1_UC/Oct22



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Councillor Ash Lister
Cabinet Member for Social Services (Children's)
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Dear Ash,

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 OCTOBER 2022 –
COMMITMENT TO UNPAID CARERS; LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22; AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES Q1 PERFORMANCE
2022/23**

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the consideration of Cabinet proposals relating to the RPB's Commitment to Unpaid Carers; the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2021/22; and Q1 Performance – the latter two Items will be commented on together in this letter. Please also pass on our thanks to Sarah McGill and Deborah Driffield.

The Committee commends the two reports to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting today. A further letter on the Youth Justice Service will follow in due course, as this was not a pre-decision item.

As Chair of this Committee, I would again wish to take the opportunity to welcome you to your role as Cabinet Member responsible for Children's Social Services, and I will strive to ensure that the positive relationship we have with Children's Services continues and that we remain impartial and non-political in our dealings with you. Whilst our role involves us being a "critical friend", we recognise the complex issues you face in your role and we are here to understand the challenges, support you and officers, and champion improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people.

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

Commitments to Unpaid Carers

The Committee noted the Cabinet report and would wish to be kept informed of the development and implementation of the Carers Action Plan, once available.

Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2021/22/Q1 Performance

Members welcomed the opportunity to consider the LASSAR and Q1 Performance and did so in conjunction with each other (as well as the supporting documents to the LASSAR Item, such as the Directorate Delivery Plan) as an opportunity to “look back” at how the Service performed in continuing unprecedented circumstances, as well as the current and future priorities for Children’s Services. Specific comments are as follows:

Intervention and Review Hubs

Members asked for an update regarding the Intervention and Review Hubs and if there was evidence available in terms of performance. Deborah responded that she would produce a performance report for the Committee on some of the early findings and performance, including some examples of how the Hubs have helped families and their journey through the Hub. The Committee would welcome this report and look forward to receiving it in due course.

Statutory Visits

Linked with the above, whilst discussing Q1 performance, Members shared your concerns regarding the delays in carrying out statutory visits and the performance rates for carrying these out in time. Officers responded that they are focussing on this issue, including the use of mobile phone tech to improve reporting of statutory visits.

As part of its priorities for 2022/23, the Committee agreed that it wished to review and evaluate at how effective innovations introduced by Children’s Services (including the above Hubs) have been at a future CYPSC meeting. Reviewing improvements to key areas such as this will be crucial part of that piece of work. I will link with you and officers to agree the most appropriate time for this information to be reported to CYPSC, though any initial thoughts via your response would be appreciated.

Recruitment of Social Workers

Members asked a number of questions around the recruitment of social workers and asked whether there had been discussions with Welsh Government on this issue. We enquired about the sustainability of the market supplement; the potential of other local authorities “competing” via this kind of incentive; pay and conditions; and losing social workers to border authorities in England. We also asked whether students in schools, colleges and universities were being approached to work for Cardiff and whether a university conversion course had been explored.

We appreciated that much is being done to try to mitigate the challenges on all these matters and the reality of the situation not just faced by Cardiff but across the country. We asked whether, as a Committee, there was anything we could do to lend our support to the Cabinet and Service Area to get behind you and even lobby Welsh Government on this issue if required. We wish to reiterate that support, and I will make arrangements (via the Scrutiny Officer) to meet with you and officers (in consultation with CYPSC Members) on how we could do this and what would be the most effective way to do this.

We would also **request** that the potential of a university conversion be explored and reported back to this committee at a later date.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

We asked questions relating to whether there were processes in place with internal partners to support those children and young people with ALN to ensure sufficient safeguards are in place for them. Officers responded comprehensively on the Service’s relationship with Education and were told about the “Virtual Head Teacher” initiative. We would be interested to hear more about this, so will make contact with Education colleagues to obtain this information.

Children Looked After (CLA)

Given the new legislation relating those young people who may have ALN, and how this is impacting on those who are also CLA, Members asked what evidence and assurances could be given in relation to the Service Area monitoring this, particularly attendance at school. Therefore, Members would request information relating to this, including any challenges the Service might be facing in this area.

Placements

We asked a number of questions around placements and the need to ultimately ensure better outcomes for children & young people, balanced against the shortage of placements and the complexities of registration of placements. We **request** that a verbal briefing be held with yourself, officers and CYPSC Members on the issue so that we can gain a better insight and understanding of placements, and the need to ensure that the language we use on this issue is carefully considered and communicated correctly. I will ask the scrutiny officer to link with you and Children's Services officers to arrange this.

Data and Information

On considering both the LASSAR and Q1 performance, Members agreed that some of the data collected and presented as required by Welsh Government was not always a useful way of measuring "performance". We agree that data and information needs to be outcome based, and there is an opportunity for any reader of data and information to "look behind the figures" and not simply base judgements on quantitative figures. As a committee, we again offer our support in approaching Welsh Government on this issue, and I will make arrangements (via the Scrutiny Officer) to meet with you and officers (in consultation with CYPSC Members) on how we could do this and what would be the most effective way to do this.

During the consideration of Q1 performance, Members discussed the target rates shown in the report in relation to social worker recruitment and gaining a better understanding of this. In response, Deborah offered to undertake a session on this issue, to include receiving some anonymised examples in relation to Child Protection Referrals and those coming in via the Front Door. I will ask the scrutiny officer to link with you and Children's Services officers to arrange this, to be potentially held at the same time as the "placements" briefing.

Complaints

During Sarah's statement, she acknowledged that complaints remain an issue across the Service and that she would be looking at this as a priority. Members would welcome a report back on this issue, once available.

To recap, this Scrutiny Committee will commit to the following:

1. Link with yourself and officers to explore how this scrutiny committee can help and support you in ongoing discussions regarding the recruitment of social workers; and improved data and information required by Welsh Government.

2. Link with you and officers to arrange a verbal briefing/session with us to consider placements; and for us to gain a better understanding of the role of Social Workers, including receiving some anonymised examples in relation to Child Protection Referrals and those coming in via the Front Door.
3. Link with officers in Education & Lifelong Learning to gain some further information on the “Virtual Head Teacher” and other developments of work with Children’s Services.

We request the following information from you:

4. A performance report on some of the early findings and performance from the Interventions and Reviewing Hubs, including some examples of how the Hubs have helped families and their journey through the Hubs.
5. Report back on evidence and assurances in relation to the Service Area monitoring new legislation relating those young people who may have ALN who are also CLA, particularly attendance at school, including any challenges the Service might be facing in this area.
6. Some initial thoughts on when the most appropriate time for CYPSC would be to receive a report to Committee on Innovations in Children’s Services.
7. That the potential of a university conversion be explored and reported back to this committee at a later date.
8. A report back on addressing complaints be submitted to this Committee, once available.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members

Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities

Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services

Liz Williams/Debra Willis, PA to the Corporate Director

Jennifer Goss, Cabinet Support Office

Kim Thorpe, PA to the Director of Children's Services

Jo Watkins, Cabinet Support Manager

Tim Gordon and Jeremy Rhys – Media and Comms

Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader

Cllr Rhys Taylor – Group Leader

Andrea Gibson – Group Leader

David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee