

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 7th July 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors D Brown, M Francis, R Fuller, T Hayward, Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere, Mrs R E Mathews and Mrs D C Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D J Mead and M C Oliver.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D M Tysoe.

14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd June 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors D Brown, P Jordan and D Reynolds declared interests in relation to Item 4 on the Agenda.

Councillor D Brown declared an interest as Lead Governor at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CUH).

Councillors D Reynolds and P Jordan work for the NHS.

16. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st July 2015 to 31st October 2015.

17. CHILDREN WITH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

Mr L Miller, Senior Programme Manager for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group presented the report to the Panel. The Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) update report outlined the challenges faced by the service, described measures already taken and longer term plans for improvement.

The Panel noted that the key points to the report were as follows:

- Waiting times in specialist CAMHS are too long, with some cases waiting for over 52 weeks.
- Waiting lists have been temporarily closed for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity

Disorder (ADHD) referrals where there are no associated Mental Health needs.

- CAMHS Emergency assessments in Emergency Department settings have increased threefold in recent years.

Members the Panel questioned whether the closure of waiting lists for ASD and ADHD would be advisable due to the amount of staffing resources that are used for emergency care when vulnerable Children and Adolescents are unable to access the preventative services and may require hospital treatment. Mr Miller responded by assuring the Panel that the waiting list for services will not be closed to those with other Mental Health problems such as anxiety and depression. It was noted that working on decreasing the waiting lists will positively impact on the number of NHS admissions. Members were also made aware that a grant of £ 600,000 per year has been awarded to CAMHS from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) which will be focused towards additional staff.

The Panel questioned Mr Miller regarding the problems faced by young men with mental health issues due to alcohol and drugs. Mr Miller had no information at the meeting, but has agreed to send this information on.

Statistics surrounding CAMHS are now 15 years old; The Department of Health are recommissioning this piece of work to get a clearer picture regarding the increase in mental health problems for Children and Adolescents.

Mr Miller informed the Panel that timescales for the waiting list closures are still being discussed with CFPT and that referrals to the voluntary/charity sector will be increased during the list closures.

CAMHS are looking to work closely with local schools, and also at developing the online 'self-help' resources that are available to the community.

The Panel considered and noted the report and Members have requested future reports from CAMHS to monitor the progress made. This was agreed by Mr Miller.

18. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted related to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

19. BENEFITS RISK BASED VERIFICATION POLICY - EXEMPT

Councillor Tysoe introduced the Benefits Risk Based Verification Policy to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Social Well-Being. It was explained that risk-based approach is currently used for new claims, and that now needs to be applied to any changes in circumstances.

The Benefits Manager guided the Panel through the key points of the

report including;

- New claims have been processed using the Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy since 2013
- RBV has been a great success; majority of claims made are low risk, and the performance of the Benefit team has increased dramatically
- Correct information protects claims and ensures that new claims are accurate
- There is now a need to focus RBV on changes to circumstances which will also increase accuracy for claims.

Members commented on the report, reflecting that it was simple and clear to understand. It was clarified for Members that the specialist software used for RBV determines whether a claim is a low, medium or high risk case using previous statistics and the claim form itself.

Following a question from the Panel on resource implications, and whether staffing levels may be reduced, the Benefit Manager explained that staffing may indeed be affected. It was also confirmed to the Panel that the grant received by the Benefits department from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to improve services will not be effected.

Additional funding from DWP has been received which will assist with any further software costs to set up RBV for changes of circumstances, however, these cost will be minimal due to the initial outlay when the software was first purchased.

After further discussion relating to online access for residents, the Panel approved the report.

20. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

21. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of studies bring undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economic Well-Being and Environmental Well-being.

A Member of the Panel queried the expected timescales for the current Operations Review and it was noted that the Review is anticipated to be completed during Autumn 2015.

22. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting.

Councillor T Hayward volunteered to be included in the Review of Elderly Patient Care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Working Group.

23. SCRUTINY

The 156th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted by the Panel.

Chairman