

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES - 19 OCTOBER 2022**

Present: Councillors Mpofu-Coles (Chair), Ballsdon, Cresswell, Davies, C Dennis, Ennis, Gavin, Hoskin, Keane, Khan, Kitchingham, McEwan, O'Connell.

Apologies: Councillor Robinson and Sultan.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Health and Wellbeing Board - 18 March 2022 and 15 July 2022.

3. QUESTIONS

A question on the following matter was submitted by Councillor Cresswell.

Question	Subject	Reply
Councillor Cresswell	Children's Services Finances	Councillor Hoskin
Councillor Cresswell	Ringfencing Apprenticeships for Care Leavers	Councillor Hoskin

The full text of the questions and replies were made available on the Reading Borough Council website.

4. URGENT CARE CENTRE IN READING

Sarah Webster, Executive Director for Berkshire West Place, ICB and Helen Clark, Associate Director of Primary Care, Berkshire West, ICB provided a presentation and update on the Urgent Care Centre in Reading pilot scheme. The main points included:

- There had been an increase and high demand for urgent care services including help for minor illnesses, 111 referrals and for out of hours GP. This showed a demand for a service to meet the needs for urgent care activity.
- Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Reading Walk-in Centre saw around 100 patients per day and the Centre was only able to access patients Summary Care Record; patients had to go back to their practice for ongoing care, onward referrals etc.
- During the pandemic the Walk-In service had been suspended to accommodate the Covid-19 Respiratory Hub. From April to July 2020 a registered list ran from Milman Road Surgery, after that period the two services operated alongside each other.
- The Walk-In Centre was currently suspended with focus on encouraging patients to access care from their own GP practice. During Winter 2021-22 there had been an additional number of appointments commissioned across Berkshire West practices

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with two overflow hubs in Reading. There had been no national funding for additional capacity this Winter.

- A pilot scheme for an Urgent Care Centre based in central Reading for minor illnesses would be commissioned from November 2022 to run for 18 months. This would then be reviewed for consideration of a long-term model to be delivered locally.
- The pilot scheme would have the capacity for 100 patients a day with 50 walk-ins and 50 referred from Emergency Departments.
- The previous Walk-In Centre would remain suspended.
- The registered list element would be re-procured over the next six months and would be dealt with separately.
- Improvements to other areas included monitoring data, working with Healthwatch to gather information, working with PCNs, increasing referrals to the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service, completing a telephony roll-out, winter messaging, revised delivery service for Enhanced Access, registration campaign for young males, peer support to improve access and a digital literacy programme to support online access and the NHS App.

In response to questions, points made included:

- Work was being undertaken with the planning department to consider population growth and the needs for GP provision across Reading. Updated data had been received and plans were being updated to consider future need.
- Consideration would be given to working with social care and the needs of the service to support patients.
- Partnership and joint working with Adult Social Care and Health was being undertaken. The scheme would provide learning and future ways of working together. It was agreed that an update be provided to the Committee once the Urgent Care Centre was up and running to provide information on the service and how it linked with partners and how social care was working.
- The Service would make links and referrals for patients with mental health issues as appropriate.
- Referrals from the NHS 111 service was not part of the pilot but would be considered in the future.
- There was a commitment to ensure health and equalities to avoid digital exclusion. Literacy programmes and hubs to access support with computers to access services would be provided. Anyone accessing the Urgent Care Service for on the day care would receive support. Information would be provided to people about the service and support would be provided to register with a GP practice.

The Chair thanked Sarah and Helen for the presentation.

Resolved - That a future update be provided to the Committee on the Urgent Care Service.

5. READING COMMUNITY VACCINE CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME 2022/23 - UPDATE

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report on the Reading Community Vaccine Champions (CVC) Programme.

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Reading Borough Council had received £485,000 from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to run the CVC programme to improve the uptake of the COVID 19 and flu vaccination particularly focussing on myths and difficulties around the understanding of vaccinations.

Phase 1 of the CVC programme had ended on 31 July 2022. Key achievements had included:

- Effective use of data analysis to support a structured approach in working with local partners and communities to deliver engagement and community vaccination activities.
- Engagement with local key influencers to enable a targeted approach to engage with communities.
- 32 vaccine champions had been recruited with 27 trained.
- Successful award of local community grants to develop interventions to increase vaccine uptake.
- Working with key partners to deliver programme outputs and outcomes.
- Reducing health inequalities.
- A marked increase in vaccination uptake within the targeted hard-to-reach community groups.

Phase 2 of the CVC programme had focussed on improving the vaccine uptake. Work undertaken to date had included:

- Formal approval from the DLUHC to extend the programme end date.
- Formal approval obtained from Reading Borough Council to extend the programme.
- Proposed activities submitted by Voluntary, Community Services (VCS) organisations.
- Delivery plan and costings produced with co-production of the VCS organisations and health partners.

The Committee recognised the work that had taken place and thanked volunteers who had been involved. It was noted that terminology in the report was used nationally however, this would be reconsidered to ensure equality. Wards targeted were dependent on data collected as this showed areas where people were hesitant in receiving vaccines, and work was being undertaken in relation to the data. The 50 plus age group were mainly targeted and if children were eligible then parents would be targeted rather than children directly.

Resolved -

- (1) That the good progress and outcomes achieved to date on the Community Vaccine Champions Programme be recognised and acknowledged;**
- (2) That the Phase 2 delivery of the CVC programme be supported;**
- (3) That the deployment of infrastructure, capacity and capabilities established to date for the planning and delivery of other public health and Vaccination programmes (e.g., Seasonal Influenza and Autumn COVID 19 Booster Programmes), be endorsed.**

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6. READING SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (SAB) ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report which would form the Council's submission to the Berkshire West Annual Report 2021/22.

Jo Lappin, Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Quality, Performance and Practice explained that Reading Borough Council was the host and lead organisation for the strategic partnership arrangement between Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham. From July 2022 the Contact Centre was the single point of contact for receiving safeguarding concerns from partner agencies which were then signposted to the most appropriate team.

It was noted that there had been a significant increase in safeguarding concerns raised and work was continuing on prevention. The Safeguarding Annual Report Delivery Plan was attached at Appendix 1 to provide information on the areas of focus.

A summary of the Council's Safeguarding Performance Data was set out in the report and included the following:

- The number of safeguarding concerns had risen significantly from 1589 in 1920/21 to 2989 in 2021/22;
- Concerns which converted into a safeguarding enquiry had fallen to 13%, compared with 31% in the previous year. It was noted the national average was 33.9%
- A higher number of out-of-scope concerns had been received from the Police and South-Central Ambulance Service.
- Neglect and Acts of Omission had risen by 2.9% (abuse type in 39.9% of cases).
- There had been a slight increase in 'Self Neglect' cases (up 1.3%).

The Committee discussed the report, and it was noted that there had been an increase in safeguarding concerns with older and more vulnerable people who were open to neglect, abuse and manipulation. The aim would be to create a culture of reporting so that every resident in Reading could feel confident to report safeguarding issues and get a positive outcome. It was noted that the Contact Centre was now the single point of contact for receiving safeguarding concerns from partner agencies. Feedback and support were provided to partners to help with decision making.

There had been an increase in reporting with the majority from the ambulance service and police. Work was being undertaken with these agencies on out-of-scope concerns and to support partners with referrals.

Regarding the drop in the number of concerns converted into a safeguarding enquiry, it was noted that this could be due to several factors including the impact of Covid. This percentage was expected to increase and would allow resources to be used more effectively.

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It was reported that the hoarding and self-neglect project had been very successful. There had been good multiagency working and additional funding was currently being investigated to continue the prevention work.

The Principal Social Worker was now in role and supporting the team with safeguarding practices, decision making and operating processes.

To better understand inequalities work would be carried out to contact groups and partners in the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities to raise awareness. This would include continued work with the NHS and specifically GPs to help understanding and highlight how to prioritise issues.

Resolved - That the report be noted as the Council's contribution to the Berkshire West Safeguarding Board Annual Report.

7. ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report providing an overview of complaints and compliments activity and performance for Adult Social Care for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. A summary of Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments 2021/22 was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report stated that over the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 the service had received 20 corporate complaints, which was a 17.6% increase compared to the 17 that had been received in 2020/21, and 93 statutory complaints, which was a 31% increase compared to the 71 that had been received in 2020/21. Of the complaints 18 had progressed to formal investigated and 66.7% had been responded to within timescales.

The main themes for the period 2021/22 for both corporate and statutory complaints were as follows:

- Quality of Service Provided
- Financial Issues
- Staff Conduct
- Communication

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) had received seven representations; which was two more than the previous year. Of the cases three had been investigated and upheld, two cases were referred back to the Council, and two had been assessed and not investigated. The LGSCO did not issue any findings of maladministration by the Council.

Also 10 compliments had been received by the Adult Social Care Teams:

Community Reablement Team - 1
Hospital Discharge Team - 1
Locality Team - 6
Safeguarding - 1
Short Term Team - 1

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It was noted that the report was open, transparent, easy to access and interpret.

Complaints were recorded as no outcome when there was no evidence to substantiate a complaint. However, all complaints were reviewed by a director and learning would be actioned and improvements made, for all complaints including those recorded as no outcome, if necessary.

All complaints were reviewed by officers through a quality assurance board. It was noted that many complaints resulted from a lack of communication. Improvement was then embedded into the service following learning from complaints. Also, service users were randomly contacted to request feedback so that improvements could be made where necessary. Information on external providers was also collated and the commissioning team contacted to provide a quality assurance regime. Compliments collation was also important so that learning from good areas of work could be understood and staff praised for their good work.

It was noted that all managers spent time with the Customer Relations team, this was part of the staff induction process and staff were supported to understand processes.

Resolved - That the report be noted.

8. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children, submitted a report providing an overview of complaints and compliments activity and performance for Children's Social Care for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. A summary of Children's Social Care Complaints and Compliments 2020/21 was attached to the report at Appendix A. Nayana George, Customer Relations and Information Governance Officer, provided an overview to the Committee.

The report stated that over the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 the service had received 65 statutory complaints, which was a 7.14% decrease compared to the 70 that had been received in 2020/21. Of the 65 complaints received, 9 had been resolved through alternative dispute resolution (ADR) by the social care teams. The remaining 56 had progressed to a formal investigation, although six of these had been subsequently withdrawn by the complainant once the investigation had commenced. The top complaint themes were quality of service, staff conduct and complaints around various procedures. The Customer Relations Team and BfC's Communications, Marking and HR teams continually work with Brighter Futures for Children staff to raise awareness of the complaints process with staff and the public.

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) had received 16 representations; which was an increase of 11 from the previous year. Of the cases four had been investigated and upheld, one case was not upheld and six cases were had been referred back to BfC. The remaining six cases were not within the LGSCO's jurisdiction to investigate or were closed after the initial assessment.

The LGSCO did not issue any findings of maladministration by BfC.

During the same period a total of 64 compliments had also been received.

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It was reported that some data around ethnicity was difficult to capture as not all service users wanted to disclose their ethnicity. Options would be explored if this could be made mandatory on the web form. Some complaints were submitted via email or letter and options would also be explored for these methods.

The Executive Director for Children's Services explained that he would be writing personally to families who have submitted a complaint to follow up and receive further feedback and learning. A proactive approach would be undertaken and reporting next year would include data on ethnicity and the culture of complaints. There would also be further engagement work with fathers to provide deeper learning of issues. It was noted that there had been good support from the Customer Relations teams to help provide a better level of understanding of background issues and needs.

Resolved - That the contents of the report and intended actions to further improve the management of representations, particularly complaints, in children's services in Reading be noted.

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved -

That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of item 20 below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

10. ADULT SOCIAL CARE RESIDENTIAL DEMENTIA PROCUREMENT

The Executive Director of Social Care and Health submitted a report that explored and made recommendations regarding a procurement process for a Residential Dementia Block Contract.

Resolved -

- (1) That the recommendation to procure Residential Dementia block beds for the recommended period and predicted maximum annual costs to the Council as outlined in the report be accepted.**
- (2) That the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care be granted authority to:**
 - Procure and enter into a contract with the successful tenderer(s) for the support/care services to be provided.**
 - Negotiate with the successful tenderer(s) to mobilise the contract, vary the contract, extend the contract at the appropriate time and otherwise contract manage the contract throughout its lifecycle within the lifetime financial envelope as stated in the report.**

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11. SUFFICIENCY OF CHILDCARE PLACEMENTS

The Executive Director of Children's Services - Education, Early Help and Social Care, Brighter Futures for Children submitted a report on the sufficiency of placements for children and young people.

Resolved - That the information in the report and the steps being taken by Brighter Futures for Children Ltd to improve the sufficiency of placements for children and young people be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.38pm).