

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE** held on Wednesday, 4 September 2024 at Council Chamber, County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG.

PRESENT

Councillor K S Athwal (in the Chair)

Councillors R Iliffe, S Burfoot, C Dale, R George, P Rose, J Wharmby, G Musson and S Swann.

Also in attendance was Councillor J Patten, A Glover, Lisa Holford, C Selbie, and Marcel Van Der Venne.

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor T Kemp and A Sutton.

24/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25/24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

26/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTE MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)

There were no public questions.

27/24 INTRODUCING THE CONTRIBUTION TO CARE UNDER SECTION 20 OF THE CHILDREN ACT 1989 POLICY

Adele Glover, Director of Early Help and Safeguarding, presented the report and presentation, detailing the rationale and options that had been considered in preparing the contribution to care policy.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to protect children who are at risk of significant harm and when risks were unmanageable within a home, take the necessary actions under the Children's Act 1989 to remove a child from their parents' care. When a court order was requested and issued the Local Authority would take responsibility for the care of the child and all associated costs.

In some instances, a family would agree to a child coming into the care of the Local Authority and the parent or parents would have 'parental responsibility' for their child under S20 of the Childrens Act 1989. The local

authority may not seek to share parental responsibility in relation to these children accommodated in accordance with Section 20 Children Act 1989.

Paragraph 21 of Part III of Schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989 states that “Where a local authority is looking after a child (other than under section 21, interim care order or remanded into their care) they shall consider whether they should recover contributions towards the child’s maintenance from any person liable to contribute.”

Derbyshire County Council had not previously consistently sought a contribution from carers or parents under this legislation, the Council was now experiencing unprecedented financial challenges which were impacting on the Council’s ability to meet demands for services. Therefore, the implementation of a contribution to care policy which aligned with the immediate risks and needs of a family’s circumstances was being proposed. The intent was to ensure that parents were encouraged to work with support and services to fulfil their responsibilities and that accommodation was utilised only where this was necessary and proportionate to the risks and needs identified.

Committee members sought clarification on the assessments done with carers or parents before funds were sought. Officers stressed that both financial and holistic assessments would be completed, and the family circumstances would be considered before making an informed decision. Carers or parents in receipt of financial benefits would not be considered.

Committee members shared concerns that the administrative task of implementing the new charges could be costly to the Local Authority and could be time consuming for officers. It was clarified that this would not be the case as there would only be a small number of families considered for assessment and that officers were already involved with these families. It was also explained that this would not affect existing families, only new referrals.

Committee members requested that a report be brought back in 12 months to provide an update on how these changes had been implemented.

The report would be taken to the October Cabinet meeting for approval.

Officers were thanked by Committee members for their presentation.

RESOLVED to

1) Note the report.

28/24 BEST LIFE DERBYSHIRE

Lisa Holford, Interim Director Transformation & Partnerships, and Marcel Van Der Venne, Practice Lead Transformation, gave a presentation to the Committee, detailing direct payments and personal assistant (PA) support.

Direct payments, along with personal budgets and personalised care planning, mandated for the first time in the Care Act 2014, provided the platform with which to deliver a modern care and support system. Derbyshire county Council provided support to direct payment holders through a dedicated Direct Payment Team, which averaged around 50-60 referrals per week. The team provided information and advice to individuals to enable them to choose direct payments and to employ personal assistants.

The Local Authority had been promoting the upcoming open day on their social media, taking place on 18 September 2024, in partnership with Blue Sky Brokers. This event would include information on being a personal assistant, becoming a self-employed personal assistant or Micro provider. It would also include training opportunities available for personal assistants and an opportunity to sign up to the PA register, expected to go live on 01 October 2024.

Committee members expressed a need for further information to be provided to PA's such as employment tax and health and safety. As well as detailed that it could be concerning for individuals sourcing a PA becoming an employer. Officers detailed that the responsibility was ultimately with the direct payment holder, but that information and guidance was available for these individuals.

Committee Members gave the suggestion for the authority to create networking opportunities for personal assistants. Already in place, alongside the PA Information hub, peer support, there were 4 annual co-production forums. But that the suggestion of more networking opportunities would be considered.

Committee members wished to see an update be brought to a future meeting on the changes being implemented.

Officers were thanked by Committee members for their presentation.

RESOLVED to

1) Note the report.

29/24 DERBYSHIRE ADULT SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY AND PLAN

Colin Selbie, Assistant Director Commissioning, Contracting and Market Management, gave a presentation to Committee members, detailing the Derbyshire Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy and Plan.

Social care workforce applied to the following:

- Local authority adult social care staff
- Private and independent sector staff (care homes, home care etc)
- Staff in the voluntary and community sector
- Individual employers (using personal assistants)
- Personal assistants, unpaid carers and families
- Volunteers

It was widely recognised in Derbyshire as it was nationally that recruitment and retention of adult social care staff was challenging for most staff groups. There was a need to attract people with the right skills and values into the sector and retain those already working here.

Data showed that the most effective method of recruiting social workers was to train them from existing staff. A number of colleagues were studying as social work apprentices, with a new cohort being recruited to start January 2025. Additionally, there were 2 Occupational Therapy (OT) apprentices with more planned. Committee members suggested that officers work in collaboration with local colleges within Derbyshire.

A number of amendments had been made to make the roles of Social Workers, Occupational Therapists or Senior Care Practitioners more attractive. Such as, the transfer scheme, ½ a day per month for (CPD) time, training pathways, and approved mental health professionals training.

The Better Care Fund was a pooled budget with the local Integrated Care Board that was subject to Governance via the Health and Well Being Board. £250,000 from this pooled budget was invested in Joined Care Derbyshire to promote and support careers in health and social care.

International recruitment had assisted with capacity in the adult social care workforce and increased retention of those working in the sector. Support was being established to help care providers overcome barriers within the international recruitment process.

Committee members sought information on the travel time of care providers. DCC were one of the only Local Authorities to pay travel time and this was stated in their contracts with external providers.

Committee members wished to share their congratulations to Derbyshire's Adult Social Care and Health on their good rating from the CQC.

Officers were thanked by Committee members for their presentation.

RESOLVED to

1) Note the report.