

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee held at Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 17th May, 2023.

PRESENT: Mr A M Ridgers (Chairman), Mr S Webb (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P T Cole, Mr N J Collor, Ms S Hamilton, Ms J Meade, Mr J Meade, Mr T L Shonk, Mr R G Streatfeild, MBE, Mr R J Thomas and Ms L Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs C Bell

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Michael Thomas-Sam (Strategic Business Adviser, Social Care), Simon Mitchell (Senior Commissioner) and Dominic Westhoff (Democratic Services Officer).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

126. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item. 2)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Dirk Ross.

127. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda
(Item. 3)

Mr Shonk noted that a member of his family was a care provider. Ms Meade noted that she was personally affected by some of the items. Ms Linda Wright noted that she was an appointee for a relative with a mental health issue.

128. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023
(Item. 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023 are correctly recorded and a paper copy be signed by the Chairman.

129. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director
(Item. 5)

1. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Mrs Clair Bell, gave a verbal update on the following.

(a) It was noted that the 15-21 May marked Mental Health Awareness Week, this year the focus was on anxiety. Residents were encouraged to think of simple steps they could take to improve their mental health and to recognise where intense anxiety is impacting daily life and when to seek support. Mrs Bell then gave details of services and advice available countywide. Kent and Medway's authorities, health services and community groups were coming together to remind residents of locally based support available. Live Well Kent and Medway were a network of voluntary groups and charities offering free mental health support and guidance for young people and adults. Better Health

Every Mind Matters website offered advice on stress, anxiety, low mood and sleep issues. One You Kent, a free local healthy lifestyle service, would help residents set realistic fitness goals and stay motivated. Counselling services were available for a range of concerns through Release the Pressure. It was noted that further information and links to these services were available on the Kent County Council Website and promoted on the Council's social media channels. Please find links to the services below:

- Live Well Kent and Medway: [Welcome | Live Well Kent](#)
- Better Health Every Mind Matters: [Better Health - Every Mind Matters | Campaign Resource Centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](#)
- One You Kent: [One You Kent - Kent County Council](#)
- Release the Pressure: [Release the pressure - Kent County Council](#)

(b) Mrs Bell said that on the 19 May, there was a free event at the Detling showground showcasing the support available for those living with, or caring for those with, dementia. The event would be organised by members of the Kent Dementia Action Alliance. Organisations and experts will be available with activities and information. People would be able to meet with experts and professionals and connect with local dementia support services. As well as learn about new research and take part in activities. In the afternoon the Kent dementia friendly awards would take place to recognise individuals and organisations that benefit the lives of those with dementia. The event would be attended by Kent County Council Leader Roger Gough and Minister of State for Social Care, and local Kent MP, Helen Whately.

(c) Mrs Bell noted that she had attended the Health Watch Recognition Awards on 29 March 2023, where Kent County Council had won 4 awards. The Council's Public Health directorate had won two of the awards. The first was for Kent and Medway Listens, a large engagement project that engaged with numerous residents from seldom heard communities and the findings from which would help inform the interim Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy. The second award was for their commitment to be involved with and listen to those with lived experience of suicide. The other two awards for the Council were for its work with the People's Panel, which was created by Health Watch Kent, and for ensuring that people's experiences were fully part of the Technology Enabled Care pilot.

2. Mrs Clair Bell then responded to comments and questions from the Committee, including the following.

(a) Asked about the difficulties faced by residents in finding the correct pathway or resource for a mental health issue, who instead found themselves being signposted from one place to another. Mrs Bell said that this would be taken away and looked at to ensure the services are effective. Mr Richard Smith said he would like to discuss the issue further outside the meeting.

(b) Asked about the effectiveness of social prescribing for mental health and if it was being promoted during Mental Health Awareness Week. Mrs Bell was not aware of any specific examples but emphasised the evidence that shows how effective such measures were for mental health issues.

3. The Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, Mr Richard Smith, then gave a verbal update on the following.

(a) Mr Smith noted that 1 in 4 people were affected by a mental health issue, he encouraged people to reach out and seek support or check in with their friends, family, or colleagues.

(b) Mr Smith said that he had spoken at the Kent Independent Care Association (KICA) Registered Managers Conference. The conference was hosted at Detling and was said to have been very well attended. A presentation was delivered to providers outlining the directorate's commissioning intentions. Information was provided on the consultation on the care workforce. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) updated delegates on their new structures and inspection regime. There were commercial stands on technology and care services. A workshop was held on technology-enhanced lives, Mr Smith noted that this was a conscious decision to change the terminology from technology-enabled care, as the offer was about more than just care.

(c) Mr Smith had visited a number of the services provided. Including, Strode Park and in-house services provided at West View. Mr Smith was planning to visit further teams and providers over the coming weeks and months.

(d) Mr Smith attended the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADAS), It was noted that there was a call to arms about the workforce and ensuring diversity and equality within the workforce. There had been a focus on co-production as several of the presentations had those with lived experience at their centre and it was a central theme of the CQC and Future Roadmap presentations.

4. Mr Richard Smith then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) Asked about hospital discharges and if there had been any learning from recent events. It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing with staff, NHS colleagues and voluntary sector actors to ensure people were moving as smoothly as possible through the hospital system. Mr Smith noted the complexity of the issue in Kent and that work was ongoing. Hospitals are under considerable pressure not just in winter but all year round, particularly in east Kent. Several out-of-hospital initiatives were underway with NHS colleagues.

(At this point the Chairman, Mr Alan Ridgers, was unable to continue as Chair and handed over to the Vice-Chair, Mr Simon Webb. Mr Ridgers thanked Mr Webb for taking on the Chairmanship for the remainder of the meeting.)

130. Technology Enabled Care Service Contract Award

(Item. 6)

Ms Georgina Walton, Senior Project Manager, Innovation Delivery Team, Adult Social Care, and Anthony Prime were in attendance for this Item.

1. Georgina Walton introduced the item. Ms Walton noted that the service would be known as Technology Enhanced Lives Service going forward, following feedback from users.

2. Ms Walton said that the contract was for 5 years, with the option to extend by a further two years.
3. The procurement process had been completed, with a preferred provider identified. The evaluation panel had high confidence that the provider would deliver against the service specification. Once agreed the contract would be awarded in June and the full county-wide offer would go live in September 2023.
4. Mr Prime gave further information and details on the procurement process.
5. Georgina Walton and Anthony Prime then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) Asked about the lack of Wi-Fi connectivity among some individuals and groups and how this would impact the implementation of the service, only 44% of those over 65s, the age group most likely to be affected, were recorded as having Wi-Fi connectivity. Also, was there any scope to Wi-Fi enable relevant households to ensure the contract was delivered in the most efficient way possible. In response, it was said that technology facilitators were in place to visit homes and only offer the most suitable technologies for the environment, many of which do not run on Wi-Fi. Also, work was ongoing with Digital Kent, which focussed on digital accessibility and infrastructure, which would help to understand barriers to Wi-Fi connectivity.

(b) Asked about data protection measures it was confirmed that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) had been completed and would be updated once work had begun with the preferred provider and legal advice received.

(c) Asked about the security risks. It was said that individuals would be given advice and support and that potential security risks were well understood. Digital ambassadors were in operation to provide 1-on-1 support to users.

(d) Asked about the costs of Wi-Fi installation. It was noted that Digital Kent offered support and vouchers for those with barriers to Wi-Fi connectivity. It was also said that there were technologies that do not rely on Wi-Fi, for example, some were sim based.

(e) Mrs Bell noted the importance of technology in care going forward as benefits included maintaining independence and supporting social connectivity and wellbeing. Excited about the project going forward and thanked those who developed the project.

RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care Committee agreed to the recommendation as set out in the report.

131. Adult Social Care Charging Policy
(Item. 7)

Ms Michelle Goldsmith, Finance Business Partner, Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, was in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Goldsmith introduced the report and gave an overview of the Adult Social Care Charging Policy. It was noted that all those who were overcharged had now been resolved. The next step was said to be identifying where the authority had been too generous. It was proposed that existing people would remain on the current charge whereas new people would be charged the amended rates. The forecast loss of income was anticipated to be around £200,000, but it was noted this would diminish over time.
2. Asked if further anomalies were expected to come to light and if this would then need to come back before the committee. It was said in response that all anomalies had been identified and resolved. Mr Smith noted that this had been a very specific issue and would only come back to the Committee if there was a substantial change to the Charging Policy.

RESOLVED the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee agreed to the recommendations as set out in the report.

132. Community Sensory Needs Support Service (Item. 8)

Katherine Clark, Commissioner, and Nicola McLeish, Senior Commissioner, were in attendance for this item.

1. Katherine Clark introduced and gave an overview of the report. It was said the proposed contract would be for a period of 4 years. A formal procurement process was due to commence over the summer with the contract expected to be awarded by the end of 2023 with the service commencing in early 2024.
2. Katherine Clark then responded to comments and questions from the committee including the following.

(a) Asked about the choice between commissioning and providing the service in-house. It was said that an assessment had been conducted but as the level of need is small it did not make financial sense to provide this in-house. It was noted an external provider would effectively respond to peaks and troughs in demand.

(b) Asked about the decision made by the Council to withdraw funding from charity sectors and how this impacted the decision to procure this service. Ms Clark and Ms McLeish said that the contract formalised a service that the Council was already engaged with to provide statutory services. Mr Mitchell said that the service was separate and different to existing wellbeing contracts. Mrs Bell said that it was the same provider, but a different service was being provided under the contract being discussed.

RESOLVED that the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee agreed with the recommendations as set out in the report.

133. Adult Social Care Performance Dashboard (Item. 9)

Paula Parker, Transformation Lead, Helen Gillivan, Head of Business Delivery Unit, and Sydney Hill were in attendance for this item.

1. Ms Parker introduced the report and highlighted the key areas of activity and performance during quarter 4 for 2022/23.
2. Ms Parker then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:

(a) Asked if officers could give further details on what happened in Q4 as many of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were down on the previous year and if a forward plan was going to be put in place to address this. Sydney Hill gave further details on what happened in Q4 including greater-than-expected demand resulting from winter pressures. It was noted that issues would be addressed by updating the pressures plan and the structural change to the locality model.

(b) Despite a good response to the winter pressures, it was noted that many individuals had experienced, or had ongoing issues, with accessing care and asked if there was a plan to collect and analyse data on these cases to inform future plans. Mr Smith said that there were several factors responsible for the figures seen in Q4 and gave details on the drivers of demand and pressures in the NHS system. It was noted that this was a national issue, not a Kent-specific one. It was said that Q1 figures would indicate if this was a blip or sign of an ongoing concern.

(c) Asked about care homes heading into the 'required improvement' area and what support was given to such care homes. Mr Mitchell said there was a combination of measures in place. Mr Mitchell gave details of how his team would go into care homes and work to pre-empt any foreseen downward turns in quality of care. It was noted that discussions and work were also ongoing with the front line, CQC and health colleagues to identify care homes heading into trouble. It was said that most care homes were private businesses, so the onus was on them to work with the Council to maintain acceptable standards.

(d) It was confirmed that KPIs were reviewed annually as part of an ongoing process, alongside any national changes, to ensure they accurately reflected what needed to be measured and monitored.

RESOLVED recommendations agreed as set out in the report.

134. Adult Social Care Pressures Plan *(Item. 10)*

Sydney Hill was in attendance for this item.

1. Sydney Hill introduced and gave an overview of the report. It was noted that the pressures plan was updated and reviewed annually. An overview was given of various pressures that were faced over the previous winter and how these were successfully supported and responded to. The Pressures Plan for 2023/24 would take forward the learning from the previous year and the updated plan would be presented to the Cabinet Committee in November 2023.

RESOLVED the report was noted and considered.

135. Adult Social Care Workforce Update
(Item. 11)

Sydney Hill and Jade Caccavone, Directorate Business Manager Adult Social Care, were in attendance for this item.

1. Sydney Hill introduced the update. Jade Caccavone then gave a presentation. Please find the presentation attached.
2. Jade Caccavone then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following.

(a) Mr Webb thanked the presenter and praised the clarity and quality of the presentation.

(b) Asked how many vacancies were currently open. It was said that the exact figures were not available but would be circulated after the meeting.

(c) Asked about over-50s potentially re-entering the workforce and if they could be attracted to help alleviate the social care workforce pressures. It was said there was no targeted campaign in place but if individuals had the right values and behaviours they would be welcomed to apply and join the workforce.

(d) Asked if there could be a breakdown in the workforce figures by district or locality it was said that this would be taken away and discussed as to how best to deliver this data.

(e) It was asked if there could be a second presentation down the line detailing the impact and evaluation of the proposed measures and how this was affecting Kent residents.

(f) Asked if recruitment campaigns were targeting students from a range of degree courses. It was noted that registered practitioner roles were open to qualified social workers, occupational therapists, and nurses but other operational roles did not require technical qualifications that were being actively recruited for.

(g) Asked about the quality of mental health training it was said that specialist training was available including the Think Ahead Master's Programme. It was noted that the workforce was encouraged to take further mental health training and qualifications. Joint work with the NHS was ongoing with efforts made to progress this going forward.

RESOLVED the presentation was noted.

136. Work Programme
(Item. 12)

RESOLVED that the Work Programme for 2023/24 was noted.

