

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 26 July 2022

Present:- Councillors Pitchley (Chair), Cooksey (Vice-chair), Atkin, Aveyard, Bacon, Bennett-Sylvester, Z. Collingham, Griffin, Hughes, Jones, McNeely and Thompson.

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Barley, Elliott, Haleem and Mills.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair confirmed there was no reason to exclude members of press or public from observing any items on the agenda.

14. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been submitted.

15. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

16. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE

The chair confirmed that the next meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel was scheduled to be held on 13 September, commencing at 4.30 pm.

17. HEADLINE REPORT FOR QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2021/22 4TH QUARTER ROTHERHAM SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD

Consideration was given to an update in respect of Adult Safeguarding Performance Data corresponding to Quarter 4 of 2021/2022. The presentation described the foundational principles of safeguarding which categorise performance measures and associated data. These are proportionality of trends in safeguarding demand, prevention thresholds, partnership with police, accountability for quality of health and care provision, protection through timely completion of inquiries and safeguarding adult reviews, and empowerment through collection of views and wishes and meeting personal outcomes. Data was shared associated with each principle. Followed by to anonymised customer stories exemplifying safeguarding activity and involvement bringing about positive results.

In discussion, Members noted that information coming through to the service may meet complex case thresholds, but not meet the threshold for safeguarding. More information was requested around what to do if there were complex but not safeguarding level concerns raised. The response from officers noted that if there was not a threshold for safeguarding met, there may be an appropriate alternative action. The service was working with partners and with police to ensure they were aware of the appropriate way of dealing with specific alerts. The forthcoming 7-minute informational videos were helping inform partners of what the thresholds are. Members requested that these videos be circulated upon availability.

How are we keeping people from posing as carers, how are we validating their roles? The response from officers noted that it is crucial to protect against financial abuse, which is the greatest one. Wider work is ongoing and warranted given the rising instances of abuse. We do receive a number of alerts from banks which are vigilant to prevent fraud, and we are aware that this is an area of growing need.

It was noted that RDASH have approximately 50% progressed, which suggests they are getting it right. Members requested more information around how effective signposting be improved among other partners in line with the RDASH progression rates. The response from officers noted that the service Manager meets regularly with police officers regarding the use of the app. The Q4 report showed the rates coming in from Police had decreased. It was noted that part of the work of the Adults Safeguarding Board is to undertake dip sampling in the auditing of safeguarding referral data.

Members requested more information in respect of cases that did not go on to full review. The response from officers noted that if a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) were found not to be the best way forward, for example, there might be a serious case review or a thematic learning review. It was noted that lessons will always be learned. Members noted that it would be helpful to receive information in respect of the majority to ensure that people who are in a dire situation are given timely and appropriate help. Members requested to have a demonstration of timelines and pathways for interventions of various kinds.

Members requested to know more about the cause of significant increase in the number of reports. The response from officer noted that an increase in self-neglect had been observed, likely as a result of the isolating effects of COVID-19. A growing theme was noted that people were not reaching out for services.

Members requested further assurances that the service is learning from the information received. The response from officers described a consistent first-contact team since October 2019. A social work team of 5 or 6 social workers handled the bulk of referrals coming in. The team engaged with the person themselves who had been referred because they operated by the principle of “no decision about me without me.” They

used their professional expertise and curiosity to investigate when the service received a referral, whether by phone call or someone coming in. Fact finding checks then pulled through available information. Three stage criteria needed to be met in terms of statutory safeguarding responsibilities. The information around the case was then checked out with the relevant advocate to receive their views around next steps, keeping the person in the centre all the way through the process. The team spoke to the advocate around whether other processes could support the person in their unique situation.

Members requested more details as to the reason progression rates were not tracking upwards as referrals track upwards. The service expressed concern about the progression rate of 14% which is low. The service were working on addressing the low progression rate. It was noted that public awareness about safeguarding had grown, resulting in more reports coming in, but with a low uptake rate which was being looked into.

Members requested more information around action being taken to ensure the information is accurate and of high quality. The response from officers noted that qualified assessors performed the assessments. Further, all teams have had briefing sessions around casework as part of the ongoing quality assurance framework in place. The service picked up actions needed to ensure a learning loop is maintained. Audits in terms of safeguarding adults were also done for assurance. Members emphasised the importance of asking questions and keeping curiosity going, whilst working closely with Policy, Performance and Intelligence to generate a set of working data for reference. It was noted that a dashboard of KPIs would be useful, including a measure indicating the effectiveness of the app.

Further information was requested in respect of benchmarking across the nation. The response from officers noted that Rotherham comes in mid-table nationally and within South Yorkshire.

Members requested more information around the method for ensuring that the right decisions were made in respect of a patient. The response from officers noted the importance and usefulness of safeguarding auditing for assurance and for understanding if a journey was right for a patient. It was observed that, if a section 42 inquiry were needed in terms of risk to the person, the person may have capacity and may not be interested in further section 42 inquiries being taken. The service monitored ongoing risks being exposed to and considered alternative measures which could be taken.

Members noted that the questions in the app may not mirror safeguarding criteria and requested assurances that the design of the app will be sorted out with the police. The response from officers noted that this was a work in progress, with more work on the app still needed. Some improvement had been shown, but there was still room for more improvement.

Resolved:-

1. That the report and presentation be noted.
2. That the forthcoming seven-minute briefings be shared with Members when available.
3. That a dashboard of performance on a page be provided to members on a regular basis.
4. That the next quarterly report include wider context including benchmarking, timelines and breakdowns of referrals by pathway and type of action taken where information may not meet the threshold for safeguarding.
5. That the refinement of the safeguarding app be prioritised or delivery.

18. CYPs PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/2022 OUT-TURN

Consideration was given to a performance report introduced by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and presented by CYPs officers. The report included information in respect of first-time entrants, numbers in social care, placement stability, repeat numbers reducing, number of people on child protection plans, timely interventions, completion of dental assessments, early education placements, Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) timely completion, work ongoing to refine reporting, and key benchmark and operational demand and activity.

The presentation provided context and overview of governance, which included a description of Quarterly Assurance Day, when the service reviews the cases of individual children to examine how the cases have been managed. Practice learning days are also part of the learning process. The service generated 319 performance measures in total. Some are benchmarked, whilst some internal measures are not publishable data so cannot be benchmarked. Current work to strengthen internal score card and inclusion data will soon be included as well. Early Help and Family Engagement highlights were shared also, highlighting compliance against target timescales. Not in Education And Training (NEAT) areas for continued development were also identified, in particular, registration rates at children's centres of children living in the most deprived areas of the Borough. Published Youth Justice Board Data also showed a reducing trend of first-time entrants. Children's social care highlights were also shared, including reduction of re-referrals and static cohort receiving support for CSE/CCE, timeliness of assessments, and reduction of LAC numbers overall. Education highlights including SEND inclusion were presented. Next steps were also described, for example, the intention to group benchmarked performance measures where possible for more reader-friendly presentation of data.

In discussion, Members requested to know more about whether registration rates could be skewed by postal codes. Members requested clarification as to whether two-year-olds with an early education placement also had their attendance verified? The response from officers noted that eligibility rules meant that children residing in Rotherham were eligible to register with Rotherham children's centres. Where a child lives very close to the border and there are extra places, a child may be allowed to enrol at a well-run centre. Attendance data was not centrally kept, but Early Years services liaised with providers and monitored young people with special needs and disabilities. There was regular conversation around the placement of a child.

Members also expressed interest in learning more about the potential for dentists to go into schools or for other links with education to be maximised to aid formation of healthy prevention habits. The response from officers noted that the designated nurses are tenacious about ensuring that looked after children receive their dental checks. A challenge was that these are due on a revolving basis. When they were completed, they would need to be arranged again in six months' time.

Members noted areas in the data where percentages were given where tallies would be useful along with trajectory and target information. The response from officers noted that the scorecard identifies the direction of travel and target direction. It was noted that performance data was useful to inform scrutiny work programmes. Members noted appreciation for the provision of context with the data which focussed on quality rather than exclusively on quantity and turnover.

Members requested assurances that the service are working with schools to ensure that elective home education is undertaken when appropriate and not as an avenue for dealing with responsibility to particular students. It was understood that conversations were ongoing on this topic. It was observed that for some children, school is not the most important priority due to for example life threatening conditions. The service ensures support is in place for when a parent is feeling vulnerable and wishing to review the educational options for their child.

Clarification was requested and provided in relation to Super Output Areas. These SOAs were for reporting purposes and reassurance point of views. The north, south, east and west localities were not fixed. If some residents had further distances to travel, people should register with their local one. This was down to parental choice. There was a universal core offer, but the offer may take place on different days of the week. Families can be re-registered at the nearest accessible centre. It was requested that, if Members became aware of specific examples where families were struggling, they could please contact the service to work this through. It was acknowledged that awareness of the offer within the community could be greater.

Members noted the effectiveness of the scorecard and dashboard and requested assurances around the dip in referrals during school holidays. The response from officers identified that easter holidays always create a slow period, because schools are referrers. Sometimes work within the community can create surges as well. Officers also looked at the data across the year to see overall trajectory and fluctuations over the long term. Seasonal factors could be identified in future reports with a hypothesis with measures in place to address the identified factors. The Cabinet Member emphasised that nothing stops in social care for school holidays. It was clarified that when the students return to school, there can be a spike in referrals.

Clarification was requested around the schedule for quarterly data validation. The response from officers noted the activity of the Business Intelligence team and provided a summary of the assurance plans and regular monitoring and processing of data. Currently there were eight areas of transformation that each comprised key performance measures. It was noted that any measures generated by a peer review or formal inspection were added. Assistant Directors accounted for all actions performed against these objectives. The Quarter 1 performance report goes to the August assurance day. Within five working days of the assurance day, the quarterly report was issued.

Members requested further assurances in respect of the gap between health assessments and dental assessments. Initial health assessments were done in hospital, and reviews could be in the child's home. The service encouraged teenagers to visit the leaving care home, where leaving care nurses were there for those young people who were reluctant to engage with the health assessment. The designated specialist is available for the children; however, dental care cannot come to them. Therefore, building confidence to help increase young people's willingness to engage with the dental checks was important. Dental packs for local schools had been funded, with wider implementation possible.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Chair and Vice Chair of Health Select Commission and the Director of Public Health and representatives of NHS England be consulted about exploring the potential expansion of Public Health links with early education whereby development of healthy preventative habits related to dental hygiene can be promoted among children who attend Rotherham schools.
3. That a briefing be received in respect of latest trends in elective home education with a view to understanding the implications of COVID-19 on students and on vulnerable young people.

4. That a deep dive be undertaken to consider positive elements of flexible learning delivery that benefit many learners with a view to ensuring that positive progress is retained where possible.
5. Toward increased awareness of Children's Centres, that the local offer be clarified and publicised both within the community and to Members for the purpose of sharing this information widely within wards.
6. That consideration be given to including a session on Business Intelligence Dashboard performance data in the forward plan for Member Development.

19. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to an outline work programme for 2022/23 scrutiny activity.

Resolved:-

1. That the Work Programme for 2022/23 be approved.

20. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES

There was no update to report on sub and project group activity.

21. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

22. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

1. The next scheduled meeting of Improving Lives Select Commission would be held on 6 September 2022, commencing at 10am in Rotherham Town Hall.