

CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING & SOCIAL CARE

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care 's meeting held on Thursday, 13 January 2022 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Jason Fazackarley (in the Chair)

Councillors Lewis Gosling
 Kirsty Mellor

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jeanette Smith.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Independence and Wellbeing, Community Services and Co-production

Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Care, introduced the report.

In response to questions from members about ensuring initiatives such as co-production would take place, Mr Biddle acknowledged that the word consultation is often used when in fact there is no choice. The lowest level of engagement is going out and speaking to people. In some cases information and advice are given because Adult Social Care (ASC) is a statutory service and sometimes this is the only way of delivering it. However, ASC is trying to move away from that approach. For example, when the care element of Extra Care was re-tendered in mid-2021 residents and families were involved and asked what they were wanted as the service is for them. This is linked to the emphasis on social value, one of PCC's priorities. The intention is to make interaction with residents genuine. The ASC Senior Management Team focus monthly on various areas of the service, including governance, to see that it is doing what it says it is doing. The intention is to report on progress to members so it is not a matter of ASC "marking its own homework."

Members thanked Mr Biddle for the report, noting it was useful to see the chosen pathway allowed people to keep their independence and that ASC may not always be the best route to delivering services.

Councillor Fazackarley thanked Mr Biddle for his report and noted it was important to place the policy on record.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

4. Public Protection Notice (PPN1) Process

Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Care, introduced the report.

Members said it was important to support the ASC MASH Team reduce the backlog without placing extra pressure on limited staff resources. Councillor Fazackarley suggested it might be worth speaking to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner about 97% referrals not meeting the criteria for safeguarding involvement. He had a slight concern that one or two cases might be missed and hoped the policy would not have any ramifications.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

5. Risks and Challenges to Adult Social Care 2021/22 and 2022/23

Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Care, introduced the report and highlighted developments since it had been written. The National Living Wage (NLW) increases from April 2022 to £9.50 per hour but Mr Biddle was not entirely convinced the increase will have a major impact on recruitment in view of wages paid elsewhere. Three packages of care had been handed back by providers in November 2021 and this had risen to nine by the end of November. Packages were re-allocated but with difficulty. ASC is using the Workforce Recruitment & Retention Grant to fund a domiciliary rate rise from 1 January to 31 March 2022. ASC is working nationally with ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services), the Department of Health and Social Care, and the National Care Forum.

In response to questions from members as to concerns with different rates paid by PCC and other local authorities, Mr Biddle said feedback had been mainly positive; some care agencies acknowledged the support but said it is still not enough. Domiciliary care agencies generally work in their own geographical areas so the issue of having two rates has not arisen.

Members noted the need to weigh up the positive aspects of increasing the NLW as it may result in saving money if carers are better paid and there is a better quality of care. It should not just be PCC who takes full responsibility for increasing wages. There are providers with CEOs on high salaries who make a profit. Local authorities cannot deliver care when the problem lies in getting government funding. The situation is heartbreaking but members thanked officers for all they were doing.

Mr Biddle said the local recruitment campaign had had some success. ASC is considering a care career pathway but this is difficult without national funding.

Councillor Fazackarley noted the stark reality of the situation and said it was hard to see positive aspects but thanked Mr Biddle and hoped there was a way through. He also thanked the opposition members for their support over the last year.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

6. Covid-19 Intelligence update

Matthew Gummerson, Strategic Lead for Intelligence, gave a presentation on the latest Covid-19 data and intelligence. He advised there was a lot of "noise" in the data due to different behaviour patterns over Christmas caused by changes in tests and government policy. The dashboard is usually updated daily at 4 pm; it is published every Friday on the council's website. Although there is a slight decrease in adult infection rates (counter-acted by an increase amongst schoolchildren) real numbers could be higher as re-infections are not included. The figures tally with the Prime Minister's announcement on changes to the need for PCR tests and reflect where the peak is expected to be.

77.1% of those eligible have had the booster jab. Since the data had been published there are now about 100 patients with Covid in hospital. There is growing pressure on the hospital but numbers are below those for January 2021. Despite an increase in admissions those for intensive care have not increased as much which shows the reduced severity of the Omicron variant.

Councillor Fazackarley thanked officers for their work and colleagues for their support during the year.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 10.32 am.

Councillor Jason Fazackarley
Chair