

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 14 September 2020 at 3.00 pm at the Virtual Meeting.

County Borough Councillors - Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor R Yeo (Chair)

Councillor G Holmes	Councillor A Roberts
Councillor M Forey	Councillor J Davies
Councillor J Williams	Councillor P Howe
Councillor G Stacey	Councillor G Hughes
Councillor D Owen-Jones	Councillor E Griffiths

Officers in attendance:-

Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Mr N Elliott, Director of Adult Services

County Borough Councillors in attendance:-

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from County Borough Councillors M Tegg, C Willis

2 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

3 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 24th February 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

4 Update on Covid 19 Position in Rhondda Cynon Taf

It was explained to Members that the purpose of the report was to give Members of the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise, review and challenge the Council's response to the COVID 19 Pandemic from an Adult Services perspective.

The Director of Adult Services thanked Committee for the opportunity to update Members on the work that has been carried out since the start of the pandemic and also the opportunity to highlight the current plans in place to support the vulnerable Adult and families in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Director of Adult Services continued to explain that despite the impact of the pandemic across Rhondda Cynon Taf the staff have continued to provide social care services to the most vulnerable people in all settings.

The Director of Adult Services highlighted that that in order to manage the initial impact of the pandemic safeguarding was the main priority for the Service. It was explained that Adult service has had to adapt and change some way of working to move with the extremely fast pace of the changing situation. Members were informed that as an Authority we are continuously following and reviewing Government guidance to ensure we are able to respond to the latest advise.

Members were provided with an overview of the priorities which included working with partners to support timely and safe discharges from hospital, arranging care at home or in an appropriate setting while long term planning takes place. It was explained that support to care providers was essential to deliver a quality and safe service. Other key priorities are as followings:

- Support our most vulnerable people and their carers to stay safe and well in the community;
- Respond to urgent and immediate care and support requirements;
- Safeguard and protect adults considered to be most at risk in the county borough.

The Director explained the procedures in place to ensure these priorities are some of which are as follows,

- Continue to assess and prioritise cases in accordance with flexibilities afforded by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) 2014 Act;
- Continue to review packages of care where calls have been reduced with a view to re-installing where the risk is escalating.
- Continue to work with care homes and other care providers, which includes maintaining bed capacity across care homes, including all 11 in house care homes.

The Director of Adult Services updated Members on staffing pressures within the service and the Committee acknowledge concerns of staff retention along with threat of increased sickness absence during the winter period with cold and Flu like symptoms contributing to an already stretched work force during these times.

Members were also presented with an overview of other areas within the Service for example day services, extra care, PPE provision.

After concluding his verbal update the Director of Adult Services along with the Group Director Community and Children Services proceeded to take Members questions.

The Chair thanked the Officers for a very comprehensive and thanked the service for all its hard work and commitment through very testing times.

A Member also wanted to put his thanks on record for the outstanding work and commitment from all the staff and carers during this situation and wanted clarity on a few points. The Members asked in respect of care and assistance what precaution are in place for both the client and staff Member safety as many of our domiciliary care workers visit many houses throughout the day.

It was explained that as an authority we follow Welsh Government Guidelines and Public Health Wales Guidelines, home care workers are provided PPE and

advanced PPE which is facemasks, visors etc. which allows staff to visit people in their own homes, this guidance has also been provided to the independent sector. If any staff Member has signs or symptoms then the relative action is taken.

The Member also asked for clarification of day centre provision and whether one in particular will reopen.

In response the officer explained that the day centre in question was a community day centre and this was covered under a different department. The Group Director Community and Children's Service went on to explain that Day Centre provision under adult social care needs all decision are based on safely to staff and residents, It was agreed that the Day Centre in question would be passed the relevant department and information would be fed back to the Member.

Another Member also wanted to thank the service for its outstanding work during this time and asked a question regarding testing of home care staff and staff working in assisted living, he also asked about staffing and building resilience within the service.

The Director of Adult Services explained that at present the only testing that takes place is for residential care home workers as stated within the Welsh Government testing guidance. With regards to home carer workers and assisted living staff testing would only take place if individuals showed symptoms. The officer went on to explain a request to the Health Board has been made for testing of all staff however at present we are following Welsh Government testing strategy.

Wider workforce agenda, we are working with independent sector to campaign to increase capacity In house recruitment is an area the Council has work on and HR has worked to put an open advert out to recruit staff.

Members also put questions forward regarding the extreme pressures put on staff, along with demands, winter pressures on top of the pressures of COVID 19 and the accessibility of PPE going forward into the winter.

After a long discussion Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the update from the Director of Adult Service in relation to the Council's response to Covid 19.
- Receive the findings from the Independent review on Care Homes and
- Review the regional support plan
- Receive an update on Winter Pressure Plan for COVID 19.

5 Chair's Review and Close

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

This meeting closed at 5.10 pm

**CLLR R. YEO
CHAIR.**

