

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Public Services Scrutiny Committee held at on Tuesday, 3rd October, 2023 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Armand Watts (Chairman)
County Councillor Penny Jones, (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Jill Bond, Jan Butler, Steven Garratt, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Dale Rooke, Frances Taylor, Armand Watts and Meirion Howells

Also in attendance County Councillors: John Crook, Peter Strong, Jackie Strong, Sue Riley, Alistair Neill, Emma Bryn, Simon Howarth, Angela Sandles, cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement, Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services and Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Sharran Lloyd, LSB Development Manager
Nicola Prygodzicz
Chris Overs, Divisional Nurse
Tracey Pw, Assistant Director of Nursing at ABHB
Dan Davies
Lloyd Hambridge, Divisional Director for Primary Care & Community Services Division
Susan O'Brian, Early Years Integration And Transformation Lead
John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager
Paul Underwood, Interim General Manager for Unscheduled Care
Beth Watkins, Flying Start Manager

APOLOGIES: County Councillor Tudor Thomas

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting is at

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjokQyqlXqc&list=PLLMqn4nAaFJCILetq56Hon4uJ3r_La-et&index=6

1. Declarations of Interest

None received.

2. Public Open Forum

No public present.

3. Early Years Integration and Transformation Pilot and Flying Start

Beth Watkins and Susan O'Brian updated the committee on recent progress. The Chief Executive of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Nicola Prygodzicz and Chris Overs answered the members' questions with Beth Watkins.

Key points raised by the Committee Members:

- Members welcomed the positive progress that had been achieved in addressing some of the issues since the Committee's previous scrutiny of the matter in the

summer. A member commented that they believed health visitor courses to have been historically over-subscribed and questioned whether the lower number of people training becoming health visitors was related to general recruitment and retention issues and questioned how this could be remedied. Another member highlighted that during the pandemic, staff were seconded into different roles and were able to learn new skills. They questioned whether this practice could provide development opportunities and also bring stability to the workplace by managing gaps in staffing. The chair also highlighted the recruitment drive a few years ago in European countries that led to transferrable qualifications and suggested that in respect of the Ukraine crisis, there may be a potential recruitment opportunity.

- The health visitor caseload of 110 children was contrasted with the social care caseload of 25-30, Members being concerned as to how the number of cases could be reduced.
- Members felt it was important to continue having conversations with Welsh Government to highlight any resource issues.

Chair's Summary:

The chair thanked officers, Beth Watkins and Susan O'Brian for their continued hard work and thanked the health board for their input, acknowledging that progress has been made since the previous scrutiny.

4. Dentistry Services (including those for young people)

Lloyd Hambridge spoke to the committee and answered the members' questions with the Chief Executive of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board Nicola Prygodzicz.

Key points raised by the committee members:

- Members reported that foster carers are expressing real difficulty in accessing services for young people in their care.
- A Member highlighted how Severnside had lost a dentist practice in Caldicot and there is little capacity for NHS services in Chepstow and questioned what was being done to incentivise newly qualified dentists to go into the NHS rather than private practice.
- A resident had advised a councillor that they have been unable to receive dentures for nearly 2 years, because they are unable to get the initial referral from a dentist. **ACTION – Lloyd to follow up individual case with details from Councillor Rooke.**
- A member asked how many NHS dental practices are in the clawback process, whether this is being explored. There is a concern that NHS dentists may be only

doing emergencies, rather than preventative work, leading to poor job satisfaction and practices not being viable. **ACTION – Lloyd to provide details.**

- A member asked whether ABUHB were aware of how desperate the dentistry situation is in Chepstow, arguing that a 'nearby' area might look close on a map, but may not necessarily be the case on the ground, for example, if there are no direct buses. The member asked why referrals are being made to Monmouth, if services are already available in the community hospital in Chepstow? **ACTION – Lloyd to provide a response.**
- A member highlighted that the public are unsure of who to speak to, to get the relevant information and that signposting to services needs to be much clearer.
- A member highlighted that with 450 new homes planned for Magor and Undy in the next 3 years and two dental surgeries being completely full, what plans are proposed to provide for this area. **ACTION: Lloyd to provide a response.**
- The chair suggested that European recruitment had appeared to be successful previously and questioned how we would address the potential deficit from recruiting overseas post-Brexit.
- Another member asked whether there are incentives for students to enter the NHS via placements, allowing dentists to do more detailed work.
- A member highlighted that using 'Llaes' may be beneficial for consultation.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked Lloyd for his presentation and for answering member's questions and agreed that actions would be forwarded to ABUHB to provide a response following the meeting.

5. Minor Injuries Unit at Nevill Hall: Question and Answer Session

Nicola Prygodzicz introduced the discussion to the committee, Paul Underwood delivered a presentation and together, they answered the members' questions.

Key points raised by the committee members:

- Members highlighted that at present, the public are very unclear as to the services are available and the locations, with many people unsure where to go. There needs to be clear communication to the public how to access all of the services. Members reported very different experiences at different hospitals, people reporting that service are no joined up or linked well to English services.
- Members questioned why minor injuries cannot be signposted to Nevil Hill at the Grange, to avoid long queues, Members citing that consultation responses demonstrate the public's overall anxiety about emergency services and waiting lists

- Members questioned the effectiveness of the public information campaign and suggested there is need for a targeted media campaign, as opposed to a leaflet drop.
- Members asked whether the Minor Injuries Unit at Nevill Hall is being cut because of the wider budget problems and what are the budget savings that the proposal will deliver, especially given there will be no staff reduction. Explanations were given as to usage and spending priorities.
- Members expressed that there is great concern from residents that the Grange is too far in an emergency situation and there is no local provision that they can rely on, particularly the case in the north of the county and that the way that services have been distributed compounds the situation.
- A member offered an example of her difficult experience with a close relative and ABUHB agreed to look into this if the member provided further detail outside of the meeting. **ACTION: Councillor Sue Riley to provide further detail to Paul Underwood.**
- The chair highlighted that there is a broader issue of consultation and what can be done to convince the committee and public that the ABUHB will listen to what the people want.

Chair's Summary:

The chair thanked the Chief Executive and her colleagues for being present to answer Members questions and noted that decisions being made were very stark and he urged ABUHB to hear the public feedback.

6. To note the date and time of the next meeting: 23rd October 2023

The meeting ended at **1.00 pm**