

# **ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

9 NOVEMBER 2023

The meeting commenced at 10.10 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

### **Present:**

Councillor: Bob Buchan (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gary Allen, Rob Darby, Ged Hall, Sue Little, and Mike Young.

Also present: Councillor Tom Feeney as substitute for Councillor Carole Thompson in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Maxine Crutwell and Shaun Mayo, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust

Tony Leighton, Hartlepool HealthWatch

Evelyn Leck

Officers: Jill Harrison, Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services  
John Lovatt, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care  
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning  
Neil Harrison, Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services  
Trevor Smith, Head of Strategic Commissioning (Adults)  
Julian Heward, Communications and Marketing Team  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **18. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carole Thompson.

### **19. Declarations of Interest**

None at this point in the meeting. During consideration of Minute No. 21, Councillor Allen declared a personal interest as an employee of Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust.

### **20. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023**

Received.

## **21. Community Mental Health Transformation – Update** (Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services)

### **Type of decision**

For information.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Adult and Community Based Services Committee with an update on the community mental health transformation framework and collaborative partnership for Hartlepool, and to share a report outlining the impact of the Better Mental Health Grant, commissioned by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services introduced the representatives from Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) who gave a presentation to the Committee outlining the work that had been undertaken in reviewing and transforming the mental health system across the Trust area. The presentation focussed on the changes in the Tees Valley and highlighted the work undertaken specifically in Hartlepool. Detailed work with stakeholders had developed 16 work streams looking towards there being local support for each part of the system and removing the ‘silos’ that many teams had been working in.

The TEWV representatives outlined the changes made to the adult patient flow through mental health services noting that only 1 in 5 referrals into the service needed to be transferred into treatment services. There was now a Primary Care Network Mental Health Team based in GP surgeries, senior clinical staff including peers and Care Navigators collocated with Local Authority and Voluntary Care Sector support in the Community Hubs. Feedback from both patients and practitioners was positive with the ‘virtual huddles’ being seen as a positive among practitioners.

Members welcomed the update and considered that a lot of work had gone into the changes to service provision. There was concern expressed, however, at the allocation of funding for enhancing VCS services which was being hosted by the PFC Trust. It was unclear as to how that funding was being allocated and how groups could access that fund and Members considered that greater clarity needed to be brought to that process. The Head of Safeguarding and Specialist Services indicated that the funding had been allocated by the NHS Integrated Care Board and was being held by the PFC Trust until it was distributed.. It was acknowledged that it had been problematic ensuring that the breadth of VCS groups were aware of the funding. The group allocating funding had met three times since April but had not yet allocated the full funding. Much of the work was around ensuring that the VCS was fully aware of the contract criteria.

A Member commented that the current process was simply too confusing for VCS groups and improved clarity was required. If services were to be delivered in the community then who would be delivering them needed to be confirmed sooner rather than later.

A Member questioned how the Community Hub approach in Hartlepool influenced the service delivery here and elsewhere and if there was scope for more Community Navigators. The TEWV representative indicated that the skill mix within the current teams was being examined to look at the potential for further Community Navigators, but any increase would need to be delivered from within the existing resources. It was indicated that other Council areas were looking to replicate the Community Hub model that had been developed in Hartlepool. There was also a question raised in relation to the numbers of mental health nurses available in the town; were there nurses available within each GP surgery. The TEWV representatives stated that there were two Mental Health nurses that operated across all the surgeries and appointments could be booked by individual surgeries.

The HealthWatch representative commented that the improvements to the services were very welcome but there were still some issues that needed addressing. One was the Lived Experience Forum where attendance by service managers and decision makers was necessary to ensure the voice of people using services was being heard.

The Executive Director acknowledged that the Community Hubs model had made a significant difference in delivering services in the community through collaborative working with a wide range of partners. Much of the recent success had been down to the hard work of the team lead by the Head of Community Hubs and Wellbeing. The Executive Director commented that there were still some challenges with the limited resources available but wished to record her appreciation of the hard work that had gone into the development of the Hubs.

During the debate Councillor Allen declared a personal interest as an employee of TEWV.

### **Decision**

That the update in respect of the implementation of the Hartlepool Community Mental Health Transformation plan and the successful outcomes achieved be noted.

## **22. Adult Social Care Strategy 2024-2027** (*Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision: test (ii) – General Exception Notice applies.

### **Purpose of report**

To seek approval for the Adult Social Care Strategy 2024 – 2029, incorporating the Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy and Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Executive Director reported that work had been undertaken with staff over recent months to develop a vision for adult social care and to confirm our key priorities and values. The outcome of this work was summarised in the Adult Social Care: Better Outcomes, Better Lives 'Plan on a Page', appendix 1 to the report. Further detail on how the vision and priorities would be implemented, in line with our corporate values, was set out in the Adult Social Care Strategy 2024 – 2029 (Appendix 2 to the report). An annual Delivery Plan would be developed to support implementation of the strategy and monitor progress. This would be overseen by the Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Group and an annual update will be provided to the Adult and Community Based Services Committee. Two of the key documents that support the Adult Social Care Strategy were the Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy (Appendix 3 to the report) and the Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy (Appendix 4 to the report). The Executive Director clarified that all the plans were for the five year period 2024 to 2029.

Members commended the work undertaken in the preparation of the strategy documents and commented that wider publicity of the strategy and the services through Hartbeat should be undertaken. The Executive Director commented that there were regular items in Hartbeat publicising the services available through the Community Hubs. Often simple word of mouth was the best publicity for bringing new people into the services available.

In referencing the Workforce Strategy, a Member questioned if there were any issues around recruitment and retention. The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning stated that Hartlepool was particularly lucky with a very stable adult social care workforce. Much work was done to ensure staff received regular communication and appropriate work place supervision, team meetings and annual reviews. The risks of shortfalls in key areas was always monitored. The Executive Director added that the annual feedback from staff was always very positive and staff welcomed the access they had to senior managers for example.

A Member raised the issue of care home staffing and the department's role in assisting care homes to ensure they were fully staffed. The Assistant Director indicated that we did work closely with providers and shared adverts for posts across our platforms. There were national issues with care home staffing, nurses being one particular issue. Locally there was the Care Academy that would bring forward new trained staff for the future.

The HealthWatch representative questioned the local services for dementia sufferers indicating that that there was the advice and support provided by the Hospital of God but that was external to the Council. The Assistant Director stated that the service provided by the Hospital of God was commissioned by the Council. The Commissioning Strategy highlighted that there was need for a review of what the community needed in terms of dementia support in the future.

### **Decision**

That the Adult Social Care Strategy 2024 – 2029, incorporating the Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy and Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy be approved.

## **23. Assistive Technology Service** (*Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Key Decision Test i & ii – Forward Plan Entry - ACBS 141/23.

### **Purpose of report**

To provide the Adult and Community Based Services Committee with an update on how assistive technology services had developed, and to seek approval for a new charging arrangement to be introduced from 1 April 2024.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Executive Director reported that assistive technology supports people to remain independent in their own homes and when accessing the community. People using the service are able to access support when needed 24 hours a day, seven days a week historically through some form of pull cord or pendant, but more recently through smart technology as well. The service gives peace of mind to family, friends and carers, knowing that when they are unable to watch over their loved ones, support can be accessed when required.

The type of technology provided to the person is tailored to meet their needs. It can include sensors and triggers such as motion or fall detectors and fire and gas alarms that trigger a warning to a response centre staffed

around the clock, 365 days a year. It can also include location devices that can be used to enable an individual to have security outside of their home.

The call handling element of the service has recently been tendered and the new Hartlepool Technology for Care service was launched in April 2023 following the appointment of Taking Care as the new provider. The appointment of a new provider is enabling new technologies to be explored and potential benefits maximised learning from best practice elsewhere in the country.

The assistive technology service in Hartlepool is currently used by almost 3,000 people and was provided free of charge. Approximately 750 people using the service have access to assistive technology alongside other types of care and support while the remaining 2,200 have assistive technology in place as a standalone service.

In most local authorities across the country, people pay a weekly charge to access this type of support, with charges based on a basic service (monitoring without a physical response) and an enhanced service (including a physical response). This was already the case in 10 of the 12 authorities in the North East with charges ranging from £5.04 to £7.27 for the basic service and £11.45 to £17.51 for an enhanced service.

It was proposed that charges are introduced for the service in Hartlepool from 1 April 2024, with the basic service charged at £6.00 per week and the enhanced service (including a physical response) charged at £10.00 per week. These charges compared favourably with those in operation elsewhere in the north east, which will be subject to inflationary increases for 2024/25. Charges would be reviewed on an annual basis and would be expected to increase in line with inflation.

In addition to the weekly charge, to be paid by direct debit, there would be a one off charge of £46.00 to cover provision and installation of a key safe which complied with British safety standards. Installation of a key safe would be a standard requirement to access assistive technology support as it would allow the service to operate in the safest, most effective way and ensure that people requiring a physical response could be supported as quickly as possible. In exceptional circumstances where this was not possible, alternative arrangements would be made.

The Executive Director highlighted the financial considerations set out in the report which indicated that income generated in 2024/25 will be in the region of £400,000 with the full year effect of up to £832,000 achieved by the end of 2025/26.

A Member was concerned at the people that may opt out of the system if charges were imposed and questioned what systems would be in place to ensure that those that needed this service could continue to receive it if they couldn't afford the charges. The Executive Director stated it would be

difficult to predict the numbers of those that may opt out of the system. Those that received the service as part of a wider package of support would be able to include the costs in their personal budget. Officers would assist service users to maximise their benefits if they were considering opting out because of the costs.

The key safe charge was also questioned and the Executive Director indicated that these would be an important part of the service removing the need for staff to regularly return to base to collect keys. There would be some situations where a key safe would not be utilised but they were seen as best practice in the majority of cases.

Members noted the concerns and sought assurance that mechanisms were in place to ensure that all service users were proactively contacted ahead of the introduction of the charges and assisted where appropriate to ensure they were in receipt of their full benefit allowances, then the introduction of the charges should be supported.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.5, a recorded vote was requested and taken on the recommendation to approve the proposed implementation of charges.

Those for: Councillors Buchan, Darby, Little and Young.

Those against: Councillors Allen, Hall and Feeney.

Those abstaining: none.

The recommendation was carried.

### **Decision**

That the proposed introduction of charging for the assistive technology service as reported be approved subject to all service users being proactively contacted ahead of the introduction of the charges and assisted where appropriate to ensure they were in receipt of their full benefit allowances.

## **24. Annual Report of Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments 2022/23** (*Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

### **Type of decision**

Non-key Decision.

### **Purpose of report**

To present to members the Annual Report of Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments 2022/23.

### **Issue(s) for consideration**

The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning reported that during 2022/23, 74 compliments were received relating to adult social care. This is an increase of 17 from 2021/22. A total of 24 complaints were received during 2022/23 which was a decrease of one compared to the previous year. Of the 24 complaints received, 2 were resolved within 24 hours and 6 were not considered further leaving 16 complaints that were investigated. This was a decrease of 3 complaints being investigated compared to the previous year. Of the 16 complaints investigated in 2022/23, 15 had concluded local statutory complaints processes and 1 complaint remains ongoing which would be carried forward to 2023/24.

The appendix to the report provides an analysis of complaints and compliments and demonstrated the learning that had occurred from complaints and actions implemented as a result. There had been one complainant who had approached the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) about their adult social care complaint in 2022/23. The LGSCO decided not to investigate further because there was no sign of fault with the Council's actions.

Members welcomed the report particularly the number of compliments received. The Executive Director commented that it was known that there were any more compliments received by staff during the year and Managers were looking at ways to capture more of those.

The HealthWatch representative asked if complainants were offered any advocacy during complaint processes and the Assistant Director stated that all complainants were advised of independent advocacy being available.

### **Decision**

That the contents of the Annual Report of Complaints and Compliments 2022/23 be noted that the report be approved for publication online.

## **25. Response to Council Resolution** (*Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

### **Type of decision**

For Information.



**Purpose of report**

To provide an update to Committee.

**Issue(s) for consideration**

The Executive Director of Adult and Community Based Services reported that at the Council meeting on 28 September 2023, Members resolved that “The Adult and Community Based Services Committee receive a report providing an update on the implementation of the Indoor Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy and that all sports clubs in the town be engaged in the discussion on the future provision of sporting facilities in the town.”

The Executive Director informed Members that the Playing Pitch and Indoor Facilities Strategy was scheduled for review in 2024 and a specification is being developed to commission an independent expert to lead this work. A full report setting out the wider strategic context, the proposed developments and timelines, engagement and consultation processes and governance proposals will be presented to the Committee in January 2024.

A Member questioned how clubs would be engaged and the Executive Director stated that officers had very good relations with the majority of the various sports clubs in the town, particularly those utilising Council facilities. All sports clubs would be invited to participate in the review.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

**26. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

None.

The meeting concluded at 11.50 am

**H MARTIN**

**DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

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