

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Morpeth on Tuesday, 2 July 2019 at 1.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor J Watson
(Chair, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Armstrong, E.
Bowman, L.
Cessford, T.
Dungworth, S.
Hutchinson, I.

Moore, R.
Nisbet, K.
Rickerby, L.
Simpson, E.

COUNCILLORS ALSO PRESENT

Jones, V.

OFFICERS

M. Bird
J. Hillery

C. McEvoy-Carr

K. Thompson
K. Willis

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Complaints and Customer Relations
Manager
Executive Director of Adult Social Care
And Children's Services
Rights Team Manager
Complaints Manager - Children and
Education

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

S. Brown

L. Sprudd
C. Riley
D. Thompson
S. Young

NHS Northumberland Clinical
Commissioning Group
Northumberland Sport
Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust
Healthwatch Northumberland
NHS Northumberland Clinical
Commissioning Group

Two members of the public and one member of the press were also in attendance.

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Daley for not being able to attend for the complaints and compliments report on the agenda, which was jointly within his portfolio.

16. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing OSC held on 4 June 2019, as circulated, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Members received the latest Forward Plan of key decisions (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix A). No items listed were due for pre-scrutiny by this committee.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

18. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting held on 11 April 2019 were presented for the scrutiny of any issues considered there (enclosed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

REPORTS CONSIDERED BY CABINET

19. Adult Services Market Position Statement

Members were reminded that this committee pre-scrutinised the Adult Services Market Position Statement (MPS) for Care and Support report at the last meeting on 4 June. Cabinet then considered and agreed the Adult Services Market Position Statement report on 11 June and received a report about this committee's recommendations. An extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting and a copy of the report from this committee were presented for information (copy enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix C).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION BY SCRUTINY

20. REPORTS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

20.1 Customer Experience: Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2018/2019 by the Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care Complaints Service

The report (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix D) informed members of the activities of the Children's Social Care and Adult Services complaints service, including work on behalf of the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group; how customer experiences were sought and to provide an overview of what people had said about services; how complaints were handled and statistical information from 2018/19; matters of general note arising out of those complaints including some examples where action has been or was to be taken in order to improve services; decisions made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Health Service Ombudsman in respect of complaints they received about children's and adult services; and other feedback from people who used the services. The report was introduced by the Cabinet member for Adult Services with further detail provided by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services and the respective complaint managers for both adults and children's services.

Discussion followed of which the key points raised by members and responses from officers were:

When a compliment was received, it was shared with the service area concerned including the individual staff being complimented. Officers also considered in such cases whether they were acting as expected or doing anything different. This helped with considering whether the right action was being taken. The report provided details of issues raised in compliments received.

Members were advised that the increase in children's complaints to 70 compared to 27 the previous year was not a concern as it resulted from changes to how complaints were recorded. Previously, more issues had been addressed informally, but were now recorded through the formal complaints process which provided more evidence of how issues were being addressed. It was not considered that the rise in numbers resulted from any increase in dissatisfaction with services.

There were no formal regional benchmarking arrangements in place but the most recent information showed that Northumberland compared favourably with others in the region although the socio-economic mix varied between different areas. The figures had also been impacted upon by serial complainants. Officers were satisfied that they learnt from complaints, which helped them understand issues raised and change practice as a result.

A member requested that the next report on the 2019-20 period should include more comparative studies. Analysis using one report/section on children's complaints and one on adults plus details of any common themes of complaint would be welcomed. It was also requested that Northumberland should be compared with similar counties in future, for example Durham, Cumbria, Lancashire, if this data was available. Members were also advised that complaint statistics were calculated on the basis of per 10,000 population of children or adults.

In response to a question members were referred to details about the main areas of complaint, lessons learned, actions taken and levels of success. More complaints tended to be received about children's services than adult services, who also received more compliments. There was always a mix between people who did not want to formally complain and others who felt strongly to do so. Furthermore, the Local Government Ombudsman had advised that local authorities should not be concerned about the number of complaints they received but the complaints to them that were upheld.

Mr Hillery and Ms Willis were thanked for their attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and members' comments on suggested changes for the following year's report be followed up.

20.2 Welfare Rights Annual Report 2018/19

This report (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix E) updated members about the activities of the Welfare Rights Advisory Unit for the year ending 31 March 2019, and on key current issues about supporting people with benefits during a time of ongoing major changes to the benefits system. Welfare Rights Team Manager Keith Thompson introduced the report with the aid of a presentation which covered details of providers of welfare rights advice and information in Northumberland, what welfare rights advice could be provided, details of the welfare rights team's staffing, case studies of people supported by the service, and key issues going forward including Universal Credit, (Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance (DLA and /PIP) reassessment, Attendance Allowance and changes applying to mixed age Pension Credit couples.

Discussion followed of which the key points raised by members and responses from officers were:

Regarding concerns that Attendance Allowance (AA) take up was low and what could be done to increase awareness of its availability, members were advised that two temporary posts based in care management had been made permanent in April 2019. These AA support planners identified people who weren't known to adult services or social care providers and tell them about their entitlement. The AA supported planners could also then help these people to make their claims, however organisations like Age UK could also assist with benefit claims for older people. Many people were reluctant to claim benefits but having this extra money helped many people to cope with the increased costs resulting from any disabilities they had.

The Cabinet member referred to the number of publicity campaigns which had been organised which regularly repeated as additional people became entitled to the funding. Members could help publicise its availability. Most charities could also assist. A member thanked the welfare rights team for their support for residents, especially those experiencing financial difficulties. Members were advised that the team trained workers in frontline social care services and other residents were able to access Age UK and Citizens Advice for support.

Members stressed the need for increasing ways to promote awareness about the benefits. A system based effort was needed to reach Northumberland's wider population. Messaging all 41 NHS GP practices in the county could assist; this would be followed up with Northumbria NHS Trust's communications team. Members agreed that they would look at other means for getting the message out about the availability of benefits, perhaps in leaflets, parish magazines and other formats. This was a good example of organisations working together to help residents.

Members were advised of the increase in payment up to £1500 through the proposed new funding formula. Members agreed that they should lobby in support of this new formula, especially as Northumberland had an ageing population. Additional funding both helped people in their daily lives and led to more spend in the local economy. Mr Thompson was thanked for his attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the information be noted and issues identified be followed up.

21. REPORT OF THE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER

Health and Wellbeing OSC Work Programme

With the agreement of the Chair, the agenda was then reordered to allow for the availability of an officer presenting.

Members considered the work programme/monitoring report for 2019-20 (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix G).

Members noted that as updates on Rothbury, Berwick and the Whalton Unit were all now due for September's meeting, items previously scheduled for then would be deferred to October's meeting. An item identified for consideration under urgent business later at this meeting would also be considered further at September's meeting. The Chair also allowed a short verbal update on Berwick hospital; endoscopy services would be included in the new development; all services previously provided in Berwick would continue to be delivered there.

The Chair took this opportunity to thank Mr Young, who was leaving his role as the CCG's Strategic Head of Corporate Affairs on 10 July, for all his work and very good contributions to this committee.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

22. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 3 September 2019 at 1.00pm.

23. INFORMATION ITEMS

23.1 NHS Quality Accounts

Copies of the letters sent to local NHS Trusts in response to the presentations given to the committee in March 2019 had been circulated to members for information (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix H).

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

23.2 Policy Digest

This report gave details of the latest policy briefings, government announcements and ministerial speeches which might be of interest to members, and was available on the Council's website.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

24. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

The Joint Musculoskeletal (MSK) and Pain Service (JMAPS)

The Chair agreed for this item to be raised as an urgent item due to public interest in the issue. Copies of a briefing note from the CCG about the Joint Musculoskeletal (MSK) and Pain Service (JMAPS) were circulated at the meeting (copy enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix I.)

The Chief Operating Officer of Northumberland CCG provided a verbal overview. She stressed that it was a very good news story, as previously some parts of the county did not have access to the service, but this was now available throughout. The CCG had listened to residents' views and the service would now be delivered in 16 locations. The new model had followed consultation with frontline staff and would be kept under constant review. This issue had not been raised with this committee before as all the services were still in place, there was now a higher coverage and it did not represent a significant change in service. The new model would improve quality of care and not reduce patients' choices. It was not privatisation and was no different to previous arrangements; there would be some subcontracting but did not represent a new way of working. The budget had reduced but better care would now be provided. There would be no job losses.

It was suggested that the item should have been brought to the committee earlier, even if it was not a requirement. Members agreed that further discussion was needed, so the issue would be debated further at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the issue be scrutinised at this committee's next meeting on 3 September 2019, with any updates provided if required.

25. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF NORTHUMBERLAND SPORT

Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy

This report (enclosed with the official minutes as Appendix F) presented the draft Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy 2018-28 (as attached in Appendix 1 of the report), a multi-agency approach co-ordinated by the Northumberland Sport Partnership, which aims to tackle the wider health and wellbeing issues associated with the rising levels of inactivity amongst all age groups throughout the county. The report explained the long term 'whole system approach' being taken to engaging inactive communities in Northumberland through targeted interventions and a universal offer to reach out to inactive people more effectively.

The report and its recommendations had been considered and supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 13 June 2019 and was presented for any scrutiny of the issues included. The Director of Northumberland Sport provided an overview, including the cradle to grave approach being taken, the 0-19 pathway, the importance of addressing concerns that 35% of people were now less active than previously; consultation undertaken with 130 stakeholders; and future long term focuses on improving activity amongst women and girls and amongst lower socio-economic groups. Other key considerations included environmental issues such as benefits from litter picks, putting active design into planning applications and ensuring good street lighting for safety.

A member welcomed the cradle to grave approach and targeting of resources following findings on gender. She expressed concern about findings that children under 11 were now less active than adults. High levels of childhood obesity continued to be a concern and for continued attention. It was important that footpaths were clear of glass and weeds cut, but worried that reductions to local services budgets had an impact on this. Another member referred to an active group in his local areas who had received assistance for mapping footpaths and raised funding for work to clear them and make them more accessible; such self help should be explored.

Mr Sprudd responded with reference to older people's walking groups and how a key consideration of the strategy was about getting people to contemplate doing physical activity. Work took place with headteachers to encourage more active classroom activities and use more active learning on school trips. School based exercise should not be limited to physical education classes. A more preventative approach could also reduce further costs to the health services and other budgets.

Discussion followed of which the key points raised by members and points in response from officers were:

- it was important to encourage more schools to participate in the 'daily mile'; 33 in the county were involved to date
- it was important to note that this work was also equally within Councillor Homer's Cabinet portfolio
- such strategies could only be delivered through a partnership approach; it also involved the ageing well team
- it was key to help motivate those people who knew they should be more active
- praise was given to a resident who had set up a group in Seaton Valley after identifying some gaps in service. It was agreed that he would be a welcome addition to the list of community champions
- the Seaton Valley would greatly benefit from the conversion of old railway lines into cycle tracks; the Northumberland Cycling and Walking Board were looking at options for such conversions, which would provide a return on investment
- it was important to engage large employers about physical activity projects to benefit their staff and design workplaces to help people become more active
- schools might struggle to fit in more physical activities due to examination driven needs and pressures to achieve results. However there was also evidence that more active children also tended to achieve better educational attainments
- the financial cost of some physical activities could be off putting for many
- many activities did not cost, for example many facilities in parks
- Ofsted encouraged fitness activities in schools. It was important to vary curriculums to meet academic needs but also balance with other different activities.

Mr Sprudd was thanked for his presentation and it was:

RESOLVED that the report be noted and Northumberland Sport consider members' comments.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____