

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Adult Services held at 2.00 pm on
Thursday, 3 September 2020

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Cabinet Member)
Councillor J Birdi (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Employees Present:

P. Fahy, Director of Adult Services
G. Holmes, Law and Governance
U. Patel, Law and Governance

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February, 2020 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Enhancing Support to Family Carers

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Adult Services which sought approval to enhanced support to family carers.

Supporting family carers is a critical area of activity for Adult Social Care. Family carers provide support to their loved ones that is both person centred and compassionate, whilst also being extremely demanding in a range of circumstance. As such, carers would need to be adequately supported to continue this critical role.

Should family carers not be effectively supported the risk of carer breakdown increases. Where this happens there is a much higher probability of more formal care and support services being required and in some cases admission to residential care or housing with care. Wherever possible this should be avoided due to impact on the individuals involved.

In Coventry our support to carers is led by Carers Trust Heart of England who are supported by a grant from the City Council. Examples of the support on offer includes information and advice, networking, emergency support services and planned replacement care. In addition, the City Council also directly arranges respite care and carer breaks for carers eligible under the Care Act 2014.

The demands on carers as a result of Covid-19 had significantly increased. The limitations on social contact and social distancing, combined with clinical vulnerabilities had put increasing pressure on carers within the home environment.

A number of people with care and support needs struggle to understand the need to follow the regulations in place and as a result may exhibit more challenging behaviour as their normal routines are disrupted. Even as lockdown was lifted and society begins to return to normality, many carers did not have the same opportunities for support as before. For example, day services that used to provide important breaks for carers were now operating at a much reduced capacity. In addition, a number of carers had concerns regarding their own futures, for example, as a result of coping with a recent bereavement, a change in lifestyle, or concerns about employment and financial resilience. Young carers had also been impacted on by Covid-19 and additional support may be required in order to support with the emotional demands on this group.

In order to recognise these additional demands on carers, the report proposed the creation of an 'enhanced carers support offer' to be in place and delivered through Carers Trust Heart of England for a period of 12 months from September 2020. This enhanced support offer would include a range of interventions to improve carer resilience across areas including physical and mental health, digital and use of technology, coping with grief and loss, support in the workplace, hardship and poverty, and supporting the specific needs of black and minority ethnic carers. There is the ability to apply flexibility to this resource in order to provide some additional support to Young Carers should this be required.

This enhanced support offer would provide much needed support across a number of areas as we continue to live with Covid-19. Feedback and evidence of success of this enhanced offer would inform the types of support that would need to be mainstreamed for carers in Coventry as part of our multi-agency carers strategy from 2021.

The Cabinet Member and Shadow Cabinet Member recognised and acknowledged the unprecedented work undertaken by carers and young carers and hailed them as unsung heroes throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Both Members were fully supportive of the proposal.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services approves the establishment of an Enhanced Support Offer to family carers for 12 months from September 2020.

4. **Outstanding Issues**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance that contained a list of outstanding issue items that would be submitted to future meetings and summarised the current position in respect of each item.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services notes that a report will be submitted to the next meeting in relation to the item listed "Adult Social Care Practice Framework Adults and their Carers at the Heart of Practice".

5. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.15 pm)