

Adult Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2009

Present:

Mr A Adams	Mr J Joyce
Mr D Callaby	Mr M Kiddle-Morris
Miss C Casimir	Mr S Little
Baron Chenery of Horsbrugh	Ms J Mickleburgh
Mr T Garrod	Mr J Perry-Warnes
Mr D Harrison	Mr A J Wright
Ms D Irving	

Also Present:

Mr D Harwood, Non-Voting Cabinet Member

Officers/Others:

Harold Bodmer, Director of Adult Social Services
James Bullion, Assistant Director, Community Care, Adult Social Services
Terry Cotton, Quality Assurance Officer, Domiciliary Care, Adult Social Services
Jeremy Bone, Planning and Policy Officer, Adult Social Services
Catherine McWalter, Procedures and Quality Assurance Manager, Adult Social Services
Alan Long, Chief Executive for Care Force.
Colin Sewell, Head of Policy and Performance, Adult Social Services

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Borrett, Mr P Hardy, Mr B Long (Deputy Cabinet Member), Mr J Mooney and Mr N Shaw.

2 Election of Chairman

Resolved –

That Ms D Irving be elected Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

(Ms D Irving in the Chair)

3 Election of Vice-Chairman

Resolved –

That Ms J Mickleburgh be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing year.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 March 2009 were confirmed by the Adult Social Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel and signed by the Chairman.

5 Declarations of Interest

Mr J Perry-Warnes, a Member of the Friends of Kelling Hospital – personal interest – Item 15.

Mr A Wright, a Member of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Mental Health Forum – personal interest – Item 15.

Baron Chenery of Horsburgh, an employee of the Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, contracted to work 22.5 hours per week (three days) as a mental health practitioner – personal interest – Item 15.

Mr S Little, Norwich Access Forum – personal interest – Item 14.

6 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

7 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

8 Local Member Issues/Member Questions

There were no Local Member issues.

9 Cabinet Member Feedback on Previous Overview and Scrutiny Panel Comments

- (a) Reviewing Supporting People Service Contracts**
- (b) Payment Levels for Independent Sector in 2009/10**
- (c) Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards**
- (d) The Continuation of the Norfolk Learning Difficulties Service**
- (e) Appointment of Domiciliary Care Contract**

The annexed reports by the Director of Adult Social Services were received.

The reports gave feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the above mentioned issues.

It was noted that not all the issues had previously been reported to the Panel before having been considered by the Cabinet. The Panel was of the view that the titles of the reports should in future be changed to reflect this point.

SCRUTINY ITEMS

10 Scrutiny Report

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Committee Officer said that the Member Working Groups, mentioned in paragraph 4.2 of the report, need not be politically balanced and could include Members who were not Members of the Panel, if the Panel was to agree to this nem con.

(a) The Working Group Monitoring the Quality of the Home Support Service

It was agreed (nem con) by the Panel that this should be a cross-party Working Group, with a membership of three Conservative, one Liberal Democrat and one Green (and names given by the Party Spokespersons after the meeting).

(b) The Working Group on Social Enterprise

It was agreed that the Panel should receive a progress report at its next meeting on the activities of this Working Group, before deciding whether to re-appoint Members to the Group for 2009/10.

(c) Scrutiny (Spokespersons) Meetings

It was noted that the Scrutiny (Spokespersons) meetings were arranged for the following dates:

29 July 2009 – 9.30am in Room 610
30 September 2009 – 9.30am in Room 610.

It was agreed that the Scrutiny Work Programme should be prioritised and rescheduled where appropriate at the next Scrutiny (Spokespersons) meeting.

OVERVIEW ITEMS

11 Service Planning Update

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that described the key elements of the recently completed Adult Social Services Plan. The report also proposed a programme for monitoring and reviewing the service plan in the coming year.

During the course of discussion, the following key points were made:

- The service objectives should be prioritised and have anticipated completion dates; each objective should include details of the finance and resources (including officer time) required to deliver them.

- The service objectives fitted in with the corporate objectives of the County Council.
- The service objectives included a number of significant outcomes that could only be met by effective partnership working with the voluntary/independent sector.
- Emergency plans, led by NHS Norfolk, had been prepared to deal with the current outbreak of swine flu.
- The Department anticipated that it would be able to obtain additional funding from the NHS and District Councils to improve access to a range of preventative services. Without this funding it would be difficult for the County Council to provide these services.
- It was pointed out that future Government funding levels for Adult Social Services Departments were expected to be reduced in real terms from 2011 onwards.
- The Cabinet Member said that he had recently met with Mr Phil Hope MP, the Minister of State for Care Services at the Department of Health, and representatives of the LGA, to discuss the launch of the Care and Support Green Paper: Shaping the Future of Care Together, setting out proposals for ways to reform the care and support system for adults in England.

The Panel noted the Service Planning Framework for 2009-12 and agreed that the process for monitoring and reviewing the 2009-12 Service Plan and developing the 2010-2013 Service Plan should be as set out in the report.

12 2008-09 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Out-turn Report

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel noted that the revenue out-turn position for the financial year 2008-09 was a balanced budget. The capital programme variance was £9.424m, which would be carried forward to 2009-10.

Members spoke about how long it could take to obtain grant aid for some minor works and how many of the slippages in the capital programme were linked to minor estate management improvements, particularly at residential care homes.

The Director agreed to produce a report for the Panel that tracked the changes in the capital schemes that had slipped from the previous year.

It was noted that purchase of care, particularly in the area of Learning Difficulties, continued to be the main pressure on the budget. This pressure was partly attributed to changes in corporate demographic indicators and to the increasing cost of referrals from the NHS.

The Panel noted the contents of the report and agreed (nem con) to set up a cross-party Member Working Group for Learning Difficulties (three Conservatives, one Liberal Democrat and one Green). It was further agreed that officers should present a position statement regarding Learning Difficulties to the next meeting of the Panel, prior to a report from the Working Group being presented to the Panel in November 2009.

13 Adult Social Services Performance Report

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that demonstrated current Department performance activity for the year 2008/09.

It was noted that the Department continued to show improvement against nearly all the key performance indicators. The issues concerning delayed transfers of care and waiting times were well known in the department and were being properly addressed.

14 Quality Assurance Framework

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report about the development of a Quality Assurance Framework, which provided standards against which assessment, care management and professional social care practice, could be audited.

It was agreed that Members should be involved in future Quality Assurance Framework practice audits by way of the following:

- Receiving quarterly reports on the implementation of the framework and related quality assurance activities;
- Receiving more detailed findings and action plans resulting from specific audits;
- Full selected audits – accompanying officers during the undertaking of practice audit interviews/case file checks.

15 NHS Norfolk's Strategic Plan 2009-2014 and the Implications for Adult Social Services

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received.

The Panel received a report that set out the key points of NHS Norfolk's Strategic Plan for 2009-2014 and in particular highlighted the synergies with the priorities for Adult Social Care in Norfolk County Council.

It was noted that the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a detailed presentation by Mrs Julie Garbutt, Chief Executive, NHS Norfolk, about NHS Norfolk's Strategic Plan.

Members recognised that the development of integrated care teams for older people and other priority groups was part of a major national programme.

Members commented that the implementation of the Strategic Plan would require the combined collaborative skills of all the NHS partners, including Adult Social Services and the voluntary/independent sector. Only by working with partners would the NHS be able to address the increasing gap in health inequalities across specific health issues and local communities. More detail was required as to how the NHS hoped to address this key objective. It was noted that for many people the fact that the NHS services were

mainly free and Adult Social Services were means tested was an important consideration.

The Panel noted the contents of the report and endorsed the continuation of joint working with NHS Norfolk.

16 Findings of the Care Force Survey Undertaken on Behalf of Adult Social Services by Age Concern

The annexed report by the Director of Adult Social Services was received. A revised appendix to the report was laid on the table.

The Panel received a report that introduced the findings of Age Concern Norfolk and Age Concern Norwich into the levels of satisfaction among service users of the domiciliary care service provided by Care Force and recommended future courses of action.

Alan Long, Chief Executive of Care Force, was present in the meeting to answer questions about the seriousness of the complaints that had been raised with both Age Concern organisations in the county.

During the course of discussion, the following key points were made:

- The survey commissioned by the Age Concern organisations had shown that almost 62% of respondents (197 out of 318) had experienced problems with Care Force at one time or another.
- The problems dated back to when Care Force had been awarded a five year contract for domiciliary care services in Norwich which ran from February 2009.
- Six months' notice was required to terminate the Care Force contract.
- The Chief Executive of Care Force said the problems started when lower than anticipated numbers of staff had transferred to Care Force from the previous provider. Staff who had initially agreed to transfer to Care Force had failed to turn up to work without notice, and there were difficulties with IT equipment and phone lines.
- Members said that a number of the mistakes made in the early days of the contract, particularly around transfer of staff, could and should have been avoided.
- The Chief Executive of Care Force said that he was determined to address the problems which were particular to the Norwich area and in many ways different to what he had experienced before.
- Complaints had come down from initial highs of around 40 a week to about eight a week.
- The Adult Social Services Purchasing and Quality Team were carefully monitoring Care Force's performance, including individual complaints.
- The County Council did not want to disrupt the care of those people who wanted to

stay with Care Force.

- The County Council would, however, be writing to all 525 people who currently received care from Care Force to ask if they wanted to continue with their existing provider or transfer to an alternative provider.
- The Cabinet Member said that he was being kept informed of developments and that he would not hesitate to take whatever action was necessary to safeguard the interests of vulnerable people receiving a domiciliary care service in Norwich if recent improvements in that service were not sustained.

The Panel noted the contents of the report and the ongoing work with Care Force to improve the level of service. The Panel also noted that the Director was to consult with all Care Force service users in Norwich to assess their satisfaction with the service being provided by Care Force and to review service options.

The Panel agreed to receive an update report at its next meeting following consultation with Care Force service users.

The meeting concluded at 16.15pm

Chairman



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Tim Shaw on 0344 8008020 or 0344 8008011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.