

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Feedback to Cabinet

Report Subject Matter: Respite Provision

1.0 **Context:**

1.1 On 10th August 2023, the People Scrutiny Committee was asked to scrutinise a report on Respite Provision. The scrutiny committee's role is to offer views to the cabinet and make any recommendations, which the Cabinet can accept or reject as part of their future decision-making.

1.2 The People Scrutiny Committee was presented with the following recommendations:

That the People Scrutiny Committee considers the findings of the Respite Opportunities Service review, the review recommendations, feedback received, and offers views to the Executive.

Key points raised by the Committee Members

1.3 The Committee recognised the commitment of the staff group and the high quality of the care and support the respite service at Budden Crescent has provided to the people with a learning disability and their carers over many years. There were mixed views across the committee about the proposals brought to the Scrutiny Committee, but the following offers key points for consideration by the Executive:

- Some members commented that the report didn't outline the full range of respite opportunities available across the county.
- There were some concerns expressed about the data and whether we have a true picture of the demand for the service, both currently and in the future.
- Some members commented that lower levels of use as a resulting from the pandemic should not be a justification to remove services.
- Some members acknowledged that whilst supporting people is very important, if demand for the services offered at Budden Crescent has declined, the cost implications cannot be ignored, acknowledging that it leaves less funding available to provide other types of respite.
- Some members felt that relying on facilities provided by other local authorities may be short sighted, given the increasing ageing population and advocated the need for some in-county respite provision.

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- Concerns were raised over the ability of the alternative respite provision, to respond to emergencies and how flexible the proposed alternative arrangements would be to meet those needs?
- Members questioned whether Budden Crescent could operate a wider respite model to cater for people suffering with dementia or learning disabilities and whether this would make the service financially viable. Members heard that this would be very difficult to staff, as different care skills would be needed for people with different health conditions. However, Members are aware that Centrica Lodge in Newport operates a wider respite model, catering for elderly Care, learning disabilities, mental health conditions and younger adults. Members question therefore, why Monmouthshire cannot diversify to meet a number of care needs and suggest this is something the Executive should explore. The possibility of a regional facility was also highlighted, recognising that other authorities are facing similar challenges.
- There were mixed feelings about the review, some members advocating the need for an independent review, but others commented that it was a robust report.

Public Open Forum

- 1.3 Written contributions had been received in advance of the meeting and had been shared with all who attended. A contribution reported how the family felt let down by the Council in terms of the proposals to close Budden Crescent and how alternative respite provision would not meet their needs. A written contribution from another service user highlighted the importance of the service to her and her relative. A written contribution from an academic was also circulated to Members and a lady who has sent a written contribution attended the meeting and spoke on behalf of her family, explaining how the service currently provided at Budden Crescent met the needs of their family and how they would very much struggle without it.

Formal Outcome of the Scrutiny

- 1.4 The Committee made the following recommendations:
1. That if the Executive does close Budden Crescent, it fully reviews the respite options, given that majority of the options are currently unviable for those with complex needs who need 24/7 care. The Committee requests the Executive ensures that alternative types of respite support and 'shared lives' is accessible to people and provides the appropriate level of care and support for each individual receiving respite.

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2. That the Executive ensures that social services fully engages intensively with the families who are unhappy with the recommendation to close Budden Crescent to provide more intensive care and support them and to see how their needs can be met.