

CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING & SOCIAL CARE

RECORD OF DECISIONS of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care 's meeting held on Thursday, 10 March 2022 at 10.00 am at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Jason Fazackarley (in the Chair)

Councillors Lewis Gosling
 Kirsty Mellor
 Jeanette Smith

7. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

8. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Adult Social Care Safeguarding overview

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

In response to questions from members about the backlog of safeguarding referrals, Mr Biddle said Adult Social Care had carried out the exercise described at the previous meeting and reviewed a percentage of referrals. This had shown that the vast majority were not eligible for social care or had not consented to share details. Since February 2022 the referrals are reviewed daily and the backlog is now in low double figures. Figures will now be reviewed weekly.

The wellbeing of staff working in safeguarding and difficult cases is managed by a mix of corporate and service approaches. Support is a mixture of planned and ad hoc activities. There are very regular wellbeing updates, shared insights from colleagues, "lunch and learn" sessions, one-to-one and group supervisions. Where there are very difficult circumstances such as staff who are working on a major safeguarding inquiry, regular support is provided when staff visit the establishment in question. The Safeguarding Team Manager is very experienced in health and social care and alert to wellbeing concerns. The Team Manager offers support to other teams.

Portsmouth has always trended slightly above national data for safeguarding referrals, partly as there are challenges in Portsmouth because of deprivation. There was a significant dip in figures at the start of Covid with more people at home, then a spike; figures are now at a plateau but are expected to continue to trend above national levels.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

10. Transition into adulthood

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

Councillor Mellor welcomed the transition arrangements and having dedicated social workers supporting neuro-divergent children as having to deal with many different agencies is frustrating and confusing for parents.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

11. Meals delivery in Portsmouth

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

Councillor Smith was pleased to see more time would be allocated to visits and liked the concept of virtual dining rooms which would help combat loneliness, especially in view of Covid. Mr Biddle said that during Covid local provision had grown to provide meals delivery services as it was seen that it was not just traditional Meals on Wheels customers who had meals delivered. Quality will be assessed by an active feedback cycle. When ASC commissions partners it will actively look at using local community services where there will be a tighter feedback loop than with larger national services. Although the prices of the meals have not been set yet, variation would be difficult to manage so the intention is to have a consistent price.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

12. Adult Social Care inspection overview

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

In response to questions from members, Mr Biddle agreed that having an external view is a valuable part of the critical friend role.

Mr Biddle acknowledged concerns that savings decisions taken over the last ten years have affected ASC's capacity to prepare for inspection though the decisions were seen as appropriate at the time. ASC is going to have to build up data assurance which, along with other preparations for inspection, will have an increased financial burden.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

13. Management information and data in Adult Social Care

Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Care, introduced the report. Since it had been written the programme of work has been added to the capital fund list and is likely to be funded by the Better Care Fund as it is a significant portion of cash to find.

With regard to priority from the council's IT service, the programme has been formalised as a project with milestones, frameworks and monthly updates with ASC's IT Business Partner. Technical specialism has been engaged as it is linked to updating Continuing Healthcare reporting so there are some external resources.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

14. Covid-19 intelligence update

Matthew Gummerson, Strategic Lead for Intelligence, gave a presentation on the latest Covid-19 data and intelligence. He advised that the move away from regular testing means data is more reliant on the weekly Office for National Statistics (ONS) infection survey. Infection rates are still relatively high, particularly in the South East, so it will be interesting to see what happens. Rates and hospital admissions increased significantly last week, which is not unexpected in view of restrictions easing. There are about 150 Covid patients in QA this week which causes pressure on admissions. However, deaths have decreased and are less than expected for the time of year.

Infection rates are increasing in all ages. The exact cause is uncertain but is possibly due to the increased transmissibility of the Omicron BA2 variant, people mixing more, waning immunity in older people (who were vaccinated first) though the spring booster will help, and anecdotal evidence that people who were shielding for two years are now mixing more.

In response to questions from members on the usefulness of providing data from now on, Mr Gummerson said the ONS survey will give a continuity measure so Public Health will use their data as a checkpoint as there is not much point in replicating it. Public Health may end the weekly updates on the council's website as test results will be an increasingly unreliable indicator. In the short-term they are useful if used with caution. Actual cases are probably higher than those reported. Public Health is looking to move away from public reporting with the national dashboard used a fall back.

The Cabinet Member noted the report.

Councillor Fazackarley personally thanked officers for their useful and invaluable support over the last difficult year. He also thanked the opposition members for their support over the last year.

The meeting concluded at 10.37 am.

Councillor Jason Fazackarley
Chair