

Health Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Johnny Kidney (Chairman), Cllr Gordon King (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Dr Monica Devendran, Cllr Howard Greenman, Diane Gooch, Irene Kohler, Cllr Tony Pickernell and Cllr Tom Rounds (Substitute)

Also Present:

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Jane Davies and Cllr Tony Jackson

54 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Cllr Clare Cape
- Cllr David Vigar
- Cllr Mike Sankey (substituted by Cllr Tom Rounds)

55 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Resolved

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 5 July 2022, were approved as a true and correct record.

56 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

57 **Chairman's Announcements**

The chairman reminded the committee that new guidance had been published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), setting out the principles of how health overview and scrutiny committees should work with Integrated Care Systems to ensure they are locally accountable to their communities. He reassured members that Health Select Committee would retain its legal duties to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in Wiltshire.

It was reported that the committee would receive an information briefing in October or November, on the recent Learning Disabilities Mortality Review, an investigation into the reasons behind premature deaths amongst people with

learning disabilities. The committee were also informed that the final version of Wiltshire's Independent Living Strategy would be presented to Cabinet for approval on 27 September.

Furthermore, the chairman was pleased to report that the Scrutiny Team would be contacting partners to discuss the arrangements for the committee's inquiry day, a system-wide review of hospital admissions and discharges, and the factors behind the delayed patient admission from ambulances. A report outlining the approach to the inquiry would be presented to the committee for approval at the next meeting.

58 **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

59 **Primary Care Update**

The Director of Primary Care at the Integrated Care Board provided background information about patient access to appointments and outlined plans for enhanced access from 1 October. She also took the opportunity to report on the progress of the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

The director noted that the Primary Care Network (PCN) was facing significant workforce pressures, but, despite this, had delivered appointments 233,000 in July 2022, out of a Wiltshire population of 497,000. She reported that the proportion of patients receiving face-to-face appointments had increased in August, so that at least 65 percent were seen in person during the month. Further details were then given about plans to extend the hours available to patients, which would mean that a range of appointments would be available between 6:30pm to 8pm Monday to Friday and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays. The director explained that Primary Care had been working closely with Healthwatch Wiltshire to plan the delivery of the extended service.

It was announced by the director that the focus of the autumn vaccine programme would be on the most vulnerable patients, with a particular focus on care homes and social care staff. She explained that large vaccination sites were running in Salisbury and at Bath Racecourse, but vaccinations were also available at smaller sites throughout Wiltshire's PCNs. She also praised the communications teams who had been working alongside PCNs and their partners to improve the programme.

During the discussion key points included:

- Members thanked the director for the update.
- It was confirmed that plans for enhanced access were in place across all 13 PCNs in Wiltshire, covering the entire population. A panel, including representatives from Healthwatch Wiltshire, had met to review the plans of all of the PCNs to ensure that they were well coordinated and met required standards. The plans had also received NHS sign off at a national level.

- The director highlighted that the number of appointments across the whole of BaNES, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) had increased to 427,000 in August.
- In response to questions from members about the reasons why such a high proportion of the population required an appointment, the director explained that they were analysing the data about different types of appointments to gain a better understanding of the increase and would be happy to share their findings with the committee. She also offered anecdotal evidence that much of the demand was from people with longer term conditions that were reticent to come forward during the height of the pandemic.
- When asked about how the level of demand was communicated to patients, the director stated that there was a video available on the King's Fund website, but that they could also review their communication at a local level, including through area boards.
- It was noted that there was one GP practice, in Calne that was not part of a PCN but that the ICB was working closely with the practice to ensure that it delivered demand.
- The director stated that she would welcome feedback from members relaying their conversations with the public about their experience of getting appointments. She also said that she would be happy to provide information about whether there was an associated increase in the number of missed appointments.

Resolved

- 1. To thank the Integrated Care Board for the update on the delivery of Primary Care services across Wiltshire.**
- 2. To receive further data on the reasons behind the increased demand for GP appointments and the increased number of patients who consider their condition to be urgent.**
- 3. To schedule a future agenda item on the workforce challenges being faced across the Primary Care System.**

60 Domestic Abuse External Grant Allocation - Year Two (2022-23)

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management and Operational Assets introduced the report outlining how Wiltshire Council intended to spend a grant allocation of £832,348, from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in 2022-23. He explained that it was anticipated that funding would also be in place for 2023-24 but had not yet been confirmed. A Public Health specialist in the Vulnerable Communities Team and a Public Health consultant then provided background information about the demand for domestic abuse support services and how the council had spent the grant for 2021-22. They then elaborated on proposals to spend the money allocated for 2022-23. Key points included:

- Wiltshire Council has a statutory responsibility for the provision of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children residing in safe accommodation.
- The Institute for Public Care at Oxford Brookes University had undertaken a needs analysis in June 2021 which helped to inform Wiltshire Council's strategy

for the procurement and commissioning of services. The study identified that some groups, such as men and people from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to be hidden victims of domestic abuse.

- A perpetrator strategy was being developed to work with individuals committing abuse to make them less likely to reoffend.
- Grants were awarded by central government on an annual basis and had to be spent in accordance with strict timeframes and guidelines. To make the best use of the available funding within these parameters there was a strong emphasis on different agencies working together and contract variations were agreed with existing suppliers.
- Local authorities received the grant funding simultaneously, so the recruitment of specialists was highly competitive. Due to the challenges in recruiting additional staff, training was provided to upskill the existing workforce.
- There was a strong focus on prevention and making people feel safe in their own homes, so the use of safe accommodation was seen as a last resort.
- As funding was awarded on an annual basis, it was not possible to commission services over the longer term. However, staff were able to build upon the experience of the first year of the project and there was anecdotal evidence of better outcomes for people using the service.
- Outcome data showing the impact of the 2021-22 funding would be available towards the end of 2022.

The committee were then invited to consider the outline proposals for the spending of the funding allocated for 2022-23 ahead of the final report being sent to Cabinet for approval on 11 October. During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Members thanked the cabinet member and Public Health officers for the update.
- Given the short-term nature of the funding, members asked whether lessons could be taken from the project to improve service delivery even if the grants were not renewed in future. In response, the Public Health consultant explained that there were lessons that could be taken forward, such as improving the pathway for people with complex needs by making sure they received help from a core group of staff rather than having to go to multiple agencies for support.
- It was confirmed that the military did not provide direct funding for the scheme but that the council worked closely with the military. Given the size of the military population in the county, as well as the unique pressures faced by military personnel, some staff were designated specifically to work with military families.
- Leader of the Council, Cllr Richard Clewer, reported that respite care was provided by the military at the Cotswold Centre and stated that the council was working to strengthen these links even further, including by working with the Army Welfare Service to signpost vulnerable individuals.
- In a response to a question about the proportion of male victims that were in same sex relationships, the public health specialist explained that the majority of male victims were in heterosexual relationships, but it was possible that men in same sex relationships were harder to reach. She then reassured members that there was an engagement worker specifically for people in harder reach

groups to develop a better understanding of why some victims are less likely to seek support.

- It was noted that the greatest increase in reporting had been from older people coming forward. There has also been an increase in the reports of parents being victims of abuse from their children.
- When asked about whether the victims that came forward reflected the demographics of the county, the public health specialist clarified that 76 percent of victims were female and most were between the age of 26 and 35. She then offered to share further statistics with the committee.

Resolved

- 1. To note how Wiltshire's Domestic Abuse External Grant for the provision of support for victims and their families was allocated in 2021-22.**
- 2. To note the outline plans regarding how the grant in 2022-23 will be allocated, with this to be determined by Cabinet on 11 October 2022.**
- 3. To note the specific challenges and work ongoing to support victims of domestic abuse within hard-to-reach groups.**
- 4. To schedule a future update on outcomes from the Domestic Abuse External Grant and other domestic abuse work in 2022-23.**

61 Substance Misuse - Proposed Spend Allocations for the Supplementary Grants

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, Leisure, Libraries, Facilities Management and Operational Assets introduced the report outlining how Wiltshire Council intended to spend a supplementary grant allocation to tackle illicit drug use, including through enforcement, diversion, and treatment and recovery interventions. He explained that £351,756 had been awarded for 2022/23, with indicative funding also in place for the following two years, rising to £630,000 in 2024/25. He highlighted that Wiltshire Council's Public Health Team spent approximately £2.5 million into this area with additional funding coming from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Swindon and Wiltshire.

The Public Health Principal at Wiltshire Council then went on to provide further detail about the new interventions to be funded by the grant, including enhanced provision of Naloxone, a medication that reverses the effects of opioids. The health principal emphasised the importance of education in tackling substance abuse and balancing investment between prevention and recovery. She also took the opportunity to stress the importance of working alongside other agencies, such as those in the criminal justice system, to ensure that the correct support was put in place for individuals throughout their recovery. A number of the new roles funded by the supplementary funding including a part time transition worker to help support young people into adulthood as they continue their recovery.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The cabinet member noted that it was important to look at statistics relating to vulnerable groups but also to look at the wider statistics in order to develop a strategic overview.
- In response to a question about the Shout system, the Public Health principle explained that it was a confidential text messaging support service, for individuals struggling with mental health to support individuals who are at crisis point.

Resolved

- 1. To note that the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant has been awarded to Wiltshire Council as part of a three-year scheme to support investment in a whole system approach to tackling illicit drug use**
- 2. To note the proposals to use the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant, to be determined by Cabinet on 27 September 2022.**

62 Business Plan Performance Metrics

The chairman referred the committee to the report in the agenda pack providing an update on the progress that the council had made against the stated missions in its business plan. He then highlighted the relevant health related indicators in the report:

- The percentage of children who are physically active.
- The percentage of adults who are physically active.
- Referrals into the reablement service.

The chairman explained that he felt that the plan would be a useful reference point in developing more detailed scrutiny of performance indicators for health and wellbeing outcomes. Noting that the market capacity and cost of social care were both highlighted in the Strategic Risk Register, he reported that Cabinet was due to discuss its market sustainability plan for social care at its meeting on 29 November. In order to allow the committee to input into the plans before that date, he proposed that the vice-chairman and he should hold discussions with officers and cabinet members. The options for scrutiny engagement were to bring a report to the committee's next meeting on 1 November or hold a rapid scrutiny exercise.

The leader explained that the intention was that the business plan would grow over time and that there would be opportunities to review indicators to ensure that they remained relevant. Whilst the plan provided an overview, the committee would be able to help identify areas which it felt it would benefit from more in-depth analysis. He highlighted that the NHS produced vast quantities of data and although many health indicators were not fully under the control of the council, it would be important to monitor this information on an ongoing basis. The leader also urged members to look in detail at the Strategic Risk Register

as it gave a good insight into the potential likelihood and impact of different risks to the council.

Resolved

1. To note the relevant updates and outturns:

- a) Against the measures and activities ascribed against the council's priorities;**
- b) To the Strategic Risk Register, issues and emerging risks.**

2. To ask the chairman and vice-chairman to explore options for ongoing monitoring of key performance metrics and risks regarding Wiltshire's health and wellbeing, with proposals reported back to the committee.

3. In light of the risks identified around capacity and costs within the adult social care market, to ask the chairman and vice-chairman to make arrangements for appropriate pre-Cabinet scrutiny engagement on the forthcoming Social Care Market Sustainability Plan.

63 Forward Work Programme

The chairman explained that he felt that it was important for both the committee to understand the implications of new DHSC guidance about the principles of how health overview and scrutiny committees should work with Integrated Care Systems. As such, he proposed a rapid scrutiny exercise be set up to establish the implications for the committee's work.

In addition, the chairman proposed that the committee received an update on the implementation of Wiltshire's Independent Living Strategy, which would be sent to Cabinet for approval on 27 September.

Referencing the annual nature of the grant funding awarded to the council for Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse services, members were keen to investigate the potential impact of the withdrawal of grants on service users.

Resolved

- 1. To note the Forward Work Programme, as amended at the meeting today;**
- 2. To establish a rapid scrutiny group to review the new guidance for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees and report any implications for the committee's approach back to a future meeting;**
- 3. To receive an item on Wiltshire Neighbourhood Collaboratives on 1 November 2022.**
- 4. To note that, in September and November, the chairman and vice-chairman will meet with the relevant cabinet members and directors**

to discuss work priorities for the coming 12 months, and to invite committee members to suggest any issues that they believe should be discussed.

- 5. To add consideration of the impact of the potential future cessation of external grant funding for Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse services, as discussed under previous agenda items.**

64 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

65 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 1 November, at 10:30am.

(Duration of meeting: 10:35am -12:25pm)

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