



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 2022

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

Councillors D Hughes, G Richards, D Sammon and I Thomas

Other Councillors in Attendance:

Councillor T Rogers

Officers:

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

M Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
673	Apologies for absence	No apologies for absence were received.
674	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of Interest were received.
675	Verbal Update on the Impact of Covid-19 on the Service	L Curtis-Jones provided Committee with an update on the impact of Covid-19 on the Service with particular emphasis on staff absences. Committee were advised that currently eight members of staff were on sick leave after testing positive for Covid, which was a huge improvement from January 2022. Currently, more of an issue was other sickness related absences due to stress. Staff were being encouraged to

		<p>take annual leave. Committee were also advised Silver and Bronze had been stepped down in the last week as numbers were coming down.</p> <p>Another concern raised was 'flow through the hospital', and Committee were advised that this had been escalated to Welsh Government on a national basis and meetings were taking place to see what could be done to help with the 'flow'.</p> <p>The following question was raised by the Committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noted that eight staff are absent due to Covid. How many staff are absent due to stress/other illnesses? <p>The Chair thanked L Curtis-Jones for the report and wished the staff well for the future.</p>
676	Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2020/2021	<p>J Eyre introduced the item and highlighted the salient points within the Report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by Committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we as Councillors/Scrutiny Committee have an input into this report in order to change things? What are the next steps? • With regard to the worrying rate of suicide, it is pleasing to note that a strategic group has been set up to look at this problem, will you report back to Committee on the work of the group? <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulations to Jon and the staff for the work undertaken throughout the pandemic. • Whilst the report is good, there is not enough specific breakdown of information provided into the community of Merthyr Tydfil. Can this matter be discussed every six months and a workshop organised so that Councillors can be more involved? • Whilst the report is comprehensive and appreciate the huge amount of work within the report, the delays/time that has passed is frustrating.
677	Adult Services Advocacy Strategy	<p>A Edevane provided Committee with a detailed summary on the Adult Services Advocacy Strategy.</p> <p>The following questions/comments were raised by Committee and answered in detail by the officers in attendance:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of demand for the service, how many assessments are going through collectively and how many are saying yes to the advocacy service in Merthyr Tydfil. • Clarity sought on the public's perception of what 'advocacy' means. • 6.1 (Taking Matters Forward) – Is there a timescale set on taking this forward? <p>The Chair thanked A Edevane for the report.</p>
678	Social Services Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan Update	<p>L Curtis-Jones introduced the item and highlighted the salient points within the Report.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by Committee and responded to in detail by the officers in attendance:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity sought on the action point on page 58 (advocacy services) where it says completed May 2021. • Para. 5.6 – Are there any problems at the moment with hospital discharges? • Are we aware of any slippages in the timescales set for March? <p>The Chair thanked L Curtis-Jones for the report.</p>
679	Forward Work Programme 2021/22	The Scrutiny Officer provided an update in relation to the forward work programme.
680	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair confirmed that there were no scrutiny referrals, feedback or follow up actions.
681	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the matters that had been discussed at the meeting.
682	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	No other business was deemed urgent by the Chair.