

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Adult Services held at 9.30 am on**  
**Wednesday, 20 November 2024**

Present: Councillor L Bigham (Cabinet Member)  
Councillor B Mosterman (Shadow Cabinet Member)  
Councillor D Toulson (Deputy Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Service Area):

Adults and Housing: P Fahy (Director), G Borro, N Byrne, S Caren

Law and Governance: S Bennett, A Veness

## **Public Business**

### **13. Declarations of Interest**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **14. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5 September 2024 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

### **15. Future Recommissioning of Carers Support Services and Update on Progress Against the Carers Action Plan 2024/26**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services considered a report of the Director of Adults and Housing which covered the Future Recommissioning of Carers Support Services and update on progress against the Carers Action Plan 2024/26.

In the 2021 Census, 27,391 people in Coventry identified themselves as having caring responsibilities. We know this is likely to be an underrepresentation of our caring population, as many people do not recognise caring roles. Of those 27,391 – 8,391 carers reported to be providing over 50 hours of care, indicating an intense caring role (30.6%).

Supporting carers is of major importance to health and social care for a number of reasons including meeting duties arising from legislation, the important preventative aspects of maintaining support and because it is the right thing to do. We are all likely to take on caring responsibilities during our lifetime.

Adult Social Care in conjunction with Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board (CWICB) currently commission a range of support services for people with caring responsibilities across the city from Carers Trust Heart of England. These include:

- Carers Wellbeing Service – Information & Advice, Training, Peer Support, Activities, Wellbeing support
- Carers Assessments – Delegated responsibility from the council
- Carers Regulated Support – Carers Emergency Response Service & Carers Break Scheme
- Carers Projects – Primary Support for Carers, Employment Support, Direct Payments and Grief and Loss

The services are currently arranged in a mix of grant-based arrangements and a contract. All contracts and grants are due to expire on 31st March 2025. The current annual value of commissioned support is circa £775k which includes an annual contribution of £134k from CWICB.

A number of additional projects at a cost of £96k per year (included in above costs) commenced in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, to respond to emerging needs and identified pressures for carers. This included Grief and Loss & Employment Support.

For the future recommissioning of carer services there will be an overall reduction in budget of £41,870 per year due to the development of alternative information and advice support corporately and how we want to reshape our future carer support. The procurement activity will be structured in such a way (with a maximum price or similar mechanism) to facilitate this reduction in budget required, with the intricacies of such arrangement to be discussed and finalised with procurement and legal services colleagues in due course.

Coventry City Council together with the CWICB plan to recommission carer support services within Coventry based on carer feedback. The recommissioning is also aligned to our priorities in the Carers Action Plan 2024-26. (See appendix one). The plan outlines three key priorities based on carers feedback:

- Empower carers with flexible respite options, ensuring they can take breaks
- Deliver the right support, at the right time, and in the right place
- Maximise the reach of carers assessments to benefit more carers

The aim of the Carers Action Plan is to improve the experience of carers with a particular focus on improving the life a carer lives alongside caring. We plan to review the success of the plan by engaging with carers and reviewing data such as the local authority's bi-annual survey.

Progress against the Carers Action Plan so far is captured in Appendix 1 and includes:

- Advancing deployment of the Accelerated Reform Funds including onboarding of a specialist self-assessment and information and advice digital tool called Bridgit and the implementation of a project called My Time with the aim of supporting carers to take meaningful breaks.
- Developing Carers Assessments and pathways including delivery of a number of training sessions and rolling induction sessions to further support carers in their caring role.
- Updating and developing carer related information such as leaflets and websites to ensure carers are aware of the most up to date information to support them in their caring role.

- Developing a working group with University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire to support carers whilst in hospital and upon discharge with the aim of improving carers experience and that they are aware of support options in the community.
- Development of Young Carer pathways including establishing a Young Carers Early Help Link
- Recommissioning of carer support services aligned to our three key priorities in the carers action plan.

The Cabinet Member noted the move away from grant funded arrangements and that existing contracts would be extended to September 2024.

The Cabinet Member also noted that the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board had considered the report at their meeting on 13 November 2024 and had endorsed the proposals, with no further recommendations.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services endorses the recommissioning of Carers Support Services as detailed in the report.**

#### 16. **Adult Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2023/24**

The Cabinet Member for Adults Services considered a report of the Director of Adults and Housing which indicated that Adult Services have a statutory duty arising from the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009, to provide a system for receiving complaints and representations from people who use its services, or those acting on behalf of service users. There is also a duty under the regulations to produce and publish an annual report.

The report set out the details of the complaints and representations across Coventry's Adult Services in 2023/24. It highlighted the service improvements and learning from feedback and includes information on future developments in complaint handling and reporting.

The report indicated that there were 59 statutory complaints made within the year 2023/24, compared to 66 in 2022/23. 29 (49%) of these complaints were fully or partially upheld, compared to 30 (45%) in 2022/23. In addition to formal complaints a number of concerns are raised informally. Most informal complaints are received by social care providers directly who act upon feedback received but occasionally complaints received by the Council are dealt with on an informal basis where appropriate. In 2023/24 8 informal complaints were received compared to 14 in 2022/23. These are complaints resolved/handled at the point of delivery. In line with our complaints policy and best practice, most concerns are dealt with on an informal basis, for example by social care providers, and may not be reflected in the figures in this report.

In 2023/24, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSO) considered 10 complaints or enquiries regarding Adult Social Care, of which 2 were investigated and upheld. This compared to 7 complaints or enquiries with 3 upheld in 2022/23.

Adult social care services are committed to learning from customer feedback. Where complaints highlight where matters have gone wrong, managers must identify any remedial and developmental action required to improve service delivery. Feedback from compliments provides an equally valuable message; clearly affirming when services make a difference, and personal qualities have added value to the outcome for users and carers. Learning point examples are as follows:

- Adult Social Care is as keen to learn from what works well as we do from what goes wrong. We continue to collate the compliments as well as complaints and look at themes, learning and where good practice exists, we share this via our internal Let's Talk meetings and briefings with colleagues across the services as well as with individuals on a one-to-one basis.
- In addition to this, an internal centralized database has been developed to capture our practice learning and areas of improvement and we hold quarterly meetings to review all our learning from quality and experience.
- Management oversight of complaints into the service is now embedded, with regular meetings with the Adults Principal Social Worker and regular updates from colleagues in the Customer Relations Team into the Adult Social Care Management Team enabling greater oversight of how the process is managed and any delays.
- The Commissioning Team have developed protocols and processes for the quality management of contracted services.
- All concerns in relation to communication, especially where this can improve, are taken seriously and dealt with at an individual level to ensure all workers uphold professionalism and reflect on their actions to ensure reflections and learning from complaints informs future practice.
- Prior to a full quality assurance visit being carried out Contracts Officers and Clinical Support Nurses review the previous six months concerns and complaints to identify any trends in order to focus their quality visit and focus our support around the trend identified.

While there are no externally prescribed timescales for the resolution of complaints, the Council's internal guideline is to resolve complaints within 20 working days. Performance on this standard is monitored by the Adult Social Care Management Team. It is normal practice to inform complainants should an extension be required. Most often, extensions are sought due to the complexity of particular complaints, including where the complainant supplies additional information/evidence part way through an investigation. In 2023/24, 27% of complaints (27 of 59) were resolved within 20 working days, compared to 2022/23, 65% (43 of 66) a year ago.

Appendix I sets out the trends in complaints and representations across Coventry's Adult Services in 2023/24. It highlights the service improvements and learning from feedback and includes information on future developments in complaint handling and reporting. Key issues for 2023/24 include: communication between adult services and service users, decisions, delays/waiting time for assessment decisions and, managing service users' expectations. Appendix II sets out the Council's complaints handling guidance.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services approves the publication of the Council's Annual Report in relation to complaints and representations in Adult Social Care for 2023/24.**

**17. Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding Issues.

**18. Sally Caren**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services indicated that Sally Caren, Head of Adult Care and Support, was attending her last formal meeting. Sally was congratulated on and thanked for her exceptional work and dedication to the City Council and offered best wishes for the future.

**19. Any other items of public business which the Cabinet Member decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

(Meeting closed at 10.10 am)