

Scrutiny Health & Social Care Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 3 October 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

- Present:** Councillor Eunice O'Dame (Chair); Councillor Robert Ward (Vice-Chair);

Councillors Adele Benson, Patsy Cummings, Sherwan Chowdhury and Mark Johnson (reserve for Holly Ramsey)

Co-optees: Gordon Kay (Healthwatch Croydon) and Yusuf Osman (Resident Voice)
- Also Present:** Councillor Rowenna Davis (Chair of Scrutiny and Overview Committee; virtual), Janet Campbell (Shadow Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care; virtual), Yvette Hopley (Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care), Margaret Bird (Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)
- Apologies:** Councillor Holly Ramsey

PART A

25/23 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

26/23 **Disclosure of Interests**

Councillor Ward declared non-pecuniary interest in the item 'Update on the Delivery of the Transformation Programme', as he was involved in the procurement of the strategic delivery partner through his role as a Deputy Cabinet Member.

27/23 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business for consideration of the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee at this meeting.

Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board - Annual Report

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 13 to 60 of the agenda which provided an overview of the work performed by the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. The purpose of the Croydon Safeguarding Adult Board (CSAB) Annual Report was to detail the activity and effectiveness of the Board. It ensured that the statutory partners (Council, Health and Police), residents and other agencies were given the opportunity to provide objective feedback on the work and effectiveness of local arrangements for safeguarding adults. The report covered the 2022/23 priorities demonstrating what had been achieved and the work which needs to continue throughout 2023/24.

The Independent Chair of the CSAB, David Williams; the Council's Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health, Annette McPartland; the Council's Director of Adult Social Care Operations, Simon Robson; Sally Innis from NHS South West London and Fiona Martin from the MET Police attended the meeting for this item, to introduce the report and answer questions arising.

David Williams commended and introduced the report to the Sub-Committee, highlighting that it was an independent, multi-agency report and had been approved by the CSAB as required by the Care Act. It was also acknowledged that officers working on the report had a meeting with Sub-Committee members and all suggestions, especially concerning accessibility, made by the Members were agreed and would be implemented before the report was published.

Annette McPartland added during the introduction of the report that Nick Sherlock, Head of Safeguarding had retired recently and that the Council had successfully recruited an officer to take over the role. The recruitment process was a multi-agency one and people with lived experience were involved in the process. The newly appointed officer started their work on 3 November 2023. Annette McPartland also thanked Nick Sherlock for his hard work and contribution to Croydon.

Following the introduction of the report, the Sub-Committee had the opportunity to ask questions on the information provided. The first question concerned the lack of Prevention of Future Death Notices received. In response it was acknowledged that this was a borough-wide issue. The CSAB had been working with the Coronial Practice to identify issues that were stopping the relevant stakeholders from receiving them. It was further clarified that the notices should be delivered and in response it was assured that the CSAB was working to resolve this issue. In response to a question about the timescale for resolving the obstacles and receiving the notices, it was advised that this would be investigated, and a response would be provided. It was also

explained that at the moment the CSAB had identified it need to improve its understanding of the reporting process.

The next question concerned the number of Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) over the year. It was confirmed that in the 2022-23 only two SARs were completed. The process usually took around six months to complete. In addition to that the process could be slowed down by deaths that occurred in the Borough.

It was questioned how the Sub-Committee could be assured that the recommendations deriving from SARs were being cascaded and embedded in the services. It was explained that the CSAB used a live action plan which was reviewed on a regular basis with the executive partners. Also, each action was monitored through an assigned RAG (Red, Amber Green) rating. Part of the assurance process was asking executive partners to provide examples for relevant actions. For example, on the implementation of new roles in the Croydon Health Service NHS Trust (CHS) which were developed to fill the gaps identified in transitional safeguarding.

The next question focused on the voice of the people in relation to temporary housing arrangements (e.g., B&Bs) and the elevated risk of exploitation. It was explained that housing and homelessness was very challenging in Croydon. The Council was actively trying to minimise the risk for individuals who went through appropriate assessments and had special needs (especially mental health-related). It was highlighted that supported housing and housing differ considerably in terms of managing the markets. When there were any safeguarding concerns, the dedicated quality assurance team would investigate the provider and improve the living situation.

As a follow up, it was questioned what was being done to improve the quality of service provided by the eight housing service providers in the borough who were identified as being inadequate. It was confirmed that there was close cooperation with the commissioning team that would or would not place residents in with these providers. It was also highlighted that some of those inadequate service providers were not operating anymore. However, they could not have been removed from the list until they were deregistered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). In addition, Councillors were provided on a monthly basis with a report covering any concerns raised in relation to the providers. There was a protocol for provider concerns and there were quality monitoring officers who worked closely with the CQC. There was also evidence that the development system worked resulting in some of the providers improving over time. It was noted that there were many care agencies registered in Croydon, but the Council did not use the services of many of them.

Further reassurance was provided by the Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care, Councillor Yvette Hopley, who explained that she reviewed this area

regularly and was assured that there was a very strong team in place to monitor placements. Also, as many inadequate providers had been removed from the list in recent years, it meant that there were more 'good' providers in the Borough.

The next question asked for further information on the number and response time of safeguarding referrals and how it compares to the national average. It was advised that the response time had been reduced in comparison to the previous year. It was highlighted that it was a statutory responsibility for the CSAB, and it was delivered through joint work with stakeholders like FJC (formerly Family Justice Service). It was very important to ensure that help was delivered in a timely manner, for those people who met the statutory threshold.

As a follow-up, it was questioned what support was available for someone who did not meet the statutory criteria. It was advised that this would depend on an individual's needs. For instance, a social care or healthcare worker may be assigned to them, to ensure that they were signposted to available support and to provide a follow-up check on them. It was highlighted that it needed a partnership approach to ensure the appropriate level of support was provided. Reassurance was given that the questions around this topic were asked routinely, and there was Red Threat support available.

A question was asked about the ethnicity of those being referred and the significant gap in regard to the British Asian population in the borough. It was confirmed that CSAB were aware of this gap and was planning to work with third sector organisations such as the Asian Resource Centre to address the issue. There were also plans to make sure resources were presented in a more accessible way.

Further information was requested on the changes made to arrangements for police interventions in regard to mental health crises. Assurance was given that there would be more police attendance than had been represented in the media, but there would be considerable changes which would be in place by the end of October. The Police worked very closely with stakeholders like local authorities and mental health agencies. The change would ensure that the right professionals were available to respond to a person experiencing a mental health related crisis, while ensuring that they were not criminalised. However, the Police would still attend if there was an immediate threat to an individual or the public. In the upcoming weeks there would have conversations about what it meant in practice for the relevant stakeholders.

It was confirmed that South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLAM) supported this new approach and that it was being delivered through a partnership approach. However, where concerns were raised, there would be further work with the Police to ensure that everyone in the partnership felt confident about the changes. The Sub-Committee acknowledged that the

issue of police intervention in these circumstances was controversial and that there were two schools of thought – some preferred the Police not to be the first respondents, while others preferred the Police to be available to ensure that there was no risk for others. SLAM provided training around the Mental Health Act, which was agreed should be available to the Police.

At the conclusion of the item, the Chair thanked the attendees from the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board for their attendance at the meeting and their engagement with the questions of the Sub-Committee.

Actions

Following its discussion of this item, the Sub-Committee agreed the following action to be followed up outside of the meeting: -

1. That an update on the timeline for the Prevention of Future Death Notice implementation will be requested.

Conclusions

Following its discussion of this item, the Sub-Committee reached the following conclusion:-

1. Following its review of the Croydon Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report, the Sub-Committee concluded that there was reasonable evidence to provide reassurance that the partners were working well together.
2. Following the changes to the mental health interventions, the Sub-Committee welcomed confirmation that mental health training provided by South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust would be available to Police officers.

29/23 Update on the delivery of the Transformation Programme

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 61 to 72 of the agenda which provided an update on the budget and saving process in the Adult Social Care and Health.

Annette McPartland introduced the report that covered the Directorate's performance in period 3 (April-June 2023). It was also noted that the report included information on preparation for the Local Government Association peer challenge due to happen in November 2023.

The first question considered the financial performance tables included in the report. It was explained that some figures were estimates based on (i) the costs that already occurred, and (ii) forecasts based on historical data. *Actual to Date* figures reflected what had been spend in period 3. *Forecast Variance*

indicated the end-of-year prediction, which forecasted an overspend of £1.2 million. A supplementary question was asked about how the officers determined the spending predictions, and how the actual spending figure for period 3 compared to the last year prediction. It was explained that the officers looked at relevant economic factors, including market conditions and inflation. Also, it was stressed that different periods would have different funding, e.g. period 4 would have a larger budget due to the winter pressures, and that managing the markers and predicting the future spends was a very challenging tasks as the trends could change rapidly. When the market situation changed, the Council might need to adjust its activities. It was assured that there were robust processes in the Council to ensure that the overspend would not increase considerably.

The next question considered the impact of the forecasted working-age adults overspend in Croydon. It was explained that the overspend was expected to drop as a result of managing the demand. As in many other local authorities there was an underspend in staffing cost. This helped to balance the budget, however, it hindered the delivery of services. Recently, the Council recruited a considerable number of newly qualified social workers. In addition to that, the Council was successful in delivering various medium-term financial savings. Delivery of the disability provision savings have been challenging, however, a designated group was established to support it and to ensure compliance with the Care Act. Also, the Council introduced *care cubed* – a funding matrix to identify benchmark values to ensure value for money - to ensure that the service provider did not increase their prices by unjustifiable amount. In addition to that the Council worked on developing an alternative to the traditional form of care. However, it would take six to twelve months to implement. It was assured that the situation was generally positive.

It was highlighted that the working-age adult demand was not only higher, but also the cost per capita was higher. The question was asked whether the Council anticipated a decrease in number of adults who needed the required support or in the cost of the necessary support. It was explained that it was supposed to be a mixture of both. For many adults that were currently receiving support, other forms of support would be more appropriate. Also, it was assured that they worked closely with different departments (including transition and housing teams) to ensure that the savings would be delivered.

A question was asked about the risks and amount of case work for newly qualified social workers. It was assured that the workload was being constantly monitored. A supplementary question was asked about the capacity for complicated and multi-faceted cases. It was assured that there was sufficient capacity. However, it was added that the complexity of cases had been increasing. Therefore, a priority was to ensure that the right funding is available.

The next question considered the deep-dive exercises mentioned in the report. It was explained that those deep-dive exercises were aimed at providing a better understanding of the services and what would be a path of a service user. The pathway review included not only Council-provided

services, but also signposting and services provided by the Council's partners. This has been an ongoing piece of work that was necessary to transform and improve services. Another question considered how autism and broader neurodiversity fitted into the pathway mapping, and what was the impact of the Council's autism strategy. It was explained that a lot of work had been done on autism and neurodiversity. One of the areas of focus was transitions for residents with learning disabilities, with an ongoing piece of work with learning disabilities teams from South West London and Croydon.

The final question asked about the internal assessment for the Care Quality Commission (CQC). It was explained that it was an internal document which was used to have a better understanding of the service areas, identify strengths and weaknesses, and to determine the plan of actions to improve those areas. In addition to that a Peer Challenge organised by the Local Government Association (LGA) was scheduled for November this year.

Action

Following its discussion of this item, the Sub-Committee agreed the following action to be followed up outside of the meeting: -

- That further information on the self-identified strength and weaknesses of adult social care and health services is provided to the Sub-Committee.

30/23 Update from Healthwatch Croydon

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out in the agenda supplement which set out reports produced by Healthwatch Croydon.

Gordon Kay introduced two Healthwatch Croydon reports covering – (i) [Young People's Mental Health](#); (ii) [London Ambulance Service strategy](#).

The Young People's Mental Health report was similar to a report conducted pre-Covid. It was acknowledged that there were some differences between pre- and post-Covid studies. However, the fundamentals were relatively unchanged. The main findings from the report include (i) recognition of signposting significance – there should be more targeted information about mental health support that was tailored for young people, as the research found that they were not fully aware of the available professional mental health services; (ii) most young people rely on friends and family as a source of support; (iii) face-to-face connections were very important and that it was young people preference over digital options.

The London Ambulance Service (LAS) strategy report concluded that LAS' resources were sufficient to deliver services and service users acknowledged

that challenges caused by the demand and issues with transferring patients into hospital. However, there were many challenges in delivering services such as first response provider. As a result, LAS changed parts of its strategy to consider more individualised care (especially in regard to neurodivergence and mental health), better communication, and more education about urgent emergency services.

During the focus group for LAS Health Watch Croydon identified that younger participants have significantly lower level of knowledge about urgent emergency services.

The first question asked whether enough had been done to ensure that people knew where to access defibrillators. It was mentioned that in the past there was a piece of work focused on mapping defibrillators in the Borough.

It was also stressed that there was a high number of Bleed Control Kits across the Borough and there could be a focus on promoting them and ensuring that people know or could easily find out where they were located.

It was acknowledged that it could be valuable to analyse the locations where heart attacks occur and locate new defibrillators based on these insights. It was added that that a potential obstacle to that can be the maintenance cost that could increase if the defibrillators are spread more sparsely.

Action

Following its discussion of this item, the Sub-Committee agreed the following action to be followed up outside of the meeting: -

- Jack Bedeman to provide more information on the Council's work on defibrillators (including mapping and raising awareness).

31/23 Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

The Sub-Committee considered a report on pages 73 to 78 of the agenda, which presented the work programme for review.

The Chair noted that the update on transformation programme and service deep-dives would be added to the work programme.

Resolved: That the current work programme for the Health & Social Care Sub-Committee is noted.

32/23 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This motion was not required.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Signed:

Date:

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