



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023

## **HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL**

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 4.00 p.m.**

### **Present:**

Councillor Hudson (in the Chair)  
Councillors Astbury, Croft, Hasthorpe, Sandford and Wilson.

### **Officers in attendance:**

- Rob Walsh (Chief Executive)
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- Geoff Barnes (Assistant Director of Public Health)
- Zoe Campbell (Senior Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Gabrielle Dunn (Health and Wellbeing Graduate)
- Simon Galczynski (Interim Director of Adult Services)
- Karen Grimsby (Operational Manager, Therapies, Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust)
- Helen Kenyon (Place Director – Integrated Care Board)
- Guy Lonsdale (Finance Group Manager)
- Stephen McGrath (Strategic Special Projects Lead – Communities)
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director of Housing, Highways and Planning)
- Eve Richardson-Smith (Legal Team Manager)
- Joanne Robinson (Assistant Director Policy Strategy and Resources)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director EQUANS)
- Jacqui Wells (Head of Housing Strategy)

### **Also in attendance:**

- Councillor Shreeve - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care.

There were no members of the press or public present at the meeting.

### **SPH.26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Aisthorpe and Brasted.

## **SPH.27     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

## **SPH.28     MINUTES**

The panel received the minutes of its meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

At SPH.19, a member referred to the conversation at the meeting around the action for the East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) and the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (NLAG) to provide a briefing paper regarding the patient flow and it was also requested to add where the bed blocking was.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be agreed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of SPH.19 to reflect the additional request for information relating to where bed blocking was occurring.

## **SPH.29     QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public for this panel meeting.

## **SPH.30     FORWARD PLAN**

The panel received the current Forward Plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this Panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

## **SPH.31     TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY**

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations previously made by this scrutiny panel, which was updated for reference at this meeting.

It was agreed by the panel that that SPH.18 be removed from the tracking due to the winter pressures on the NHS and availability of colleagues to provide this information.

RESOLVED – That the tracking report be noted.

## **SPH.32     DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT**

The panel considered a report on the current position with regard to managing Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).

A member referred to the Government guidance recommendations for best practice timescales and asked how these were measured. Mr McGrath confirmed that they were measured in working days, which was the criteria adopted by the Government.

Referring to the size of waiting list for occupational therapist (OT) assessments, a member queried how long it would take to clear the backlog. Mr McGrath confirmed that, at present, there were 291 people waiting for a housing OT assessment and a further 200+ people being seen by the service. On average, it was taking 3-4 months to hold this first OT assessment.

The Member then queried why it would take 12-18 months to clear the backlog of cases. Mr McGrath explained that there were 291 individuals waiting for an OT visit; 200+ individuals part way through the DFG process (e.g. trialling equipment) up to reaching a decision at panel; and a further 320 individuals who were waiting for the installation of their major DFG on the Equans waiting list. Equans was currently completing around 200 major DFGs a year. To clear the backlog, the new measures in the housing assistance policy would need to double the number of major DFGs completed during this time period.

However, it should be noted that people would continue to be added to the various waiting lists and therefore the waiting lists could not be cleared overall. The housing OT service currently received approximately 900 referrals for equipment, minor and major DFGs each year, with further referrals received through hospital and mental health services, etc. Officers acknowledged the need to clear the current OT and Equans backlogs which, in turn, would reduce the waiting times for future DFG applicants. Changes to the contract framework to allow existing DFG contractors to do more work as a trial; allowing Registered Providers to do more DFG work at their properties; and allocating equipment requests more speedily would help achieve these improvements.

The supply chain delays highlighted in a case study in the report was a concern to members. Ms Grimsby explained that the case study related to a patient out of area who was moving back into this area. The timelines took into consideration the referral times from other areas and ensuring the patient had suitable adaptations in place to enable them to move back into area. She acknowledged that all these steps caused delays, not just the supply chain issues. Mr Nearney reassured the panel that officers understood where the blockages were, and a performance framework had been created based around intelligence/data and this evidence was being used to improve the DFG process by tackling blockages.

Ms Wells then referred to the changes in the Housing Assistance Policy, which had been attached as an appendix to the report. Officers were proposing to introduce a third, quicker approach to delivering simple major DFGs. Minor and simple DFGs would be allocated to new Trusted Assessor posts, which would mean that OTs could concentrate on the more complex cases. Mr McGrath explained that the shortage of OTs was a national issue, not just a local one, and using Trusted Assessors would help reduce the OT waiting list for assessments.

A member referred to the average time to complete paperwork for non-urgent referrals and asked why these were 345 days. Mr Thorpe explained this included going to panel; being on the waiting list; technical specification; and delays could also ensue if the adaptation needed to go through the planning process, etc.

Referring to the days taken to complete minor adaptations at 590 days, a member queried if these were being measured differently. It was clarified that this was the number of minor adaptation applications received so far this year, not the number of days to process them. To assist members, Mr Thorpe explained there were five stages under the Government guidelines for a DFG process. He confirmed that in future, these timescales would be measured by Equans and the OT service, and this would provide comparable information for the panel in future. This was important, given the lack of comparable national data.

Members did not feel that the current performance was acceptable for major adaptations, which officers agreed. Mr Nearney highlighted to the panel that historically there had been an issue around capacity and resourcing within the DFG process. However, the DFG budget was now being used to recruit four new Building Surveyors and two new OTs, albeit recruitment and retention for both areas remained a problem.

A member asked why there was an issue recruiting OTs. Ms Grimsby confirmed there was a national shortage of OTs and retention was difficult. However, she confirmed that her team were nearly fully staffed with one additional post (Level 6) that was not yet filled.

Ms Wells talked through the key changes in the Housing Assistance Policy and explained that it would be subject to public consultation shortly. A member asked when this would commence, and Ms Wells confirmed this would be as soon as possible. Officers wanted to include any changes that this Panel wanted to suggest before going out to consultation.

A member queried if people had to move out of their homes if major adaptations were taking place. Mr Thorpe confirmed that the work took place around them unless it was impossible to do so. This prompted a member to ask if anyone checked on their welfare whilst the works were taking place. Mr Thorpe confirmed that his team did do this.

Mr McGrath explained to the panel that DFGs was a demand led service which fluctuated. Mr Nearney explained that when the new proposals in the Housing Assistance Policy were in place, he was confident waiting times would reduce.

Members welcomed the new approach to managing the DFG process in future and the development of the Housing Assistance Policy. In response to a question from Mr McGrath, the panel confirmed that they were happy with all aspects of the revised Housing Assistance Policy and no changes were suggested.

Members requested that officers come back to a future meeting to give an update on delivering the improvements to the DFG process.

RESOLVED – That the panel receive a report at future meeting on the progress being made to reduce the waiting lists following the adoption of the new approach to managing the DFGs.

### **SPH.33 ADULT SERVICES ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT**

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the panel.

### **SPH.34 INTEGRATED CARE AT PLACE**

The panel received an update on the integrated care system at place.

A member queried where the decisions would be made about where services would be delivered. Ms Kenyon confirmed that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) would be working together with the acute trusts and the six places within the region to ensure that services wherever possible were provided locally.

A member was concerned about travel costs if patients had to travel out of area for medical treatment and asked how those costs be met. Ms Kenyon explained that there was a patient transport policy and people who qualified for transport costs would be able to claim or if specialist transport was required.

Referring to specialist services, a member queried if there would be any changes to specialist services moving to other areas which were less accessible, for example York, because there were not great train links from the area. Ms Kenyon confirmed there were no plans to change the commissioning plans locally, however, she highlighted that as technology developed and moved on that some specialist services may need to locate where the technology/machinery was.

A suggestion by the Portfolio Holder of Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care for the panel to have a democratic governance oversight of the Integrated Care System at a future panel meeting was welcomed by members.

RESOLVED – That the democratic governance oversight of the Integrated Care System be brought back to a future meeting of this panel.

### **SPH.35 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 – QUARTER 2**

The panel received a report from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Net Zero, Skills and Housing providing elected members with oversight of performance against the Council Plan.

A member referred to the public health target all being on green and queried if the targets were challenging enough. Ms Robinson explained that in Public Health their targets were focused on projects that were on track to deliver and she confirmed there were more projects to be developed, so it could change when the council plan was refreshed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **SPH.36 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – QUARTER 2**

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets which provided key information and analysis of the Council's position and performance against its Finance and Commissioning Plan for the second quarter of the 2022/23 year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **SPH.37 REVIEW OF THE 2022/23 WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Statutory Scrutiny Officer) providing panel members with the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the panel's work programme at the half year stage and provide a formal opportunity for the panel to update its work programme.

The panel agreed that the report reflected the panel's work programme for 2022/23 and the items still to be scheduled were on track to be covered before the end of the municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **SPH.38 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

There were no questions for the portfolio holder at this meeting.

### **SPH.39 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no formal requests from Members of this panel to call in decisions taken at recent meetings of Cabinet.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.55 p.m.