

HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel held in the Executive Meeting Room, Guildhall, on Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 3.30 pm

Present

Councillor Kirsty Mellor (in the Chair)
Graham Heaney
Leo Madden
Scott Payter-Harris

Resident Consortium representatives
Maria Cole
Sue Gordon
Trevor Lovett

Andy Biddle - Director of Adult Care
Ben Muller - Assistant Team Manager, Carers' Centre

Vicky Newman - Brunel Carers' Group

- 1. Apologies (AI 1)**
There were no apologies for absence.
- 2. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)**
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 September 2022 (AI 3)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

- 4. Review into "Provision of respite/breaks for informal carers, particularly those who care for someone with dementia" (AI 4)**
Councillor Mellor welcomed those present and gave a brief introduction to the review. Social care has increasingly come under the spotlight and has never been more pressing than now so organisations must understand and collaborate with informal carers. There is growing recognition of their vital role along with awareness of the recruitment and retention of care staff nationally. The unpaid support of 11.5m informal carers saves £93m annually. Therefore, it was only fitting to commission a review. The local authority will be better equipped to deliver a strategy to support carers that goes beyond statutory obligations.

Members agreed to sign off the review, subject to the following amendments in the "Capacity and consent" paragraph in the Brunel Carers' Group section:

- After the sentence "If the cared for are deemed to have capacity they are asked to confirm if they wish to go into respite and they are entitled to refuse" add "The cared for can also sometimes refuse to accept other

carers coming into their home, which means informal carers do not have any respite at all."

- Replace "Interpreting what people say is important, for example, "home" for people with dementia is the most recent place they have lived in, which is what they mean when they say they want to go home, not their original home" with "Interpreting what people say is important, for example, "home" for people with dementia, when they say they want to go home, can be their most recent address, or where they lived when they were younger or where they lived with their spouse. It depends on the individual, their experiences and which parts of their memory are affected."

Members had already seen the amendments but Councillor Mellor read them out for transparency. She thanked Vicky Newman for suggesting them.

Councillor Mellor said it was very important to listen to the voice of carers. She thanked the Brunel Carers' Group and Solent Mind for their help and support for the review. She thanked Andy Biddle (Director of Adult Care), Clare Rachwal (Deputy Head of Service, Market Development & Community Engagement) and Ben Muller (Assistant Team Manager, Carers' Centre) for their support, including letting the panel attend the Carers Count event. She also thanked all panel members for taking part.

Vicky Newman, leader of the Brunel Carers' Group, thanked the panel for listening to the group. Councillor Mellor thanked the group for hosting the panel at what was a very insightful meeting.

In response to comments from Maria Cole about young carers, Andy Biddle said there was now a significant focus on them, for example, there had recently been a young carers' day. The approach has moved over time from managing risk to enabling young carers to have the same role in society as their peers. Vicky Newman, a former teacher, had raised the issues of young carers 25 years ago. Young carers as a review topic comes within the remit of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel.

Members discussed possible topics for the next review. Homelessness was suggested as there is often cross-over between housing and social care, which are both in the panel's remit. Health & Care Portsmouth are prioritising health care for the homeless as they have many complex issues like substance misuse and mental health, often end up in the Emergency Department and die earlier than the rest of the population.

Trevor Lovett said a couple of the Residents' Consortium meetings had covered homelessness. Councillor Payter-Harris advised the figure of 13 homeless people referred to when officers do a one-off sweep on a particular day and the actual number is probably much higher if the "hidden homeless" are included, for example, sofa surfers or people in refuges. The council has a lot of evidence about homelessness and its homeless working group meets monthly. A homelessness related review would be a sensible idea but the choice of topic would be for the panel to decide in the new municipal year.

The meeting concluded at 3.50 pm.

Councillor Kirsty Mellor
Chair