

## **Scrutiny Health & Social Care Sub-Committee**

Meeting held on Tuesday, 29 June 2021 at 6.30 pm

This meeting was held remotely and a recording can be viewed on the Council's website

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Sean Fitzsimons (Chair), Richard Chatterjee (Vice-Chair), Alison Butler, Steve Hollands, Toni Letts and Andrew Pelling

Gordon Kay (Healthwatch Croydon co-optee)

**Also Present:** Councillor Janet Campbell

### **PART A**

#### **19/21 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 January and 8 March 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **20/21 Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interest made at the meeting.

#### **21/21 Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **22/21 Overview of the 2021-22 Adult Social Care Financial Performance**

The Sub-Committee considered a report and an accompanying presentation providing an overview of the financial performance of Adult Social Care. The Sub-Committee was asked to review the information provided to reassure itself that the budget was being effectively managed.

During the introductory presentation for this item, delivered by the Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care, Councillor Janet Campbell, and assorted Council officers, the following points were noted.

- The spend for Adult Social Care was larger than any other Council service, equating to 31% of the total Council budget.
- Although the service experienced many of the same pressures as other local authorities delivering social care across the country, it was recognised that the cost base was too high locally. As such all areas of the Adult Social Care budget were being reviewed to bring the service within the available resources, which would mean changing how services

were delivered.

- The aim was to reduce the Council activity and expenditure on adult social care to the London average or below by March 2024.
- Taking into account £28.9m of growth and £10.7m savings, the net budget for 2021-22 was £114.342m.
- A detailed savings programme had been developed to ensure the savings of £10.7m would be delivered. Although it was early in the year, progress to date had been good, with transformational funding used to provide capacity adding pace to the programme. A robust tracking system had been introduced to ensure that progress on the savings programme could be closely monitored and areas of concern identified at an early stage.
- The priority area for savings was reviewing care packages to identify spend reduction. There had also been an options appraisal of provider services which had been approved by the Cabinet and was in the process of being implemented. There were other reviews, such as the Living Independently for Everyone (LIFE) service and the hospital discharge process that were likely to lead to further savings.
- The total package of care savings equated to 7.5% of the budget and advice from the LGA had indicated that although this was achievable, particularly the first 5%, to achieve the full 7.5% would be a challenge.

Following the introduction the Sub-Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions about the information provided. The first question concerned the level of spend on care packages with it confirmed that the Council's spend was the second highest in London for 18-25 year olds and higher than the national average for older adults.

As it had been confirmed that to date 120 care packages had been reviewed, it was questioned how many reviews were still to be completed. It was advised that 560 care packages had been targeted for review, which would include looking at where individuals are placed and the cost of living. It was confirmed that 400 people were currently in supported living arrangements and were not with a registered provider. Work was underway to identify best practice in this area. It was also confirmed that possible alternative solutions delivered with the voluntary sector were being explored.

In response to a request for reassurance that budget holders had a firm grasp of their budgets, it was advised that service and team managers met with their respective accountants on a monthly basis to review their budget and forecasting for the remainder of the year. This approach helped to ensure that there was increased understanding and responsibility for budgets than there may have been in previous years.

It was questioned whether the care plan reviews carried out to date were delivering the expected savings. In response it was advised that it was essential to closely monitor the funds both coming into and going out of the

service. Adult Social Care was not a static service and managing the budget required service demand to be managed.

There was concern about how the drive to deliver savings would impact upon the care packages provided, with it questioned whether staff would feel comfortable requesting an increase in package needs, should these be identified. It was highlighted that the Council had a duty of care to its service users and staff were empowered to advocate on their behalf.

It was noted that there was a £1.6m overspend in the Transitions service, with it questioned how this deficit would be re-cooped. It was advised that the previous budget for Transitions had been £4m, but due to an over spend of approximately £1.5m in the previous year growth had been added to the budget, increasing it to £5m. Although there was an over spend, the team was confident that this would be dramatically reduced during the year.

The Cabinet Member was asked how she assured herself that the budget was being delivered and that the Council continued to meet the needs of vulnerable people. The Cabinet Member advised that she met with the team on a monthly basis to review progress made with delivering the budget. This was a multi-disciplinary meeting, which allowed the Cabinet Member to gain an understanding of the challenges across the service. The Cabinet Member also met regularly with Council Safeguarding Leads to discuss any issues. There was also a performance framework of indicators that was reviewed by the Cabinet Member on a regular basis.

It was highlighted that there had been a recent judgement against Norfolk County Council's charging policy for non-residential services, which had been found to be discriminatory. As such it was questioned whether this decision would have any implications for Croydon. It was advised that a letter had been sent to all councils to advise them of the judgement, which made clear what the implications were. There had been a challenge submitted on the outcome, which was being reviewed.

It was questioned whether there was scope for a service user to be involved with the recruitment of the new Director of Adult Social Services. The Cabinet Member indicated that she was supportive of this request and would investigate whether it would be possible with officers outside of the meeting.

Concern was raised about the vaccination rates for care home staff, with further information requested on the work to increase take-up. It was advised that it was an ongoing process to encourage take up of the vaccine amongst care home staff. There had been challenges within specific homes, but there had also been successes leading to full vaccination at certain homes after initial reluctance. It was highlighted that this issue was not unique to Croydon, with similar rates across London. It was confirmed that mandatory vaccinations for care home staff had not yet been introduced and there was concern about the practicalities of this being enforced.

## **Conclusions**

At the end of its consideration of this item the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee reached the following conclusions:-

1. Overall, the Sub-Committee was reasonably reassured by the progress made with delivering the Adult Social Care budget for 2021-22, but agreed that continued monitoring would be needed throughout the year to ensure this remained the case.
2. Given the highlighted overspend within the Transitions Service budget, it was agreed that a deeper dive on this service would be scheduled for the Sub-Committee's next meeting to seek reassurance that the over spend was being managed down.
3. There remained concern about the financial systems used within the Adult Social Care service and whether these were allowing the previous culture of overspending within the service to be effectively challenged. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee would continue to monitor progress in this area throughout the year

#### **23/21 Healthwatch Croydon Update**

The Sub-Committee considered an update presented by the Manager of Healthwatch Croydon, Gordon Kay, on two reports they had recently completed. This update was provided for the information of the Sub-Committee and to allow consideration of any issues that may be in need of further scrutiny.

The first report concerned the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of residents. There had been 115 individual responses from the public received in the development of this report and these suggested that mental health issues had increased during the pandemic including concerns around isolation. It was found that those who had family around them did better during the lockdown than those who lived on their own.

The second report looked at the performance of Croydon's care homes under Covid-19. This report had been informed by surveys completed by residents, their family and staff. It was highlighted that there may have been less incentive for underperforming care homes to complete the survey, which needed to be considered when reviewing the outcomes in the report. As a result of the report an action plan had been created with the Council to address the issues raised.

At the conclusion of this item, the Chair thanked Mr Kay and the Healthwatch team for the work they carry out on behalf of the residents of Croydon.

#### **24/21 Health & Social Care Sub-Committee Work Programme 2021-22**

The Sub-Committee considered updates from health and care partners on their priorities for the year ahead. The purpose of this item was for the Sub-Committee to use the information provided to help prioritise its own work programme.

Representatives from the South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) advised that they were working towards completing a new strategy, with the engagement process due to be launched in September 2021. The ambitious aim for the strategy was to make SLaM the best mental health care trust by 2026, which was acknowledged would be challenging. Themes covered by the strategy included working with partners in preventions to avoid hospital admissions, tackling public health issues, improving outcomes for patients, and ensuring SLaM was a sustainable organisation.

Other priorities for SLaM included building greater resilience within the organisation through focusing resources and upskilling staff. A key priority was to improve the interconnection with primary care and strengthen the relationships within Croydon University Hospital through the Clinical Assessment Unit.

Prior to the meeting Croydon Health Service NHS Trust circulated a summary of their strategic outcomes and two year objectives. These included improving health care provision and reducing health inequalities, improving how the Trust monitored and controlled data to improve healthcare, maximising the uptake of vaccinations and improving services during the recovery from the pandemic. Other priorities included a focus on supporting staff, delivering continued financial sustainability and developing leadership.

At the conclusion of the item, the Sub-Committee agreed that the priorities outlined by the health partners were in line with its own. As a next step, it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would continue to work outside of the meeting to schedule the work programme, which would be presented to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee for approval.

25/21 **Feedback on the Croydon Health Service NHS Trust's Quality Account 2021**

The Chair advised the meeting that the Sub-Committee had meet informally on 11 June to review the Quality Accounts for the Croydon Health Service NHS Trust. The meeting had been held informally to ensure the comments of the Sub-Committee could be taken into account within the timescales for publication.

A summary of the comments submitted by the Sub-Committee was included in the report published with the agenda for the meeting. The Chief Executive for Croydon Health Service NHS Trust, Matthew Kershaw, thanked the Sub-Committee for the time they had taken to review the Quality Accounts and confirmed that the comments submitted had been incorporated in the final version.

26/21 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This motion was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.19 pm

**Signed:**

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**Date:**

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