

PUBLIC

**MINUTES** of a meeting of **the IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PEOPLE** held at County Hall, Matlock on 06 November 2019.

**PRESENT**

Councillor G Musson (in the Chair)

Councillors L Chilton, J Coyle, C Dale, R Flatley, J Frudd, R Iliffe, D Taylor and J Twigg.

Also in attendance was Councillor A Dale, C Connolly-Western (DCC), T Druce (DCC), J Gracey (DCC), Helen Henderson-Spoors (Derbyshire CCG), A Howlett (DCC), C Longmore (DCC), J Parfremment (DCC), D Turner (), and J Rue (DCC).

There were no declarations of interest.

**26/19** **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 04 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to D Turner being recorded in attendance at the meeting, and signed by the Chair.

**27/19** **PUBLIC QUESTIONS** – none received.

**28/19** **CARE LEAVERS OFFER – ACCOMMODATION AND FINANCIAL GUIDANCE** James Gracey, Commissioning Manger, Childrens Services, and four officers from the Leaving Care Service attended the meeting.

The Leaving Care Service had been established in July 2019. Although a new service the staff within it have brought with them considerable skill and experience from their previous roles

Children’s Services had a block contract for accommodation limited to 75 units. In addition to the block contract accommodation was accessed by Leaving Care Workers liaising with housing options teams across the county and advocating on behalf of care leavers. The workers ensured care leavers were registered on the housing list and completed homeless applications when a care leaver presented as homeless.

The majority of Care Leavers were placed in appropriate accommodation and in locations that met their individual needs. There was a small number of care leavers that were difficult to place because they had complex needs (for example health needs or substance misuse). This presented a challenge because of the reduction in supported accommodation across the county.

There were no concerns about the quality of accommodation. The properties under the block contract were inspected on a regular basis and Leaving Care Workers work closely with Social Housing teams. Private rental sector was more of an unknown quantity, however Care Leave Workers visited each young person regularly and advocated on their behalf to ensure the landlord rectified any identified problem. If the property was deemed to be not appropriate, alternative accommodation would be found.

The Leaving Care Service delivered formalised financial guidance to young people at an early stage (i.e from age 16) so that financial matters were not a surprise on leaving care. Each young person received a comprehensive financial workbook and their Leaving Care Worker worked through it with them so that they knew what allowances they were entitled to and when they would receive them, what expenditure they would be responsible for and how to budget effectively. The service also worked closely with a range of agencies providing financial support, guidance and training.

The Care Leavers Council and Children in Care Council provided opportunities for young people to raise emerging issues. One issue that had been raised recently was difficulties in accessing (and the cost of) transport for work and work to address this was ongoing. .

**RESOLVED** to note the information.

## **29/19 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF HIGH NEEDS PROVISION IN DERBYSHIRE**

The Committee were informed of the outcomes and recommendations of the Special Educational Needs Strategic High Needs Review undertaken between September 2018 and May 2019.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced changes for Local Authorities and their partners with regard to how children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities were assessed and supported. Derbyshire actively responded to the requirements specified in the Act with developments overseen by the Local Area SEND Strategic Board.

In November 2016 Derbyshire had its Joint Local Area SEND Inspection undertaken by Ofsted and CQC (Care Quality Commission). The inspection report had noted many strengths. The document had also highlighted a number of areas for development which had been captured in the SEND Strategic Plan, with actions taken forward and progress monitored.

In 2017 the DfE allocated funding to Local Authorities to carry out a strategic review of high needs provision. The funding could also be used to help implement the outcomes of the review with Local authorities expected to publish the outcomes of the reviews in the form of strategic plans. The Council had already undertaken elements of development in this area.

This presented an excellent opportunity for the Council to create the capacity to undertake a comprehensive review of High Needs Provision in the local area, building on this work, and to make recommendations to further

inform the Local Area Strategic Plan. This was timely, with the review to be undertaken two years on from the Local Area inspection.

Given the scale and scope of the project, it was considered that there were not sufficient resources in-house to deliver this review thoroughly. Through a robust tendering process the ISOS partnership were secured to facilitate the Strategic Review.

The report confirmed that several of the principles that had shaped the initiatives and had been introduced through the current SEND strategy echo those recognised to support effective practices seen by ISOS in other local areas through their national research. However, during the review, some concerns were expressed about the core systems and processes for accessing support.

There were six themes that were identified through the review with recommendations and actions which would be taken forward by the SEND Strategic Board to inform a refreshed SEND Strategy and a revised SEND Strategic Plan.

**RESOLVED** to note the outcomes and recommendations of the Special Educational Needs Strategic High Needs Review undertaken between September 2018 and May 2019.

**30/19 HEALTHWATCH DERBYSHIRE CARERS REPORT – UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CARERS IN DERBYSHIRE**

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) carry out the biennial Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE) which sought the opinions of adult carers, caring for an adult 18 and over, on a number of topics that were considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside the unpaid caring role. This survey was designed to help the Adult Social Care sector understand more about how services were affecting carer's lives.

On a national level, the SACE had suggested very little movement in terms of improving outcomes for carers and had shown a steady decline in the last five years in overall satisfaction on what was, in survey terms, already at a low level. Locally, the SACE had also reflected a gradual decline in satisfaction, which was hard to unpick given the tick box nature of the survey, leaving DCC with some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of carers' quality of life.

As a result, between January and March 2019, HWD engaged with carers both in, and not in, receipt of services to explore their views and experiences around the themes of the SACE. The information presented would help DCC to understand the challenges faced by carers and how they could best plan and respond to them across the system.

To collect consistent information across the county, a series of questions were developed to provide a framework for discussions with carers, which were based around the topics of the SACE and indicators of a balanced life alongside caring. The engagement team visited various groups and services between January and March 2019, in order to gather the views and experiences of carers. In total, 428 carers spoke about their experiences, and this was done in a number of different ways.

The key findings of the report were listed in detail. Some of the findings stated how being a carer impacted negatively on an individual's quality of life and that Carers have had to make sacrifices in order to care for their loved one, for example having to give up work completely or reduce their hours. Most carers explained that their caring role had a negative impact on their health. This varied from physically not feeling well, but just not having the time to book a doctor's appointment so symptoms persisted and also, the impact on a carers mental health due to their caring responsibilities

Peer support was described by many carers as 'invaluable'. Many carers explained that through attending support groups, they were able to have open and honest conversations about their feelings, share experiences and advice.

Many carers explained they would like to have a 'one stop shop' where carers could ask a question, or share a concern in which a worker would find answers and/or information on their behalf. Most carers explained that they simply did not have time to be making numerous phone calls, research and chasing people up.

Derbyshire Carers Association (DCA) welcomed this report from Healthwatch, it confirmed many of the issues that Healthwatch raise awareness of on an ongoing basis. This response had been written based on figures from the service which was hoped would address the highlighted issues and show commitment to continually improve the service that was provided.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

**31/19      UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN DERBYSHIRE – HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair, Vice-Chair and the lead Scrutiny Officer had attended a meeting with the commissioner of the service to gain an understanding into how the service was commissioned.

More information had been requested and once this had been received this would be circulated to Committee members. This subject would be discussed in further detail at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED** to note the information.