

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Reporting
Paul Cummins	Cabinet Member Adult Social Care	October - November 2022

1. Update on the National Assurance update for Adult Social Care

In September 2021, the Government announced that a new Assurance Framework would be introduced to oversee and inspect Adult Social Care Performance. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have been charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing this framework. CQC have been working with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Further to the publication of draft material on the likely domains and key lines of enquiry in September 2022, work has been taking place to complete a CQC Assurance Approach Summary to capture our progress against the domains. An update from CQC has been issued at the end of November 2022, which includes further developments to the framework including the introduction of an additional quality statement. This is within the Working with People theme and is to capture 'Equity in experience and outcomes'.

Workshops with Adult Social Care staff began in November to provide an update on what the National Assurance Framework will mean for staff and the service. Groups discussed the four themes: Working with People, Providing Support, Ensuring Safety and Leadership, and staff input was captured around what is working well and identified suggested areas for development. The workshops have been well received and feedback will be included in plans for National Assurance preparation. More workshops are planned in December 2022.

Work continues with the ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) network, and Sefton is linked into all key regional workgroups. Regionally, there is also work being undertaken to support local authorities with 'what good looks like' and assist with preparation and readiness. This work will, however, also support performance, improvement priorities and accountability, internally.

The government have stated that the planned implementation of the new Assurance Framework is still expected to begin from April 2023, although the first period is expected to focus on data-gathering which will then be used to inform the need for targeted site visits.

2. Integration and National Policy Update

2.1 Sefton Partnership Maturity

We have recently worked with Cheshire and Merseyside to review our progress towards a 'thriving' partnership. This consisted of self-assessment by partners across the Health and Care System (ICS).

This process gave us a rating of 'established' which is an improvement from the exercise conducted twelve months ago, which saw us with an overall rating of 'emerging'. This has now informed the programme of work required to take us to 'thriving' (the highest level of maturity).

On 9th November 2022, we received a visit from the senior leaders with Cheshire and Merseyside ICS to conduct a further review of our progress. The review brought together key stakeholders from Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust, Alder Hey Children's Hospital Foundation Trust, Mersey Care, Primary Care Networks and Adult Social Care. The meeting focused on the development and readiness of Sefton Partnership together with key priorities of Urgent Care and Winter Initiatives. The review saw a positive response, with progress around children's integration, our collaborative agreement, and the engagement between partners to work together, cited as particular areas of good practice in Sefton. The progress around Virtual Wards and the 2-hour crisis response was also noted as on track. Further work around the use of performance data and statistics, as well utilising learning from other Cheshire and Merseyside areas was recommended to continue, to ensure we are progressing the things that will make the biggest difference.

2.2 New Sefton Partnership website

We have recently launched our new temporary Sefton Partnership website which replaces the archived clinical commissioning group websites following the transition to NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB on 1 July 2022. This will be used as an interim platform to share key information for residents, news, and updates from all partners organisations until a permanent website is built for the partnership.

The website can be found below and feedback from all our partners:

www.seftonpartnership.org.uk

Please send any feedback to: communications@sefton.nhs.uk

3. Life Course Commissioning

Key focuses for Adult Social Care Commissioning include the following:

3.1 Domiciliary Care

As previously reported, there is a new tender set to be published in February 2023 for a new service to be mobilised by August 2023. This new service will include the following key features and seek to meet the current challenges being experienced throughout the care market:

- Strengthening person-centred care to ensure people are enabled.
- Bolstering the Trusted Assessor element to apply this role to all Providers
- Strengthening elements on package hand-backs regarding working together to resolve issues and increasing hand-back time for multiple packages.
- Ensuring inclusion of Payments by Actuals, Time Bandings, Single Handed Care, and TECs (Technology Enabled Care).
- Establishing a requirement to have a working Electronic Call Monitoring System in order to be able to be a Provider.

- Establishing a requirement to have a RAG Rating/Business Continuity plan - sharing it with the Council and putting in a requirement for review. This includes for pandemics, including Covid.
- Clarifying the requirement for safeguarding alerts/incidents/referrals through the Adult Social Care Professionals Portal.
- Clarifying the definition of frustrated calls.
- Continuing to enhance the relationship with the Local Authority and wider Health and Social Care system.
- Bolstering the requirement to engage with service users in the planning of their services.
- Strengthening the narrative on service suspensions.

Capacity issues within the domiciliary care market remain, in part, due to factors such as workforce recruitment, retention, and an increased acuity of the people being referred. Adult Social Care has received additional funding from Central Government and has used a high proportion of this to increase fee rates paid to care providers to further support them with addressing these issues.

The arrangement for additional block-booked capacity with a Provider in North Sefton to support timely discharges from Hospital, has been extended to April 2023. Work is taking place on establishing similar capacity in the South of the Borough, and Providers who expressed an interest in this are being contacted.

3.2 Day Opportunities

We have recently published the outcome of our consultation on Day Opportunities and have worked to co-produce the specification in three lots which look to support service users with a more flexible community-based offer. We are proposing that we will be ready to go out to tender in February next year with a new service offer by August 2023.

3.3 Care Homes

Engagement with the market is ongoing and Adult Social Care has recently issued an online survey for Providers to complete, with details on issues such as changes in demand for their services and cost pressures such as increases to utility bills. We continue to engage regularly with Care Homes through the Finance Forum.

Current initiatives to financially support care homes include:

- Using national funding to increase Older People (65+) care home fee rates.
- The next round of capital improvement funding for care homes is being formulated and Providers are being asked to submit bids for funding in order to make improvements to their homes.
- Providing funding for a small number of homes to implement a new Digital Social Care Records system as a pilot project, which will inform future implementation and funding to other care homes.

3.4 Winter Planning

On 16th November 2022, the Minister for Social Care wrote to all Councils advising them of additional winter discharge funding.

The letter states “the fund can be used flexibly on the interventions that best enable the discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.” All scheme types are related to hospital discharge only. Discharges from acute mental health services are also included. Whilst care home services are included in the list of scheme types, areas are encouraged to use a ‘Home First’ approach, where possible.

Template returns are required to be submitted through the Better Care Fund by 16th December and there will be ongoing monitoring on the performance and impact of any new schemes.

A number of schemes are currently being developed in Sefton together with system partners. These include:

- Providing additional block-booked Domiciliary Care capacity to support with hospital discharges, reducing waiting times.
- Creating a ‘Discharge Hub’ with a greater Social Work and Occupational Therapy capacity.
- Expanding the Intermediate Care / Transitional care home bed capacity.
- Providing support through the Voluntary Sector to meet other Social Care and Housing needs.
- Providing further support to Market Management and strengthening brokerage offers, assisting to find the most appropriate service quicker.
- Offering assistance to providers to support people with higher needs and acuity.

3.5 Charging Reform

The Autumn Statement of 17th November 2022 included an announcement that there would be a delay in rolling out Adult Social Care Charging Reform from October 2023 to October 2025. The government has stated that it remains committed to delivering the adult social care charging reforms and supporting people drawing on care and support. The delay covers implementation of the extended means test, a lifetime cap on personal care costs and new arrangements for self-funders.

The delay will give local authorities additional time to prepare for the rollout of these reforms and provide additional funding to help with immediate pressures. Spending plans are being reviewed by the government and more detail will be announced in due course. Local plans to support implementation of the Charging Reform will be reviewed accordingly once further details are understood.

4. Adult Social Care Budget

Monitoring of the 2022/23 Adult Social Care budget for October reflected a forecast of a potential deficit of £1.4m based on a number of assumptions about expenditure and income for the remainder of the year. There are ongoing pressures relating to increased package costs (£4.9m deficit - increases in areas including Residential / Nursing and Supporting Living), however increases in income – client contributions and joint funded packages will mitigate in part. Staffing is also a pressure as vacancies are being filled by agency

staff/consultants owing to national workforce challenges, however, there is a cost implication to that. Savings against Transport budgets/additional income and equipment capitalisation will offset some of the pressures.

However, there are a number of uncertainties around the assumptions that should impact on this position before the year-end. In addition, ASC currently have a programme of savings as part of Transformation and Demand Management which are reviewed regularly. Also, the introduction of a new budget monitoring system across Sefton will allow budget managers increased oversight of the current and forecast financial position.

5. Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and MP Enquiries

In October and November 2022, we received nineteen complaints – a reduction of 14% from the previous two months. For these complaints, 68% were resolved upon receipt, responded to within the twenty-five working day target or remain within this timescale.

Five of the complaints related to decision making – one was not upheld and four remain under investigation and within timescale at the time of this report. Six complaints related to financial charges and funding – one complaint was upheld; one was not upheld, and one remains under investigation. Seven complaints related to the quality of the service we provide – this includes communication issues and delays. We have upheld two of these complaints, not upheld two complaints and three remain under investigation. We also received a complaint concerning staff attitude which remains under investigation.

For the complaints which have been concluded we upheld 43% of these, either partially, or in full. Reasons for complaints being upheld were as follows:

- Communication regarding social work casework management
- Communication about the financial implications of a care package arranged for a self-funding individual.
- Delay in allocating a case.
- A residential care provider delayed acknowledging correspondence from family in relation to their late relative and sent incorrect invoices in error which caused the family distress.

In the same period, we received twenty-one compliments and eleven MP enquiries. With regard to MP enquiries, 70% were responded to within the ten-day timescale.

We received one Draft Decision from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman which stated that there was fault causing injustice to the complainant. When the Council investigated the complaint originally, we upheld the complaint in full and, to remedy the injustice, we apologised unreservedly and offered to donate to a charity of the complainant's choice. The Ombudsman has found fault with the Council for failing to provide the service user with care and support to meet her assessed needs. The Ombudsman has recommended that we apologise and pay a financial remedy in recognition of the distress caused to the complainant. We have two weeks to respond to the Ombudsman's Decision.

The Ombudsman is considering two other complaints. Details of these cases have been shared previously and, once the Ombudsman's Decisions have been confirmed we will share these details.

6. Principal Social Worker Update (PSW)

The PSW continues to facilitate the Social Worker Professional Practice Forum (PPF), which takes place monthly.

The purpose of the forum is to promote the highest level of practice to ensure excellent outcomes for local people accessing Adult Social Care. The PPF enables social workers and other members of Adult Social Care to come together and share best practice whilst also provides an opportunity to discuss any practice issues they may be experiencing. Coupled with this, it is also a mechanism by which 'key messages' can be shared to frontline staff from senior managers to inform and develop changes to policy, procedure, and the overall delivery of services.

The forum is attended regularly by colleagues from the corporate complaints team, with key themes from complaints, compliments and ombudsman findings shared to ensure learning and improvement. Additionally, the PSW has sought to engage colleagues from the wider organisation, and we have recently had presentations from the Corporate Parenting Team and the Corporate Equality Group, (CEG).

Although the PPF is targeted at registered social workers, it is open to all colleagues to attend, and we regularly see attendances of approximately seventy or eighty practitioners.

Over the past months, the PSW has been co-producing a new supervision policy with frontline practitioners and team managers. This is quite a change from the current policy as it proposes to introduce case audits during supervision and practice observations. The aim of this is to increase quality of service offered to citizens is the best it can be, whilst also offering practitioners opportunity to reflect and learn on interventions. The policy has just been finalised and it is hoped that it will be presented to the Quality Improvement Forum on Friday 9th December 2022, for comment.

7. Performance and Key Areas of Focus

The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people as put forward by Central Government. The ASCOF is used both locally and nationally to set priorities for care and support, measure progress, and strengthen transparency and accountability.

The main points of note on Sefton's performance are:

7.1 Admission into care & reablement:

Total monthly care home admissions in October remained below the annual average. The rate of admission for those aged 18-64, and for those aged 65 and over, continued to decline. For 18-64s we remain in the bottom quartile compared to authorities in England and the North-West, however we are out of the bottom quartile when compared to our statistical neighbours. For those over 65, we remain in the bottom quartile for England but

just outside of the bottom quartile compared to the North-West and statistical neighbours. There continues to be a focus on supporting people to remain at home, wherever possible.

Reablement numbers have remained low. The rate of clients over 65 receiving reablement continued to decline in October, as it has done over the past 12 months. Whilst there has been some work to improve and expand on the availability of the service, further work is needed, and this will be a key priority during the winter period.

For those accessing reablement, the outcomes are positive with just under 90% of clients 65+ discharged from hospital remaining at home ninety-one days after receiving reablement services.

7.2 Self-directed support and direct payments:

Provision of services to clients by either self-directed support or direct payments has remained consistent over the last twelve months.

The proportion of carers receiving a direct payment has continued to increase, going above 70% for the first time in August 2022 and increasing to 74.7% in October 2022, the highest figure in the past twelve months. Work done by the Carers Centre to distribute more direct payments looks to be having a positive impact on the measure, although further work needs to be done to reach the top quartile, with all carers needing to have received a direct payment to hit this target.

To reach the top quartiles for these metrics, we would need to provide 100% of carers with a direct payment, as the Carer's Centre continue the work done in assessing more people and providing more direct payments, we should see this proportion continue to grow.

7.3 Employment

Sefton continues to rank in the top quartile for the proportion of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment, both in the North-West and nationally. We also rank in the top quartile on the proportion of those living independently, currently just under 90%.

A minor increase of 0.01% has been noted in October for the proportion of adults with learning disabilities going into paid employment. Sefton remains just outside of the bottom quartile in the North-West but in the bottom quartile nationally and against statistical neighbours. The target is to support over 6% of LD Adults into employment which will move Sefton into the top quartile - we currently stand at 2.7%. There does continue to be a focused area of work with a commitment to increase performance and traction. We will shortly be launching a multi-agency work group who will focus on developing greater supported employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities, autism, and mental health problems.

7.4 Housing

Sefton compares well to other local authorities on clients in settled accommodation. Just under 90% of clients in contact with secondary mental health and around 88% of clients

with a learning disability are living independently. This puts us in the top quartile in England for each of these metrics.

7.5 Safeguarding

The number of safeguarding referrals remaining open at month end remained an issue. There was an increase from June to July and to August. October saw highest number of safeguarding referrals remaining open at month end in the last twelve months, with a figure of three-hundred and forty-three.

This increase in volume has been due to a combination of factors including a number of organisational safeguarding episodes in care settings, which meant potential enquires were opened for all residents. This work has involved working closely with CQC colleagues and sensitively with families and residents. The team continued to perform well in the timely handling of safeguarding contacts and referrals with over 90% of contacts resolved within seven days and 75% of referrals resolved within twenty-eight days.

Sefton also continued to perform well in Making Safeguarding Personal with 93% of those expressing a preferred outcome having that preference, either fully or partially met.

ASC Overview	First 3M	Second 3M	Third 3M	Fourth 3M	Direction of Travel	Trend
Open Long-Term Services At Quarter End (Numbers)	4060	4020	4061	4103	42▲	
Open Carer Services At Quarter End (Numbers)	205	283	359	423	64▲	
Contacts Received In Quarter (Numbers)	5322	5636	5960	5940	-20▼	
Assessments Undertaken In Quarter (Numbers)	1511	1462	1445	1561	116▲	
Reviews Undertaken In Quarter (Numbers)	1413	1488	1423	1482	59▲	
Safeguarding Contacts Received In Quarter (Numbers)	552	571	721	678	-43▼	
Safeguarding Contacts Resolved Within 7 days In Quarter (Percentage)	94.1	96.5	92.9	95.3	2▲	
Safeguarding Enquiries Concluded In Quarter (Numbers)	450	519	489	559	70▲	
Safeguarding Enquiries Concluded Within 28 days In Quarter (Percentage)	72.1	73.9	77.4	75.4	-2▼	
Safeguarding Enquiries Where Preferred Outcome Has Been Fully Or Partially Met In Quarter (Percentage)	97.4	94.6	99.0	93.2	-6▼	

8. Service User Engagement:

Sefton Adult Social Care (ASC) are looking at strengthening how we engage with our service users and carers on a regular basis and use feedback to improve both performance and service delivery. Presently, Sefton ASC do receive feedback via the compliments, comments and complaints process and do engage with service users when implementing individual pieces of work, such as the current work on the Day Opportunities. Adult Social Care recognise though that this engagement needs to be strengthened and completed on a more regular basis, in order to get ‘assessment ready’ given that this is a reoccurring theme within the proposed Assurance Framework to be utilised by Care Quality Commission in the forthcoming ASC inspections. The proposed framework highlights the need for Adult Social Care Departments to routinely gather direct experience from people with lived experience

Service Users and understand how well the organisation is meeting the needs and outcomes of their users.

In terms of how Sefton ASC engage with service users and capture this information within the wider performance framework moving forward, the service will be working closely with key partners such as Healthwatch and Sefton CVS (Council for Voluntary Service). This will enable an independent approach and will allow feedback to be gathered through monthly follow-up telephone conversations with a random selection of service users at various stages of the customer journey. This feedback will be supplemented, by quarterly focus groups, again externally facilitated by Healthwatch and Sefton CVS to gain more detailed input at areas that are identified as requiring more detailed discussions and engagement. This programme will be key in ensuring we target key improvement areas and remain in touch with residents

9. Learning and Development

Learning and development for all staff remains a key priority for the service.

Current activity regarding training includes the development of a Personalisation Training Programme for all staff, specialist training to enhance practice in relation to Learning Disabilities and Race Awareness Training.

Sefton are primary partners in the Cheshire and Merseyside Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP). The Vision of the Partnership is to improve the life chances of children, young people, vulnerable adults, and their families by improving the recruitment, retention and the training and development of social workers and their practice. Our membership means that we have access to any Continuing Professional Development Opportunities offered by the CMSWTP.

The partnership has three main workstreams we are involved in, which are: Pre-Placement, Transition and Post Qualifying. There are also a series of sub-groups such as the HEI (Higher Education Institutes), lived experience and student representative groups.

Given the current workforce pressures, the use of apprenticeships remains a key priority and Adult Social Care currently has eight people enrolled on the Social Work degree apprenticeship course. In addition, two Occupational Therapy (OT) apprenticeships are due to commence in March 2023.