

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Linda Ann Wyn Jones declared a personal interest in any item regarding learning disabilities that may be discussed.

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of a meeting of this Committee that took place on 11 December 2014, subject to adding the following names to the list of Members present.

- (a) Councillors Gweno Glyn and Linda Ann Wyn Jones
- (b) Mr Marc Roberts and Vicky Poole (CSSIW)

4. REVIEW OF THE ENABLEMENT SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

(a) The Cabinet Member for Care presented a report updating the Committee on the review of the Enablement Service and referred to the work of the scheme, its impact and how the service could be offered differently. It was noted that it was a fairly expensive scheme that offered a service to individuals for a short period following a hospital stay to enable them and promote independence and not create dependence.

(b) The following concerns were outlined by Members and the Older Persons Service Manager responded to each separately:

(i) In terms of over expenditure on the enablement scheme, it was asked if this was as a result of the Department offering too much service to individuals in the first instance when undertaking assessments. In response, the Committee was reminded that the plan had been presented to the Council in 2010. Following reporting that there was over expenditure within the service at the end of quarter 2, work was undertaken to find out what contributed to this. Consequently, attention was given to the enablement scheme in order to find out what the costs were and consider if the monitoring arrangements worked effectively. It was explained that the service did not complete a comprehensive assessment for each case as assessment usually started in hospital, however, by introducing an enablement scheme this was a period of rehabilitation and by the end the assessment had been completed. Therefore, at the end of this period it was possible to determine if the individual required a support service. The review highlighted that there was room to strengthen the monitoring arrangements due to the presumption that the enablement service was a service that individuals were entitled to for a period of up to six weeks, however, this depended on the circumstances of the individuals. Examples were also seen of individuals who could have gone home from hospital without having to receive the service. It was further highlighted that it was necessary to understand the principles of the enablement service and share these with the Health Board. From the review, it was seen that approximately 55% - 60% of users had left the scheme and they did not need the service to continue. There was room to ensure that the individuals who require this service receive it for an appropriate period for them, and it was seen that too many who might benefit from the service for three weeks, received it for six weeks. It was therefore necessary to ensure effective monitoring arrangements in order to ascertain the implications to the budget.

(ii) It was noted that it was important that the individuals received assessments prior to leaving hospital as the first few days at home were important. The enablement scheme's guidelines should be consistent for Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board service users if they attend hospitals at Ysbyty Gwynedd, Ysbyty Maelor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, Broadgreen, Gobowen etc. The From Hospital to Home Scrutiny Investigation that

was on-going, found that individuals often waited for at least five days to receive an assessment.

In response, assurance was given that the individuals who leave hospital and need assistance receive the service. There was no evidence that individuals waited for an enablement service and assurance was given that officers worked closely with hospital staff including community hospitals.

(ii) A request was made for an explanation of the criteria noted that referred to the number of individuals:

- who leave the service without the scheme having to continue
- who leave with a reduction in the service they require
- who leave without having completed the scheme

(iii) In terms of completing the scheme, it was noted that every case was dependent on the complexities of the case. If an individual only required a low level of support, then home carers could share this information with their supervisors and the service would end. However, in complex cases it would be social workers who would be part of the discussions.

(iv) In response to a query regarding the success of the scheme, one specific area was seen in Arfon where there were very good monitoring arrangements and if this system could be implemented across the County then the service would strengthen in every area.

(v) It was noted that the numbers were fairly consistent in terms of those who come to the attention of the service. There had been an increase in the first two years, however, by now approximately 350 used the scheme annually.

(vi) In terms of the concern regarding the size of over expenditure and the fact that it had taken four years to come to the conclusion that the service was expensive, it was explained that the report before them referred to over expenditure on the budget that was more than the enablement budget and the Council faced a challenge due to the increase in the elderly population and the complexities of need of residents in our communities. Up to £1m savings had been identified in a period of four years, however, side by side with this it was necessary to continue to serve older people who require care packages to ensure that they could continue to live in their own homes. It was further noted that a separate report would be presented to the Audit Committee who would consider the over expenditure generally.

(vii) That there were inconsistencies in the contents of the report and the lack of clear information in terms of the savings and performance measures. In response, it was explained that there was a huge emphasis on transforming the service and identifying savings for transformation. It was recognised that the report did not address what enablement meant to individuals and it was trusted that this could be done to ensure that the service was used in a timely manner and to do the best for Gwynedd residents.

(viii) It was suggested that the impact of success should be measured as a result of the quality of provision and the care to the user and what impact it would have generally in the future.

(ix) The importance of receiving feedback from doctors and community nurses prior to the withdrawal of such schemes.

(x) The workforce should not have to be reminded of the scheme's purpose as every worker should be aware and thoroughly understand the requirements of the provision.

(xi) A request was made for a specific reference to the work of John Bolton, an expert in the field of care of older persons.

Resolved: As a consequence of all the concerns highlighted above, it was requested that the Scrutiny Investigation 'From Hospital to Home' arranges a meeting with the Corporate Director and the Adult Services' Manager for a further discussion and to report back to the Services Scrutiny Committee on their findings in due course.

5. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS 2015/16 – 2016/17 (SOUTH GWYNEDD DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE AND BANGOR WOMEN'S AID)

A report was presented by the Cabinet Member outlining additional information in accordance with the request of the Cabinet on 16 December 2014, in order to ensure clarity regarding the impact of the decision to cancel the financial contribution to the Bangor Women's Aid and South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Service.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People explained that they had to look at efficiency savings in every field and this included reviewing the finance provided to external partners. It was stressed that it was not an easy decision, however, having considered other efficiency savings it was considered that there would be less impact to the service by de-commissioning service agreements with the above two organisations. In accordance with the request of the Cabinet and the Services Scrutiny Committee, more information had been received from both organisations and reference was made to the Appendices attached to the report drawing specific attention to the number of cases South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Service had responded to. It was explained that the figures had been verified and it appeared that 20 cases (and not 65) had been registered and 3 / 4 cases had received direct support from the children's worker employed via the agreement funding. It was stressed that Social Services continued to address the statutory requirements for children and young people if the services of both organisations ended.

The following points were outlined by individual Members:

- The Council could not offer the service presented by the above organisations such as offering refuge to children and families and cancelling this service would have a detrimental impact on children and young people.
- Whilst accepting that Social Services did sterling work, third sector organisations had grown for requirements that could not be satisfied via a statutory body and this had to be considered in detail prior to making any decision regarding cuts in their agreements.
- It was disappointing that representatives from the organisations had not received an invitation to attend the meeting in order that they could respond to questions and oversights regarding the details of the South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Service's response to the number of children they support who are on the Child Protection Register.
- A discussion with the organisations would allow the Members to understand the actual impact of the cuts on the ramifications of core sources.

(ch) The following responses were given to the above:

- Whilst accepting that Women's Aid Bangor could offer a refuge, it was explained that the children's worker did not respond to emergency calls from families and that it was the Police and Social Services who dealt with these. It was further noted that the provision of refuges was funded from different sources and the funding offered under the agreement went to support one and a half post for a children's worker in South Gwynedd and one in Bangor.
- That the Council's statutory responsibility would continue in terms of risk assessment and supporting domestic abuse children and would be implemented via multi-agency arrangements.
- That the organisations had attended the previous meeting of this Scrutiny Committee and no decision had been made in the preparatory meeting that met on 13 January 2015, to invite them further.

(d) There was a consensus of opinion amongst the Members of the Scrutiny Committee that implementing the above as efficiency savings would have an impact on the service and it should be transferred to the cuts system in order to allow more time for both organisations to monitor the side-effects of the savings on them. Considering the saving of 15% of the annual income of Women's Aid and 6% of the annual income of South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Service, this could be vital for both organisations to attract an additional 85% and 94% from other sources. It was known that both organisations benefited children and families and it was anticipated that if the agreements were removed then more responsibility would fall on Social Services and despite the savings, in the end it would cost more to the Council.

Resolved: (a) To request that the Cabinet Member for Children and Families conveys to the Cabinet:

(i) the Services Scrutiny Committee's objection to the removal of the agreements with the above two organisations as efficiency savings and its wish to safeguard the funding

(ii) the wish of the Services Scrutiny Committee to refer the matter to the Council's cuts system.

(b) To request that the relevant officer requests that South Gwynedd Domestic Abuse Services and Bangor Women's Aid keep a detailed record over the year of operating without core funding.

6. PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SCC/025 – STATUTORY VISITS TO LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

(a) The report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was presented outlining information regarding the current performance of the Children's and Family Support Services in respect of the national performance indicator and concern was expressed regarding performance.

(b) The Head of Children's Services and Family Support explained that the Department had given detailed attention to the indicator and the reasons why it was low. Following detailed work, they had come to the conclusion that the low performance related to recording and the fact that every visit was not registered on the statutory form on the RAISE system. It was ensured that every employee was aware of this and it could be seen that the cumulative figure at the end of the third quarter was 83% and higher than the Welsh performance average, the 'family' performance average of authorities and

the targets of the service itself. It was further noted that there was a justification of the reasons why the indicator was low. The Cabinet Member added that although the figure was higher than the average, she was of the view that they had to keep an eagle eye on this together with the procedures that are in place.

(c) The following points were highlighted by individual Members:

- They were proud of this service and they appreciated the information before them.
- In light of the cuts and the loss of jobs, it was asked how was staff morale and were there sufficient workers to achieve the work. In response, it was explained that in comparison with other Welsh authorities, Gwynedd did not have waiting lists and it was confirmed that every looked after child had a registered social worker. It was further noted that staff were coping and currently managed the demand very well although there had been an increase in the number of children in need that had been referred.
- In response to a comment that appeared recently in the press, it was explained that the figures were rather misleading and social workers dealt with approximately 24 cases and this was the average workload.
- Whilst welcoming the fact that there was a solution, there was also concern that the problem had occurred in the first place. In response, it was explained that a combination of matters had contributed towards the slippage that meant that this had to put in order and a clear instruction given to employees.

Resolved: To accept the report.

7. ESTYN MONITORING VISIT

Mr Clive Phillips, Assistant Director and Mr Iwan Roberts, HM Inspector, ESTYN were welcomed to the meeting to outline their recommendations following their monitoring visits after their inspection of the education services in March 2013. Members were reminded of the views of ESTYN regarding the quality at that time, namely that the current performance of the education service was 'adequate' together with the view of 'adequate' regarding the prospects for improvement. As the opinion at the time was 'adequate', this meant that the authority had gone into post-inspection with ESTYN monitoring the authority's progress. At the end of the recent third visit, the senior officers, elected members received a report and a formal letter was published stating that ESTYN were of the view that the service had made sufficient progress in relation to the six recommendations as a result of the March 2013 inspection, that removed the authority from any further follow-up activity.

The terms used when monitoring against the recommendations were outlined, namely that the authority had:

- made no progress
- made partial progress
- responded to an extensive degree
- responded fully

(ch) Members were guided through the following recommendations and noted the views of Estyn on the progress made by the Council.

(i) Improve safeguarding by ensuring that the Council's procedures and policies are clearly understood by all LEA employees and are regularly updated and disseminated.

- (ii) Raise standards in KS4 by targeting departments that underperform in secondary schools or that perform poorly to be stronger – They had partly got to grips with this.
- (iii) Monitor and challenge every school and use all the available powers at the LEA's disposal to improve leadership and management at underperforming schools.
- (iv) Continue to develop and implement the authority's current strategies to improve attendance in secondary schools – they had got to grips with this to a large extent
- (v) Improve quality of self-evaluation, and how improvement plans and performance management procedures are implemented in the Education Department.
- (vi) Continue to set plans in motion to reduce the number of empty places – They had got to grips with this to a large extent.

(c) Members were given an opportunity to ask questions to the Inspectors and they responded as follows:

(i) In terms of which recommendation required more attention again, it was explained that that the authority had got to grips with three of these to a great extent and with another three partly which meant more attention should be given to these. Generally, it was trusted that the Scrutiny Committee would give priority to raising standards and in ESTYN's view this underpinned everything. The original inspection had drawn attention to one group of pupils namely Key Stage 4 (KS4) and one group of schools. In terms of the general picture, in 2012 four schools were in the lowest 25% across Wales, however, by 2013 they had raised their standards but again in 2014 another four schools were in the lower quartile. It was necessary to be careful and not to take the data presented to the Scrutiny Committee as general but to ensure that the data identified individual schools than underperform and understand why this occurred.

(ii) Regarding suggestions for the Scrutiny Committee's role to challenge the quality of KS4 education, it was noted that it was vital that officers provided clear information to members to be able to scrutinise effectively and incisively. There was significant variety across the Welsh authorities in how data was presented to elected members and there was a danger in some circumstances that general data would be presented that hides the underperformance of individual schools. One good practice that took place in other authorities in Wales was mentioned where the Heads and Chairs of Schools Governors of individual schools were invited to attend the Scrutiny Committees where they are challenged about performance.

(iii) That ESTYN had not inspected GwE but had undertaken a thematic inspection at the request of the Minister for Education and they would look further at the performance of GwE as well as the other three regions in due course.

(iv) The methodology for ESTYN inspections of schools would not be changed as a result of the cuts to school budgets.

(d) The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to thank ESTYN officers for their work and the open discussions they had during their visit and the authority would focus on the areas for improvement.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the ESTYN report and note the importance of giving detailed attention to the annual report on the performance of the Education Service that would be submitted before the Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

8. PRESENTATION BY THE HEAD OF EDUCATION

- (a) Mr Arwyn Thomas, the Head of Education, was welcomed to the meeting to give a presentation on his vision for the future of the education service following his appointment to the post at the start of the year.
- (b) Members were guided through slides of the Head of Education's vision namely that the children and young people of Gwynedd attain the highest standards in order to maintain the language, culture and the local economy, by expecting to see:
- The highest education and welfare standards;
 - Inspired leadership;
 - Excellent teaching;
 - Curriculum development skills and innovative/pioneering work routes;
 - Sharing excellence and holding each other accountable;
 - Multi-agency teams supporting vulnerable families in order to change the habits of generations;

The above could occur if expectations were set clearly via open, honest, fair and non-biased discussion and the workforce had to be developed via continuous professional development; be ready to change and get to grips with problems at all levels.

In terms of the scrutiny of schools, a minimum of expectations had to be set, namely:

- Good Leadership and Management;
- Good Teaching;
- Performance in the highest 50% at least, amongst similar schools and aim towards the highest 25%;
- No school from Gwynedd to be in the Estyn statutory categories.

Therefore in terms of services, it was expected that they would:

- work as one team;
- work effectively in order to achieve the corporate priorities;
- be accountable for the performance of all schools and the outcomes for children and young people.

The importance of working as one team was emphasised and that a minimum of expectations were in place in every school at any time by:

- ensuring that the standard over three years was comparative to similar schools
- being confident that the teaching and assessment was good
- ensuring the safety of children was key
- quality of leadership
- honest self-evaluation that plan for improvement in accordance with the policies

(b) During the ensuing discussion the following observations were highlighted:

- (i) In the context of less financial resources, the Head of Education noted that whilst accepting that resources were getting scarce, as a leader he would ensure the best results and ways of working would have to be changed by schools sharing good practice, not recreating the wheel and getting to grips with high standard leadership.
- (ii) That the £4.3m cuts to the schools budget would mean a change to the curriculum and consequently this would have an impact on the children's quality of education. In response, the Head of Education noted that the governors and senior

- management teams in schools would have to deal with the matter as every authority would have to cope with less funding.
- (iii) In response to a query regarding how it would be ensured that monitoring and challenging underperforming schools would be undertaken, it was explained that the role was to monitor where exactly every school in the County was against a minimum of expectations in order that every parent could be confident that there was good leadership and management in the schools.
- (iv) Disappointment was expressed that due to time restrictions it would not be possible to ask further questions to the Head of Education. In response, the Cabinet Member for Education noted that it was proposed that the Head of Education should present his vision to the Area Forums in due course. The Senior Manager for Corporate Commissioning added that there would also be an opportunity for further questioning when the education service's annual report would be submitted to this Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: To accept, note and thank the Head of Education for his presentation and to agree with the suggestion that he should give his presentation to the Area Forum meetings.

9. SCHOOL ORGANISATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The report of the Cabinet Member for Education was submitted to update the Scrutiny Committee on the school organisation programme stating what had been achieved thus far, namely the following investments:

- Investment valued at £18m had already been made to improve the learning environment
- 900 primary pupils had benefited from the investment
- Over £430,000 annual revenue savings had already been achieved
- £9.326m for Ysgol yr Hendre
- £990,000 to upgrade the schools of Pennal and Dyffryn Dulas
- £1.47m to upgrade Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn
- £5.42m for the new school at Craig y Deryn
- £1m to upgrade Ysgol O M Edwards, Llanuwchllyn

together with the following work that was being undertaken:

- Establishment of Ysgol Bro Llifon at Groeslon
- Reorganisation in the Gader Catchment Area, Dolgellau
- Completion of reorganisation process in the Berwyn Catchment Area, Bala
- Establishment of Meirion-Dwyfor Special School at Penrhyndeudraeth – with this work to commence on 13 February 2015
- Construction of new building for Ysgol Glancegin, Maesgeirchen, Bangor

In terms of education standards, it was noted that ESTYN had not inspected the new schools, however, a combination of factors meant that the circumstances were much more favourable to improve standards than they had been in the past.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the contents of the report and they highlighted the following points:

- (a) Whilst accepting that there were positive aspects in the report, concern was noted that there was no reference to the education standards of the new establishments

