

Council – 7 November 2022

Portfolio Brief – Adult Social Care Councillor Keir Pedley

1. Directorate/Walsall Together response to COVID

The Directorate worked as a key system player in response to the Covid pandemic. Core business priorities have continued to be reshaped/refocussed, but throughout this time, there has remained a strong emphasis on the resident and establishing ways in which we all remain safe whilst continuing to deliver our statutory duties.

Whilst activity in response to Covid has now reduced, Adult Social Care has continued to meet the challenges faced from a fragile health and care system and increased demand for social care services.

Adult Social Care staff have, in the main, continued a blended way of working and frontline staff have returned to physical visits and assessments. The blended approach to working with online meetings and paper-light processes has continued to support high productivity in the face of increasing demand, whilst ensuring staff wellbeing. There has continued to be a strong emphasis on robust risk assessments when both working at home and visiting service users. Where staff members have required access to an onsite office base for their own wellbeing, or due to any inability to work from home, this has been facilitated.

The safeguarding of vulnerable residents is a key responsibility for the directorate. Safeguarding referrals have increased significantly during the year as services have reopened. This is thought to be due to increased self-neglect where vulnerable people have been reluctant to ask for help and resumed family/professional contact after a prolonged period of reduced contact during the pandemic.

Adult Social Care continues to support the broader health system as part of The Walsall Together Partnership. Despite challenges in terms of hospital admissions and workforce, the partnership continues to lead as a good national example of integrated working at a local level. Work has commenced exploring opportunities for further joined up working with health colleagues including integrated services where appropriate.

2. ASC Continuous improvement programme (CIP)

The Adult Social Care CIP is key as part of the preparation for future national reforms in social care, planned to be introduced in 2023.

The Adult Social Care ambition through our Continuous Improvement Programme (CIP) is that we want the people of Walsall to:

- Remain independent for as long as they can
- Understand how to achieve this and be given the tools to do so within the communities in which they live their lives

- Maintain their networks and access areas of their community which help them to achieve the outcomes they desire
- Connect with the council when they need to, through an approach which is digital by design, yet has the opportunity to still connect with a human being when they wish to
- Appreciate how they might get help with housing, jobs, education and how to engage with things that maintain or improve their well-being.
- Influence how services are developed from an outcome focus – so that their voice is not only heard, but also that they feel listened to and are a part of their solution, not done to.
- Appreciate how they can help themselves through the use of everyday technology, through keeping and developing networks and through making choices which enable them to live well, remain healthy and active at whatever point in their lives they are.

The Adult Social Care CIP objectives are:

- Strength based assessment/approach in all service areas, including positive risk-taking approach.
- Improve joint working and co-production with residents, voluntary and community sector to develop strengths-based outcome focused services. (Resilient Communities).
- Increase the numbers of residents who self-assess or are able to make informed choices about their care and support needs at the first point of contact with the Council. By ensuring the right information support and advice is accessible to all.
- All new individuals in the community coming into Adult Social Care will be assessed to determine reablement/enablement potential and if appropriate will receive reablement care before receiving a long-term service.
- A joint carers strategy will be developed providing the right level of care and support for carers.
- Develop leaders across the organisation that encourage a positive attitude to risk and empowers the workforce to take control and ownership over the provision of social care support, in order to facilitate innovation and creativity.
- Increase the use of assistive technology to maximise independence and reduce the need for long-term care.
- Reduce the number of adults and young people with a learning disability or mental health in long-term institutional settings including residential education placements.
- Increase in residents accessing community-based opportunities through the development of more resilient communities.
- Increase the number of people with mental health and learning disabilities living in their own accommodation or shared accommodation via a tenancy agreement.
- Increase the opportunity for more people to access 'shared lives' support.
- Commissioning of services which are outcome based. The Development of a new Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy that focuses on "outcomes" for service user groups in our community.

3. All Age Disability (AAD)

The development of the AAD approach has continued. The aim of the AAD approach is to ensure that we, as a council, along with our key stakeholders and partners, maximise the opportunities to plan with a young person and their family in a timely way for adulthood.

The AAD approach focusses on working with young people, their families and the people who are important in their progress from a child into adulthood, through an approach that maximises independence. We will work with the person and their network of support is so that they can continue to live safely, irrespective of needs, to build on their existing and aspiring strengths.

The All -Age Disability resource that was introduced at Goscote initially in 2019 has gone from strength to strength in terms of the number of younger people it is now able to support in addition to the ongoing support it provides in a far less traditional way to its established adults. (Post 18-year-olds) Some of the key tasks and activities that are delivered through Goscote promotes alternative ways to support people, including therapies, assistive technology, employment and daily living opportunities that are part of community life.

The work at Goscote has evolved so that people from the age of 14 are being supported by a more collaborative approach inclusive of Statutory assessments. Goscote offers enablement activities and time limited support for people that is proportionate to need and timely, thus reducing risks of crisis or delay.

A new Transition toolkit has been developed for operational teams to robustly plan for adulthood. (Transition). With the seamlessness of approaches across Children and Adults Directorates, alongside the wider council and partners, there are also great opportunities for much wider benefits.

4. ASC Provider Market

We continue to actively engage our Provider market and support them as required.

To date we have not had any Provider failure and have had limited backlog or delayed start for care packages; where packages have been delayed to support system flow from an acute setting we have placed a small number of people into a care home setting pending package commencement.

We use our local and national monitoring tools and regular Provider meetings to proactively support our providers and analyse trends/focus support e.g. Covid vaccination take up.

Additionally, the Commissioning team have been engaging monthly with providers on what the future of care will look like in Walsall through the 'Reimagining Care' project which is part of the ASC CIP. The aim of this work is to ensure that care provision evolves in line with the changing needs of Walsall residents and enables people to maintain or enhance their independence.

Work is continuing on the Fair Cost of Care exercise as part of ASC reform as reported previously at Cabinet.

5. Finance and Performance

Adult Social Care – Financial Budget Monitoring Position 2022/23 – as at August 2022.

The current net forecast position, after the use of reserves is a projected overspend of £2.5m.

The directorate has budgeted savings of £13.6m, of which £4.6m was carried forward from 2021/22. Currently there is a projected shortfall in the achievement of these savings totalling £6.1m. This pressure is due to a result of slippage in the delivery of the savings associated with improvements in demand management at the ‘front door’ and a shortfall in additional CCG funding relating to the Learning Disability Joint Funding arrangements.

There are also total pressures of £0.8m from business as usual activity as a result of additional staffing costs, and an increase in bad debt provision

The total pressure of £6.9m is mitigated by one off funding streams and reserves totalling £4.4m.

6. Summary

We are starting to see good and sustained progress against the 6 key projects in the ASC CIP programme. Additional capacity had helped to support the transformational work and financial and other benefits are beginning to be realised. The Programme infrastructure is now well established providing clear and appropriate governance to the programme. Other Directorates from across the council are engaged in the CIP and are providing additional challenge and support where required. Work continues to further identify and improve ‘benefits realisation’ and we are starting to engage more widely with external partners to raise awareness around the transformational work and to gain their support and involvement where required.

Our preparations for social care reform are on track and whilst challenging we are making good progress in meeting National timelines and expectations.

Inevitably we have some operational pressures due to capacity issues and the additional work involved in managing both the CIP and ‘business as usual’ simultaneously. Risk assessments and mitigations are in place and we are working towards maintaining existing services to appropriate standards whilst delivering on the significant transformation programme.

Recruitment and retention remains one of our top priorities and we are exploring more creative ways of attracting and retaining staff. This is a corporate priority as well as an ASC issue.

September 2022