

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

A meeting of Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 12th October, 2021.

Present: Cllr Evaline Cunningham (Chair), Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Paul Weston

Officers: Ann Workman, Emma Champley, Peter Otter (A&H); Jane Edmends (FD&BS); Gary Woods (MD)

Also in attendance: Cllr Jim Beall (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture), Cllr Ann McCoy (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care); Jon Carling, Lucy Owens (Catalyst)

Apologies: Cllr Luke Frost

ASH 25/21 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ASH 26/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

ASH 27/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021

Consideration was given to the minutes from the Committee meeting held on the 14th September 2021.

With reference to the admissions embargo at Piper Court that was highlighted as part of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection Results – Quarterly Summary (Q1 2021-2022) item, Members requested an update statement regarding the current embargo situation.

AGREED that:

- 1) the minutes of the meeting on the 14th September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair;
- 2) an update regarding the Piper Court admissions embargo be provided to the Committee.

ASH 28/21 Scrutiny Review of Multi-Agency Support to Care Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Task & Finish)

Consideration was given to the draft final report and recommendations for the Scrutiny Review of Multi-Agency Support to Care Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Task & Finish).

The Committee was pleased to be able to recognise the work undertaken with and by care homes since the emergence of COVID-19, and reflected on the death rate data presented as part of the evidence-gathering which showed that, whilst higher than the national average, the Borough was broadly in line with

regional Local Authorities. In terms of the recommendations, the continuation of the successful Care Home Protection Group would be a positive development.

Discussion ensued regarding the Committee's role in monitoring both the quantity and quality of information from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) and wider health and care partners. To this end, it was suggested that a further element to the recommendations could include regular consideration of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) monthly Insight reports that include care home-related data (provided by Local Authorities) which can be used to trigger inspections. Subsequent debate culminated in the agreement to strengthen recommendation 1 (Further to existing arrangements already in place regarding engagement with service-users and their loved ones, any current and future multi-agency professional group that is convened to support care homes ensures that the voice of residents and their families / carers is clearly articulated (whether through direct representation or via another appropriate mechanism)) to include specific references to SBC and its care partners.

The Cabinet Members for Health, Leisure and Culture and for Adult Social Care were in attendance, and thanked the Task and Finish Group for its work on this scrutiny topic. The commendation towards Officers for enabling a further cohort of care home staff to access the Well-Led Programme during the pandemic (paragraph 5.7) was echoed, as was the need to reinforce the importance of strong leadership and management. It was also felt that the small number of recommendations within the report was a positive sign of the efforts made to support local care home providers.

AGREED that the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet, subject to an amendment to recommendation 1.

**ASH
29/21**

Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the previously-completed Scrutiny Review of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households. This was the third progress update following the Committee's agreement of the Action Plan in June 2019, and key developments in relation to outstanding actions were recorded as follows:

- Recommendation 3 (That in response to increasing service demands, the Council explores options for alternative models for 'temporary' accommodation with Housing Providers): Tender process complete, with new contracts (providing appropriate hours of support to enable homeless individuals to move from temporary accommodation to independent accommodation) in place from the 1st September 2021 when a period of transition will commence.
- Recommendation 4 (That the Council continues to develop detailed understanding of those who are 'hardest to house' and the barriers to accessing (and maintaining) accommodation, and explore new forms of appropriate housing options for this client group): In addition to the dedicated roles outlined in previous progress updates, the Council had been successful in securing additional funding for an Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (providing bespoke housing pathways for 30 offenders into the private rented sector and

support for ex-offenders with the aim of preventing homelessness) and a Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (12 units of accommodation with support for those at risk of rough sleeping and 6 move-on units (to act as a 'stepping-stone' prior to a move into independent accommodation)). Funding to support the Homeless Officer who works directly with Holme House prison to ensure that accommodation is identified prior to release for those requiring it had also been extended.

Concluding the update, the SBC Housing Services Manager highlighted the number of different approaches (including bespoke schemes) implemented by the Council to aid accommodation options for homeless households since the review was completed. Assurance was also given that services would continue to move / adapt to this ever-changing scene, particularly since it often involved complex individuals who had other issues outside housing. Whilst the Borough does not have a prevalent homelessness problem (the last rough sleeper count undertaken a few weeks ago was 0), circumstances can change and some individuals do not want help with accommodation. Nevertheless, Officers try to engage with any affected persons and conduct searches in areas where rough sleepers are likely to be.

Members thanked the service for the vital work it carries out and commended the team for getting funding to strengthen the Council's offer. The importance of links with the Probation Service to ensure those leaving prison have somewhere to go was again reinforced.

AGREED that:

- 1) the progress update be noted and the assessments for progress be confirmed;
- 2) the Action Plan following the Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households review be signed-off as fully achieved.

**ASH
30/21**

Scrutiny Review of Day Opportunities for Adults

Evidence-gathering for the Committee's review of Day Opportunities for Adults continued at this meeting. Prior to the session commencing, Members were informed that the originally-intended SBC Children's Services contribution had been deferred to a later date due to some challenges that had arisen in pulling together the required response. As such, the focus of the session would now be on the documentation provided by another key stakeholder, Catalyst, the leading voice of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Stockton-on-Tees.

Led by Catalyst's Volunteer Manager and supported by its Chief Executive Officer, Members were taken through a report provided with the meeting papers, key features of which included:

- Catalyst's role in the VCSE in Stockton-on-Tees: Catalyst works with organisations across the Borough to find innovative solutions to help them continually improve and thrive, and offers a range of specialist support, strategic operations, and a commitment to push forward the conditions in which the

several hundred organisations in the sector in Stockton-on-Tees operate. Part of its role is to raise questions about the state of the sector and the issues affecting different communities, along with identifying needs and opportunities to obtain funding, and developing collaborative projects to make a difference.

Catalyst aims to represent the VCSE sector and act as a conduit between it and other organisations, including the Local Authority, to identify ways of working together to meet community need. The weekly Catalyst e-bulletin reaches around 2,000 people in the Borough and includes details of its forums and training events – it also contains advice about funding, governance, and other aspects of running a successful organisation.

- Catalyst membership: Catalyst currently has 148 members, with over 1,000 people registered to receive the weekly e-bulletin which acts as a virtual meeting place for the VCSE sector and provides information including funding opportunities, good news and paid / voluntary roles. The Catalyst website also holds a directory of over 300 VCSE organisations in Stockton-on-Tees – this illustrates how diverse the sector is and how much it has to offer. Included in this are over 50 organisations which support members of the community who may come under the remit of ‘Adult Day Services’.

Having direct access to, and contact with, so many organisations across the sector gives Catalyst an ideal position from which to co-ordinate delivery of services to the community in the best way possible.

- Consultation with partners on Adult Day Service opportunities: To effectively represent the interests of the VCSE sector across Stockton-on-Tees and provide a representative voice, consultation was carried out to capture the views of several VCSE organisations on day opportunities for adults and the role they can play. Views of two VCSE sector infrastructure organisations were sought, and a local Higher Education Institution (HEI) was also consulted for information on any relevant research in this area (though no relevant research has yet been completed, the HEI is happy to keep Catalyst informed as and when any research is carried out). Key points and themes emerged as follows:

- o VCSE sector role in supporting people to access opportunities in their communities: Sector is particularly forward-thinking and less risk-averse than other sectors (enabling new and more radical approaches to be tried), and many VCSE groups have an autonomy which allows them to respond quickly to change and provide a flexible service as they are not restricted by the sometimes-lengthy decision-making processes which often exist within larger organisations. Some limitations exist, mainly due to capacity and funding – for this reason, most organisations felt a combination of Local Authority and VCSE services was needed to provide or facilitate opportunities and support.

- o Impact of COVID-19: The sector had demonstrated a flexible response and managed to stay in touch with service-users well, including some face-to-face support (while observing social distancing requirements). Some felt the Local Authority closed down many services without offering alternatives, though it was acknowledged that this was done in response to Government guidelines rather than choice (SBC Officers in attendance also noted that some clients and their families did not want to continue using a service because of concerns around the pandemic, and that the Council had maintained regular

contact with everyone who attended its Day Options via virtual catch-ups and other innovative ways of keeping in touch with individuals and their families / carers). The strength of local partnership-working was evident, something both Catalyst and SBC played a key role in facilitating.

o Existing / future services (what should be retained / adapted / changed?): More diversity required in service provision (i.e. various options for people needing support for the same reason) and in the organisations commissioned by the Local Authority, each bringing their different skills and strengths to the provision of services. A more transparent commissioning process was needed so that as many VCSE organisations as possible were aware of tenders which are available and how they can apply (though it was acknowledged that some may not be reading the opportunities which are advertised), as was a move to commissioning more smaller VCSE organisations rather than repeatedly relying on larger, national charities / organisations for delivery.

Strong feeling of the need to carry out direct consultation with service-users and their families or support network in order to identify what services should be retained or changed (one organisation offered to facilitate this through focus groups). The importance of organisations being able to link back to the Local Authority if there were any issues regarding service delivery was also stressed.

o Awareness of good practice elsewhere: Approaches to VCSE-related provision in Yorkshire (replacing services previously delivered by the Local Authority and a focus on hyper-locality – smaller organisations rooted within specific communities being better-placed to respond to local needs than the Local Authority) and North Tyneside (buddying project in collaboration with social prescribing service, facilitating partnership approaches, offering hybrid (remote as well as physical) sessions / community activities) were highlighted. HEI views on the benefits of virtual interaction (alongside in-person support) and the sector's role in addressing any 'digital poverty' to enable vulnerable adults to access remote support was also noted.

• Potential role of Catalyst: Attention was drawn to three specific initiatives – Social Lights (matching volunteers with adults with autism or other learning disabilities to provide support to access activities and groups within the community), Gig Buddies (national project which matches adults with autism and / or learning disabilities with a volunteer to attend live entertainment with), and Goodgym (a running club which does 'good deeds' for members of the community). Catalyst are researching the feasibility of delivering national projects in Stockton-on-Tees including Gig Buddies and Good Gym, though both would require significant funding in order to be set-up, and research into potential funders is ongoing. If funding were available, the aim would be to identify a VCSE organisation to access the funding to run the programmes with Catalyst's support – Catalyst would only consider running programmes such as these centrally in the absence of an organisation with the expertise and capacity to do so.

When appropriate organisations were not identified or were unable to provide delivery, Catalyst was well placed to deliver projects drawing on volunteers and the experience and skills of Catalyst staff. There was a potential role for Catalyst in helping to upskill VCSE organisations to bid for and deliver services which historically are awarded to national bodies. Feedback from the sector

suggests that an element of co-production in planning services before they are commissioned would be welcomed – this would give the VCSE a sense of ownership / involvement and would be something Catalyst could help facilitate.

In thanking Catalyst for its information-submission, Members commended the VCSE sector for its vital role in providing wider support within the Adult Social Care domain. Successful holiday activity and food-provision initiatives were highlighted, and replicating this in some way with day opportunities for adults would be hugely beneficial.

Reflecting on the large number of organisations within the VCSE sector, the Committee urged Catalyst to continue to promote its role and the support it can and does offer through as many platforms as possible to ensure all groups are aware of the potential to develop and grow. A lot of activity was taking place across the Borough (including volunteering opportunities for the wider public) that people may be oblivious to, and being aware of, and signposting to, Catalyst could help those with an array of skill-sets to become involved (particularly young people who Members had received enquiries from regarding volunteering).

Members queried if the geographical spread of VCSE activity was consistent throughout the whole Borough. Catalyst felt that provision was widespread, though there was naturally some emphasis on certain areas with a specific need (i.e. linked to places with higher levels of deprivation), and regularly engaged with organisations across Stockton-on-Tees to reinforce awareness of where service delivery is taking place. There was no concept of a North / South divide within the Borough.

The Committee considered the benefits of place-based activity for those in more rural areas of Stockton-on-Tees, though it was acknowledged that local people may be more willing to travel within the Borough due to its smaller size compared to other Local Authority areas. It was also recognised that some initiatives could be hampered by time-limited funding windows (e.g. 3-years only) and / or challenges in retaining VCSE staff (with short-term contracts) which may impact on the long-term success of a project – both the Local Authority and the VCSE sector therefore needed to be careful not to build-up hopes around a particular provision if this could not be sustained.

Referencing the last page of Appendix 1 (Detailed overview of consultation with VCSE organisations), concern was expressed around the observation that there was ‘a tendency to ‘force’ individuals into a VCSE sector organisation’s support even when it may not meet the person’s needs.’ Previous work had been undertaken to address any notion of this occurring, and it was suggested that this sort of feedback would be of interest to both the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

AGREED that the information be noted.

**ASH
31/21**

Regional Health Scrutiny Update

Consideration was given to the latest Regional Health Scrutiny Update report summarising developments regarding the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny

Committee, the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, and the North East Regional Health Scrutiny Committee. Attention was drawn to the following:

- Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: Two meetings had taken place since the start of the current municipal year – the first, in June 2021, focused on a further presentation from TEWV regarding their 2020-2021 Quality Accounts, and the second, in September 2021, received updates in relation to Acklam Road Hospital (formerly West Lane Hospital), the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme, and the local NHS / Public Health response to COVID-19 (specifically progress around Tees Valley vaccinations).
- Sustainability and Transformation Plan Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: Confirmation of the Committee's next meeting date is still awaited. In the meantime, links to developments around the Integrated Care System (ICS) agenda were provided for Members' information, including the ICS framework, the views of the Local Government Association (LGA), and concerns from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) on the impact of these proposals for health scrutiny powers.

The SBC Director of Adults and Health, also present at this meeting, informed the Committee of the 17th November 2021 deadline for a decision on what local arrangements (Integrated Care Board (ICB) / Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)) would look like ahead of the full implementation of the overarching ICS framework in April 2022. SBC is represented on an Executive Design Group responsible for planning this significant structural change, and the recruitment of Chief Executive Officers has been taking place this week (involving Local Authority input).

AGREED that the Regional Health Scrutiny Update report be noted.

ASH 32/21 **Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board from the meetings in May, June and July 2021.

AGREED that the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board from the meetings in May, June and July 2021 be noted.

ASH 33/21 **Work Programme 2021-2022**

Consideration was given to the Committee's current Work Programme. The next meeting was scheduled for the 23rd November 2021 and would include further evidence-gathering for the Day Opportunities for Adults review, the latest CQC Quarterly Update (Q2 2021-2022), and the presentation of the Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees Annual Report 2020-2021.

Looking further ahead, it was also confirmed that the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) Annual Report 2020-2021 would be considered at the Committee's meeting in January 2022.

AGREED that the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Work Programme for 2021-2022 be noted.

ASH
34/21

Chair's Update

The Chair had no further updates.