



Committee and Date

People Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

26th February 2025

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024

**In the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

10.00 am - 12.36 pm

Responsible Officer: Shelley Davies

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Present

Councillor Peggy Mullock (Chairman)

Councillors Claire Wild (Vice Chairman), Jeff Anderson, Peter Broomhall, Ruth Houghton,
Duncan Kerr, Hilary Luff, Kevin Pardy and Vivienne Parry

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sian Lines, Diocesan Board of Education.

14 Disclosable Interests

Councillor Ruth Houghton declared an interest as a trustee at Bethphage, a learning disability charity and noted that her Grandson attended Severndale Academy.

15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record.

16 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

17 Member Question Time

A member question was received from Councillor Ruth Houghton – in relation to post 16 education transport.

By way of a supplementary question Councillor Houghton queried the benefit threshold in relation to the £299 annual bus pass and asked:

- Which benefits qualified for the reduced price;
- If parents/carers were supported to check eligibility; and
- If there was phased payment option.

David Shaw, Assistant Director Education & Achievement confirmed that a written response would be provided and circulated to all committee members.

The full question and response provided is available from the webpage for the meeting: [Response to Member Questions - People Overview and Scrutiny 27.11.24.pdf](#)

18 Learning Disability and Autism Development Including Supported Living

Laura Tyler, Assistant Director Joint Commissioning presented the Learning Disability and Autism Development including Supported Living report and introduced Lesley Brown, Service Manager (Commissioning).

Lesley Brown gave a presentation in relation to the commissioning approach for children and adults with learning disabilities and / or autism, which included recent progress and priority plans for the next 12 months.

In response to questions members were advised that:

- There were approximately 200 supported living houses in Shropshire, supporting approximately 270 individuals with some individuals living alone and others sharing accommodation with two to five people, depending on compatibility and needs.
- The importance of early transition into supported living was acknowledged and it was noted that the team were working to ensure that individuals received the necessary support and opportunities at the right time in their lives.
- The cost of the supported living model can vary significantly based on the level of support required and the specific arrangements. The team were looking into more cost-effective models, such as shared accommodations where multiple individuals live together with shared support which can reduce the overall cost per individual while still providing necessary care and support. The use of technology in supported living settings was another strategy being investigated to reduce costs.
- The Enable team focused on supporting individuals with learning disabilities and autism to gain and maintain employment and it was suggested that given its significant impact and the positive outcomes a more detailed overview of the Enable service be given at a future meeting.
- The significant increase in autism referrals was attributed to a number of factors including increased awareness and historical underdiagnosis.
- Specific statistics on the percentage of individuals assessed who result in an autism diagnosis were not available in the meeting but would be circulated to committee members following the meeting.

- Despite the high savings targets which include organisational savings, the People's Directorate was managing to come close to budget, which was considered a significant achievement given the demands and pressures.
- The team was focusing on doing things differently to manage costs effectively which included reassessing the need for 24-hour support and exploring more cost-effective solutions such as shared accommodation and the use of technology.
- A diagnosis of autism often comes down to choice, and while some families may seek a diagnosis, others may not. For some individuals, a diagnosis can be positive and help them understand themselves better, but it is not always necessary or desired by everyone.

Officers were thanked for their report.

RECOMMENDED:

That the contents of the report noted.

19 Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2

The Committee received the Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 which gave an update on key areas of performance across Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Education services under the People's Directorate.

Natalie McFall, Assistant Director Adult Social Care and Housing outlined key areas of the report in relation to Adult Social Care and outlined the current demand and pressures across the service. It was noted that the current trends show a significant portion of adult social care demand coming from the 75+ age group and that the reduction in waiting lists had continued for several teams, including the community mental health team.

Amanda Allcock, Service Manager Ops South, highlighted the work of the specialist social work teams and in response to a question gave further information on the aim to reduce the use of the Mental Health Act to detain people and minimize hospital admissions. It was explained that the approach involved creating support plans around the individual, liaising with all professionals involved, the nearest relative, and the person themselves.

David Shaw, Assistant Director Education & Achievement, outlined key areas of the report in relation to Education noting the improved performance in parental preferences for school admissions and a slight reduction in permanent school exclusions. David Shaw added that the virtual school continued to perform strongly and outlined the challenges in managing resources to meet the growing demand and complexity of EHCPs.

In response to questions members were advised that:

- The parenting team work to support for families to ensure children were ready for school and early years education which has been rolled back for children as young as nine months, will also help with this issue.
- The team work closely with place planning to ensure that there were sufficient school places available in Shrewsbury to meet future demand. It was added that although there was a lot of additional new homes being built in Shrewsbury it did not necessarily mean more school places were required.
- The rise in EHCPs was attributed to several factors, including increased awareness, identification of complex needs, and the impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Sonya Miller, Assistant Director Children's Social Care & Safeguarding and Donessa Gray, Assistant Director Services to Children & Families outlined key areas of the report in relation to Children's Social Care noting in particular the Early Help programme transformation which provided targeted support and intervention for families at an earlier stage and Early Help Family Hubs which focus on creating a relationship-based approach with parent carers to deliver services within local communities.

In response to questions members were advised that:

- The link to the Early Help Family Hubs would be provided to the committee following the meeting.
- The majority of children in residential care was due to the complexity of their needs. These children often required specialized support that cannot be adequately provided in a family or community setting.

Officers were thanked for their report.

RECOMMENDED:

That a letter of thanks be sent to the teams for their efforts in the early help transformation and the Enable team be invited to attend a future meeting to provide an overview of their work.

20 Work Programme

Tanya Miles, Executive Director for People, noted that the following items would be considered at the next meeting:

- Performance Monitoring Report – Q3 with a focus on the work of Enable.
- Adult CQC Report

- Technology Enabled Care programme
- Non diagnosis support for Children and Young People

It was agreed that the issue of inadequate hospital discharge following private hospital care should be covered by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that SEND was an ideal topic for a Member Briefing.

21 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Meeting will be taking place on at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday 26th February 2025.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: