

SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Wednesday 8 November 2017 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr H Prior-Sankey (Chair), Cllr A Govier, Cllr P Burridge-Clayton, Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr James Hunt (substitute), Cllr J Williams, Cllr B Revans, and Cllr R Williams (Vice-Chair)

Other Members: Cllr C Aparicio Paul, Cllr J Clarke, Cllr S Coles, Cllr H Davies, Cllr D Hall, Cllr D Huxtable, Cllr T Munt, Cllr G Noel, Cllr C Lawrence, Cllr J Lock

Apologies for absence: Cllr M Caswell, Cllr M Keating

45 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

There were no declarations of interest.

46 **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 11 October 2017** - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting were accepted as accurate and were signed by the Chair.

47 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

There were 22 requests from members of the public to speak about agenda item 5 which was an Update on the Learning Disability Service Contract.

Members listened to the views and questions from the following people:

- a) Angela Hayward, who asked about personal budgets and the cost of new offices.
- b) Gwyneth Philip, who raised concerns about unhappy customers, the loss of experienced staff, the possible closure of Six Acres, staff wages, and an invoice error.
- c) Mrs Dowling was concerned on behalf of a customer she supported because the service was being run predominantly with agency staff; there was significant staff turnover and lack of continuity which had directly affected her client.
- d) Mike Bruce, who worked as carer, said there were significant staff shortages which had resulted in lack of cover for shifts and activities having to be cancelled. He questioned the new service provider Discovery's claims that flaws in the service were pre-existing. He highlighted that the Council had promised outsourcing the service would bring continuity of care and a sustainable high quality service.
- e) Sarah Mainwaring, a staff member, said the service was understaffed, worked long hours; there was a high number of agency staff, and a lack of quality care. She further stressed uncertainty about jobs, staff feeling devalued and unsettled about their future, staff turnover, and changes to staff's terms and conditions.

- f) Ama Bolton was concerned about plans to downgrade experienced staff, a reliance on agency staff, and a lack of respect for staff. She also asked about future plans for the service.
- g) Suzanne Matthews was also concerned about staff turnover, agency staff and the impact this had on providing a quality service and providing a safe environment for both customer and staff.
- h) Sonia Hastie highlighted staff concerns of feeling not valued and that they had rejected Discovery's proposals for changes to their terms and conditions.
- i) Sean Cox said there had been a general lack of effort throughout the process to engage with customers, family members or staff with any honesty or transparency. He asked if a meaningful and sensible dialogue with customers, families and staff could have provided an easier and more effective route to a high quality and financially sustainable service. He was also concerned about the projected costs for the first year.
- j) Jon Robinson spoke about the increase in 'never events' and said this was due to the shortage of staff particularly at weekends. He was concerned that a lot of staff hired had little if any experience of people with learning disabilities.
- k) David Rankine informed the meeting about changes in the service to customers due to lack of staff and changes in personnel. There was hardly any one-to-one time and many customers hardly left the unit where they were looked after all week for trips or excursions. Staff were working without breaks, staff sickness had increased, and morale was low.
- l) Steven Maws, a customer, had concerns that he had not be listened to in the changeover to the new provider, had no interaction with the new care providers since they had taken over, and worried about the quality of service and consistency of staff.
- m) Jo White highlighted the lack of reporting on key performance indicators by Discovery and evidence to show the transformation programme had succeeded. She was concerned about the temporary suspension of any new business.
- n) Cheryl Freeman spoke about the effects of changes in staff and a lack of staff on her stepson who was a customer. She had grave concerns for her stepson's wellbeing and the future of the learning disability service.
- o) Ewa Marcinkowska said there was a massive challenge to deliver care hours to the customers. Experienced staff had time taken up with mentoring new agency workers, who had to learn and read a lot of material. This had resulted in a lot of hours not being used to support customers. Customers were uncomfortable with new people and would not go out with them.
- p) Paul Kitto felt that the service was far away from providing a high quality than ever before and asked for Discovery to provide evidenced based information to the scrutiny committee. He asked for a survey of customers and staff to be carried out to enable an holistic view of the current situation.
- q) Eleanor Amos, also raised concerns about the changes to working conditions for staff, salaries the effect on morale, and staff turnover. Customers like consistent routines and familiar faces and she feared the proposals would result in a reduction of quality of care.

- r) Nigel Behan, UNITE representative, asked questions about evidence of performance of Discovery, the Council's satisfaction, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group assessment of Discovery's performance, delivery projections, risk registers, and number of questions around key performance indicators.
- s) John Clarke, County Councillor, was concerned about the health and welfare of customers with continued staffing changes and also the issue of quality monitoring.
- t) Nick Batho, volunteer for the Learning Disability Service in Minehead, said that outcomes needed to be measured but the current information provided was focused on input data. Staff conditions were not resolved and there appeared to be a lack of commitment to the contract from the Council. He also asked for a survey to be taken, an advisory panel to be set up, and independent review of the service to be taken at the end of the first year of the contract.

Members were also provided with a letter from a Discovery staff employee who listed a range of issues around staffing hours, staff turnover, agency staff with no experience or knowledge, checks not being done properly, customers unable to enjoy usual activities in the community due to lack of staff or those with experience. Admin and finance tasks were not being completed correctly and staff felt unsupported and unable to raise any concerns.

48 **Update on the Learning Disability Service Contract - Agenda Item 5**

Director of Adult Social Care Stephen Chandler assured all those who raised questions that they would receive written responses. He reminded the meeting of the background to this. He highlighted the requirements were transformation and sustainability and that changes in the first year were part of the plan. If no changes were made to staff terms and conditions the service would cease to exist as it would not be affordable. The situation was not unique in Somerset and was happening all over the country. He encouraged everybody to work through this difficult period.

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Cllr David Huxtable said that he was part of the Cabinet that took the decision about the learning disability contract. The Council were determined to do their best for people in care.

A presentation was given by Discovery's Managing Director Luke Joy-Smith. He said that the company recognised that the staff had the customers' best interests at heart and that it was a listening organisation. He was happy to fast-track a survey with customers, family and friends. There was need to resolve the limbo and uncertainty.

Further discussion on this included:

- The aim was to get to an outstanding service
- Important to get the right foundations and settle colleagues anxieties
- Current mismatch between core hours, amount of staff and temporary staff
- Management of the contract had to be good in order to deliver a good service
- Confusion around the governance structure

- Customers and family voices needed to be heard
- The junior Cabinet member for Adult Social care had a seat on one of Discovery's boards and had committed to attend these
- It would be useful to have a forward plan available to look at for the next 6 months to give the committee some assurance. A transformation plan was available and it was agreed this could be circulated to the committee.
- Staff needed support and training but flexibility was important and the aim was to get full compliance for mandatory training by December
- It was unhelpful to blame the Council for the current poor service
- Good quality of care came from good staff morale and continuity
- This was about vulnerable people and staff that supported them and they could not wait another 5 years for a quality service.
- Concerns about the significant loss of staff and experience.
- The next 6 months were incredibly important and members did not want to see a deterioration in the service
- The data provided did not give any indication of what was working well or safely
- Discovery were reminded of the importance of experienced staff
- Assurance was sought on the safety of customers

The Chair summed up the discussion and noted that committee members were not content with the information they had received.

It was agreed that a monthly report showing Key Performance Indicators for the contract should be brought to the next four scrutiny meetings.

The Committee also agreed:

- it was not satisfied with the report and information provided.
- to request that a survey with customers, families and staff of the service be conducted as soon as possible
- to establish a Task and Finish group to look at the contract performance in more detail
- to refer the contract matter to the Audit Committee for its consideration.

There was a short break in the meeting here at 11.35am.

49 **Update on the Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan- Agenda Item 6**

The meeting resumed at 11.45am.

Councillor James Hunt declared an interest as an employee and governor of Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Rod Williams also declared an interest as a governor of the Trust.

Chief Executive Pat Flaherty introduced the report regarding the Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan. This has been developed jointly by the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Somerset County Council, Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Yeovil District Hospital NHS FT and Taunton and Somerset NHS FT. This set out a shared vision for reforming

health and social care to address the challenges of the rising needs of our population, changing demographics, and increasingly stretched resources.

The 5 year forward view was intended to describe the key priorities and challenges. These included workforce challenges, demographic changes including an ageing population. The current system was challenged and stressed and there was an uncertainty around what had served in the past that could fall over in the future.

Further discussion on this included:

- There had been a change of leadership at the NHS trusts.
- The focus was on prevention to develop a sustainable system, driving financial improvement, and creating an accountable care system
- A full review of acute services in Somerset was about to be commissioned to find out whether it was fit for purpose
- There was currently a £30m debilitating gap for NHS in Somerset and there was no extra money coming from government.
- Transformation was difficult without the funding for it and currently there was an impasse
- Concerns that there had been little progress with this and fears that the plan would disappear
- Whether the district councils were involved in discussions about this.
- It was hoped that the Council would keep sighted on what was happening
- Consultation about the new plan was due in the spring and this would be brought back to the committee in the future.

The Committee noted the report and asked for an update when there was further information to report.

50 **Adult Social Care Performance Report - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee agreed to defer this report as there was insufficient time to examine this matter.

51 **Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee Work Programme- Agenda Item 8**

The Committee agreed to update the work programme for the next meeting.

52 **Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9**

There were no other items of business.

(The meeting ended at 1.25 pm)

CHAIR