

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 29 MAY 2014 at 2.00 PM.**

**CORE MEMBERS:** Depute Provost Patrick  
Baillie Paterson  
Rosie Murray

**MEMBERS**

**ATTENDING:** David Alexander  
Stephen Bird  
Jim Blackwood  
Steven Carleschi  
Colin Chalmers  
Linda Gow  
Craig Martin  
Cecil Meiklejohn  
Provost Pat Reid

**OFFICERS:** Shona Barton, Committee Services Officer  
Margaret Anderson, Director of Social Work Services  
Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement  
Colin Moodie, Depute Chief Governance Officer  
Philip Morgan-Klein, Service Manager, Social Work Services  
Mary Pitcaithly, Chief Executive  
Marion Reddie, Head of Community Care

**PP1. MINUTE**

**Decision**

**The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 20 March 2014 was approved.**

**PP2. SOCIAL WORK SERVICE SCRUTINY REPORT**

The panel considered a report by the Director of Social Work Services setting out the performance for the service from April to December 2013.

Margaret Anderson gave an overview of the report.

Members praised staff in Social Work Services who had been shortlisted in the final of the Care Accolades. They also commended the staff at the Tremana unit who have been awarded the Reaching High Award.

Baillie Paterson entered the meeting at this point.

Members sought information on the improvement actions in relation to sickness absence with particular reference to absence related to skin conditions and musculo-skeletal problems. Ms Anderson advised that there was a dedicated training input in relation to moving and handling training and that there were tight procedures and regulations in place in terms of infection control. Good use was also made of the Council physiotherapy service. She noted, however, that there were a number of long serving employees who have persistent musculo-skeletal problems which have been caused by doing this type of work over a long term period.

Councillors Martin and Meiklejohn entered the meeting at this point.

Clarification was sought on those absences which are being attributed to mental well-being and whether these were work related. Ms Anderson advised that the figures for Occupational Health referrals showed a 50/50 split between work related and non work related. She noted that some posts were emotionally demanding and that staff were involved in psychologically demanding situations.

Members asked what measures are being taken to mitigate the stress to staff. Ms Anderson advised that there are well developed HR policies in place with regard to stress and mental well being. Any absence in this area would trigger a referral to Occupational Health and a stress risk assessment would be undertaken which would result in a management plan being put in place. She also noted that there were good pointers as to what people can do individually to manage stress.

Members asked if a breakdown could be provided relating to musculo-skeletal absence and how many of the absences are due to a long term condition and how many are due to new problems. Ms Anderson advised that she would look at providing this information.

Clarification was sought on the shortage of equipment being experienced in the Occupational Therapy sector. Ms Anderson advised that although there were some issues in this area it was not seen as being critical.

Members sought information on the triage system for Occupational Therapy referrals, and if personal care services were used pending the installation of an adaptation could this compromise the client's independence. Ms Anderson advised if a client's independence is compromised that they would be a priority 1 referral and would therefore receive appropriate adaptations.

Members asked for information on the procedures for notifying clients who are assessed as priority 2 or 3 of their expected waiting times, and also how changes in circumstances are notified which may affect the level of priority. Ms Anderson advised that case workers are asked to keep clients updated and that they should be alerted to any changes in a client's circumstances. She also advised that managers take any changes to circumstance into account and deploy resources according to the level of risk.

A question was asked relating to the joint loan equipment store and the difficulties with people waiting for extended periods to receive equipment or for it to be picked up; with in some cases clients being asked to leave equipment outside if they no longer require it and have no room for storage. Ms Anderson advised that delivery of equipment was always prioritised over picking up, but she was unaware of clients being asked to leave equipment outside. She also noted that issues with cross contamination can result in delays with delivery and pickup of equipment.

Councillor Carleschi entered the meeting at this point.

Members sought information on the ongoing work at the walled garden in Dollar Park and the reasons for the work being on hold at the moment. Ms Anderson advised that she would look into this and report back to members.

A question was asked relating to the development of an Autism Strategy. Ms Anderson advised that following on from the publication of the National Autism Strategy, work was carried out locally to develop a strategy in partnership with NHS Forth Valley. The Strategy focussed on early intervention and early diagnosis as evidence had shown that some problems can be prevented in later years with early intervention with families.

Members sought clarification on whether patients are being placed in hospital in Sauchie, and the difficulties faced by families in terms of visiting their relatives. Ms Pitcaithly advised that NHS Forth Valley is responsible for making these decisions and that if beds become available in for example Sauchie or Stirling then they can move patients to these hospitals without consultation with the Council or with the family.

Members asked for information on the reasons for there still being a significant problem with delayed discharge. Ms Pitcaithly advised that people in care homes are now living for longer, meaning that the number of places which become available at any one time has decreased. She also noted that care homes can prioritise those patients who are self-funding as this can provide greater income than those who are being Council funded.

A question was asked in relation to the timescales for community care assessments taking place and whether these could be initiated before patients are discharged. Ms Pitcaithly advised that this was something which the service was aware was a problem and there was a need for hospital staff to alert Social Work earlier when patients were ready for discharge.

Members asked if further information could be provided on the length of time it takes for community care assessments to be undertaken for all category of clients, with a summary of those who were category 3 and became category 2 after they were assessed.

Members asked for information on the efforts being made to keep applicants informed in relation to community care assessments, with particular reference to the information that goes out to the client or their family. Ms Anderson advised that team managers do their best to work in challenging circumstances. She also advised that she accepted the points being raised and the ideal of a preventative and early intervention approach to service delivery.

Further concern was expressed over the triage process, noting that elderly people tend to wait till the last minute to seek help. It was noted that often initial screening was done via a telephone interview without meeting the client in person.

Provost Reid left the meeting at this point.

A question was asked in relation to the ability for prisoners to retain their band 1 homeseeker status while they are in prison, meaning that they have priority over other applicants when they are released from prison. Ms Anderson advised that she would look into this and report back to members.

Members asked about the success of the Tygetshaugh Unit in Denny and how this has helped in making sure people can get back to their homes. Ms Pitcaithly advised that this unit has proved successful and that more of this type of provision would help with bed blocking.

A question was asked about the balance of Social Work Teams and the ability for staff to carry out Occupational Therapy Assessments. Ms Anderson advised that each team does have a qualified Occupational Therapist and if all were unavailable this would be flagged up and managers would deal with this.

Clarification was sought on whether leaflets were handed out to patients who were subject to delayed discharge. Ms Reddie advised that it was her understanding that this was in place.

Councillor Martin left the meeting at this point.

Concern was raised in relation to bathroom assessments and how there could be times where no interim arrangements were put in place. It was suggested that this could be an area for more joined-up working with NHS Forth Valley. Ms Anderson advised that the forthcoming Health and Social Care Integration could be an opportunity to do more joined-up working.

A question was asked regarding the recruitment process for Occupational Therapists, and the number of staff who are on temporary contracts. Ms Anderson advised that there are a fixed number of permanent posts on the establishment and it wouldn't be as a matter of course to fill posts on a temporary basis.

## **Decision**

**The panel noted the performance statement.**

Councillor Gow left the meeting at this point.

### **PP3. PERFORMANCE PANEL – MEETING ARRANGEMENTS UPDATE**

The panel considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer which advised of a revised reporting schedule.

At the meeting of the panel held on 23 January 2014, members requested that a review of both the number of meetings and the reporting schedule be undertaken. The core members met on 17 March 2014 to discuss the meeting arrangements and agreed a revised reporting schedule, as follows:-

Thursday 15 May at 9.30 a.m	Social Work Services
Thursday 19 June at 9.30 a.m	Service Plans
Friday 26 September at 9.30 a.m	Chief Executive Office; Education Services;
Thursday 20 November at 9.30 a.m	Corporate and Neighbourhood Services; Development Services
January 2015 at 9.30 a.m (tbc)	Social Work Services
March 2015 at 9.30 a.m (tbc)	Chief Executive Office; Education Services;

#### **Decision**

**The panel noted the revised reporting schedule to March 2015.**