



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
MERTHYR TUDFUL  
MERTHYR TYDFIL  
County Borough Council

## MINUTES OF MEETING

# SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

**TUESDAY, 13TH JULY, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: W R Smith (Chair)  
S Jago (Vice-Chair)

Councillors G Richards, D Sammon and I Thomas

**Other Councillors in Attendance:**

Councillor C Davies (Cabinet Member for Social Services)

**Officers:**

L Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services)), S Lyons (Performance and Scrutiny Officer), T Stephens (Family Support), A Edevane (Head of Adult Services), J Eyre (Safeguarding Manager) and M Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
139	Apologies for absence	No apologies for absence were received as all members were present.
140	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No declaration of interest were received.
141	The Impact of the Pandemic on Care Homes for Adults	Angela Edevane introduced the item and highlighted the salient points within the report.  The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.

		<p>The Chair thanked Angela for the report and the staff for all the excellent work they have done throughout the pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5.2 of the report states that 12% of face-to-face care home staff are yet to be vaccinated – do you envisage you may have to insist that all face-to-face staff are vaccination and if not would they be utilised to carry out other duties</li><li>• Given the steep rise of this new variant is there a likelihood that that the joint care home group monitoring will go back to weekly rather than the current 2-weekly monitoring</li><li>• The report mentions the need to completed analysis of the financial risks that care homes are facing in the near future should the hardship fund be discontinued – are you in a position to make early representation to Welsh Government if the current situation worsens</li><li>• The report states that you commissioned 85 new placements and there were 92 people who left the care home. What is the average number of placements that are commissioned each year</li><li>• Are the figures for this year down compared to other years due to the concerns around Covid in care homes</li><li>• The report states that 92 people left the care home, what are the reasons for this</li><li>• 3.9 of the report states that we place people from Merthyr Tydfil in care homes outside of the county borough, what are the reasons for this is it because we are unable to cater for their needs</li><li>• When an individual or a family make a choice to receive care outside the county borough does it cost the local authority</li><li>• What is the total capacity of care homes in the County Borough</li><li>• In relation to the 180 people that Merthyr Tydfil CBC were commissioning care home placements for can you confirm what the weekly / yearly breakdown of the costs are to the authority</li><li>• Do we get many people who come to Merthyr Homes who are not placed by other authorities and would therefore be self-funders. And is it correct that if they cease to be self-funders the Local Authority pick up the cost</li></ul>
--	--	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was acknowledged that the care staff responded to the challenge incredibly over the period of the pandemic as is outlined in the report but now I am hearing that people are reaching burn out and are exhausted is there any reflection of this in our care homes in terms of retention rates and vacancies at present</li> </ul> <p>The Cabinet Member for Social Services addressed the committee and thanked the staff in Social Services for the excellent and selfless work they have done throughout the Pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has any work been carried out to establish why the small percentage of care home staff are yet to be vaccinated</li> </ul> <p>The chair thanked the officers for the excellent report.</p>
142	Coronavirus Pandemic - Update on Recovery and Activity	<p>The Chief Officer for Social Services introduced the item and provided an update on recovery and activity.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the officers present.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Officer for the update and supported her comments in relation to the outstanding commitment of the Social Services staff and praised their work over the past 18 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.2 of the report states that there was a 43% increase in Early Help requests in the last quarter. What is the 43% compared to, is it quarter four of last year during the pandemic or a typical quarter so it can be gauged how much of the increase is down to the pandemic and how much is down to family needs</li> <li>• Can you provide a flavour of what the typical requests currently are</li> <li>• There was a lot of digital work being carried out as a substitute to face-to-face work throughout the pandemic, how has it been received and is everyone onboard and what support is on offer for those who are not up to speed with digital working</li> <li>• 3.2 of the report highlights the link between deprivation and a negative impact from coronavirus which has been greatly researched. Would you say that the levels of deprivation despite our best efforts are getting worse in Merthyr Tydfil, and do you know where we stand in the deprivation index compared to the rest of Wales</li> </ul>

143	Safeguarding 2020/21 - Internal Audit Report	<p>Jon Eyre introduced the item and highlighted the salient points within the report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has safeguarding training been provided to all Councillors</li> <li>• Item 4.1 relates to audit scores can you clarify why the report states that the Merthyr Tydfil's safeguarding service were the third highest out of a possible four categories. It seems that the score is the second highest, not third highest.</li> </ul> <p>The Cabinet Member reassured the committee that the practices in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council are safe after CIW carried out an inspection during the Pandemic and this Audit report goes on to clarify and quantify those findings.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member also addressed the issues around the pilot training programme for Councillors and explained that there were issues with the portal. However, a new training programme is in the process of being rolled out to all Councillors in the near future.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Jon for the report.</p>
144	Current Budget Position	<p>The Chief Officer for Social Services provided a verbal update on the quarter one (end of month three) budget position.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Chief Officer for the positive update on the current budget position.</p>
145	Forward Work Programme 2021/22	<p>No update was provided on the Forward Work programme</p>
146	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	<p>The Chair confirmed that there were no referrals, feedback or follow up actions.</p> <p>The Chair advised the committee that the Chief Officer for Social Services will be holding a RCF workshop on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> July at 10.00am.</p>
147	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	<p>The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the matters that had been discussed at the meeting.</p>
148	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	<p>The Chair confirmed that he had no other business deemed urgent and thanked members for their attendance before closing the meeting.</p>