

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CARE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING**

**Tuesday, 12 September 2023**

- PRESENT:** Councillor S Green (Chair)
- Councillor(s): W Dick, J Gibson, G Kasfikis, S Potts, D Robson, J Wallace, D Weatherley and A Wintcher
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor(s):
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): J Green, P Diston, B Goldsworthy, M Goldsworthy, M Hall, J McCoid and I Patterson

**CHW1 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

RESOLVED

- i. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

**CHW2 DEPARTMENTAL STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN**

The OSC received a report on the Integrated Adults and Social Care Strategy 2023. The departmental strategy and action plan will support the strategic aim to enable more people to receive support in their own homes, through increased capacity in community services, and thereby reducing reliance on bed-based support.

A five-year strategy has been developed setting out our areas of focus, direction and ambitions. There is a public facing action plan to accompany this. This will be reviewed annually, and an update provided. The strategy and action plan will be used to drive forward work across the department and will form the basis for priority and goal setting with the workforce. The strategy and action plan have been agreed by Cabinet (July 2023).

The action plan is divided into the following priority areas:

- Prevent, reduce and delay the need for support
- Caregivers
- Workforce
- Commissioning

The OSC discussed the staffing of the service in relation to vacancies and the new centre due to open in early 2024. There has been recent recruitment of trainee Occupational Therapists and the services utilisation of apprenticeships has been effective. There were 89 applicants for trainee Social Worker roles and 180 Graduate Trainee Applicants in Gateshead this year.

There was enquiry from the OSC about the use of emerging technologies in social care and how this affects the workforce. The OSC was updated on technological advancements that are supporting Carers, care givers and service users. Technology leads are looking into friendship calls made via Alexa/other home smart devices to combat loneliness; however, most technology uses are focused on traditional home support such as fall alarms. The following examples of utilising new technologies were raised:

- Virtual reality helping caregivers and Carers with understandings of conditions such as dementia and autism, among other disabilities.
- Animated pets.
- Apps that Carers can use to detect pain levels when someone is unable to vocalise.
- Beds able to turn people in the night.
- Fall detectors that don't have to be physically worn.

A barrier to some of these advances is the technological skills of the workforce.

The role of Respite Centres was also discussed by the OSC. Respite Carers are a significant part of Gateshead's social care offering. The OSC were informed that there is a guide available which demonstrates the ways that caregivers give care, encouraging more people to recognise themselves as and seek support as caregivers.

## **RESOLVED**

- i. The OSC noted the content of the report and identified that actions relating to the recognition of caregivers should be added to the work programme.
- ii. The OSC noted that performance in relation to the pressures will be reported via the Performance Management and Improvement Information Framework.
- iii. A Member's Seminar is to be organised for all Councillors to provide a technology demonstration with the service's new Technology Manager.

## **CHW3 DEMAND PRESSURES ON SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**

The OSC received a report on Integrated Adults and Social Care Pressures. The report provided an overview of the current service pressures within Integrated Adults and Social Care Services Strategy, analysis of trends, and comparison with national social care pressures.

The report focused on 3 key areas:

- Waiting lists for packages of care
- Waiting lists for Care Act assessments
- Admissions to residential or nursing care

The OSC noted that compared to other local authorities there is an over reliance on bed-based care but this is reducing year on year.

The Integrated Adults and Social Care Services departmental strategy and action

plan have been developed within the context of these pressures and will support the strategic aim to enable more people to receive support in their own homes, through increased capacity in community services, and thereby reducing reliance on bed based support.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. The OSC noted that the Committee work plan includes further scrutiny of the following areas which interface with demand pressures:
  - a. Hospital Discharge and residential care admissions
  - b. Social Care recruitment
  - c. Home care models
  - d. Extra care and Supported Living development
  - e. Strengths based approaches
  - f. Visit to Sr Winifred Laver PIC
  
- ii. The OSC noted that performance in relation to the pressures will be reported via the Performance Management and Improvement Information Framework.

**CHW4 SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATION - ADULTS**

The Annual Report on Services Complaints, Compliments and Representations was presented to the OSC following its consideration from Cabinet on 20 June 2023.

The report focuses primarily on statutory complaints for Adults Social Care Services with information on complaint related queries and compliments that were received about staff or services. The report covers the period from 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

The Adults Care Complaints Process procedure has two stages:

- Local Resolution by a Team or Service Manager.
- External Consideration by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

During 2022/23, 56 complaints were received regarding Adult Social Care Services. This is a 2% increase on complaints received during 2021/22 (55). Amber complaints, which are medium risk to the Council or the service user, accounted for 100% of all formal complaints received. Almost 29% of all complaints received involved disputes to care charges levied for care and support. During 2022/23, seven complaints were considered by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, (LG&SCO). However, after consideration, six complaints were closed by the LG&SCO as requiring no further action. In some cases, the ombudsman was satisfied with the Council's proposed remedy to the complaints. Compared with the number of formal complaints received (56), 87% of representations during 2022/23 were compliments (363).

During 2022/23, quality of service accounted for 52% (29) of all complaints received. Quality of service can include straightforward issues, such as,

- Missed or delayed social work visits / appointments
- Non-return of telephone calls
- Poor communication
- Poor or no response after a request for service.

However, quality of service can also include significant issues, for example, failure to safeguard a vulnerable adult or ensuring that services provided by our commissioned providers are of a high standard. After investigation, 44% (8) of complaints about quality were not upheld. 22% (4) were upheld and 17% (3) were partially upheld. Three complaints were withdrawn or informally resolved.

The OSC were presented with learning from complaints and representations, and examples of improvements identified during 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

- i. The OSC indicated that it was satisfied with the performance of Integrated Adults and Social Care in responding to complaints and ensuring that this results in continuous service improvement.

## **CHW5 ANNUAL REPORT OF LOCAL ADULT SAFEGUARDING BOARD AND BUSINESS PLANS AND EMERGING PRIORITIES**

The OSC was presented with the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB) statutory Annual Report 2022/23 and the updated 2023 refresh of the Strategic Plan 2019/2024.

The GSAB 2022/23 Annual Report highlights progress throughout the 2022/23 financial year. The report articulates how partner governance arrangements ensure members are accountable for Safeguarding Adults.

The GSAB Safeguarding Adult Review and Complex Cases Sub-group continues to support the statutory work of the GSAB through completion of mandatory Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and local learning reviews. This provides an opportunity for GSAB partners to review cases where a person with care and support needs has suffered abuse and neglect which has resulted in their death or serious injury or illness. The learning from these reviews allows the board to identify areas of development, in knowledge, skills and practice and to focus on areas where improvements are required to protect people with care and support needs. The Quality, Learning and Practice Sub-group takes on an operational role, taking the learning from SARs and developing these into clear and measurable actions to be progressed by partners.

Key areas of work in 2022/23 include the launch of the regional self-neglect seven-minute guides and animation, the introduction of the Adult Concern Decision Making tool to support practitioners in deciding on whether to submit a safeguarding concern. Northumbria Police have started to implement Right Care Right Person in line with national best practice and Gateshead Housing have set up the 'Less is More' – Hoarder Support Group, residents and practitioners are working together to identify best practice in dealing with hoarding issues. Tyne and Wear Fire and

Rescue continue to promote the Safe and Well visits. All agencies have promoted safeguarding training and development both internally and through the multi-agency offer. The GSAB multi-agency training offer has been reviewed and refreshed offering a robust and accessible training offer for partners.

The revised Strategic Plan 2019/24 (2023 refresh) sets out how the Safeguarding Adults Board will achieve its five Strategic Priorities which are:

- Quality Assurance
- Prevention
- Communication and Engagement
- Operational Practice
- Mental Capacity

As this is the final year for the current Strategic Plan the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board has arranged a development day in September 2023. The purpose of the day is to identify the priority areas for the Board over the coming 3 years, with the aim of setting objectives, goals and actions as well as identifying mechanisms to measure outcomes and the impact of the boards work.

The OSC discussed the challenges of defining self-neglect and how this term should be further explored. There is a balance to be negotiated between self-neglect being on a fine line of health issue and conscious living choices, while it should also be recognised as a cause of death. Concerns about hoarding behaviours were also discussed. Northumbria University have done some work on what drives hoarding behaviours and when it becomes problematic.

It was recognised that the Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) National Partnership Agreement will have an impact on services and will focus on making sure all needs are in place before the police withdraw. Northumbria Police will be the first in the region to adopt this change and will share the impacts they find with other cities when they have data available. If data is not distributed soon this will be raised as a Gold Command.

RESOLVED:

- i. The Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report 2022/23 and Strategic Plan 2019/24 was considered.

## **CHW6 WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED

- i. The OSC noted the information contained in the annual work programme report.
- ii. The OSC noted that further reports will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional issues which the Committee may be asked to consider.

**Chair.....**

