

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 28 September 2023

By: Assistant Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health – Report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 The Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Department has developed an ASCH Equality and Inclusion Strategy, which is now in its third year of delivery. This sits within the broader One Council approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and focuses on actions which are more specific to ASCH services. In July 2022 the People Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Review Board to undertake a Scrutiny Review of Equality and Inclusion in Adult Social Care and Health; the review focussed on identifying key communities that ASCH seldom hears from but should, barriers preventing groups and people from accessing services, and how ASCH can reduce those barriers and improve its engagement with those groups.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The People Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of Equality and Inclusion in ASCH. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 The review considered how the Department identifies and engages with seldom heard groups, the awareness of ASCH services amongst these groups, the different types of barriers to accessing services, and potential ways to reduce those barriers, including through the use of community engagement, enhancing staff knowledge, effective and inclusive communication, inclusive services and relationships with external partners.

2.3 The review concluded that there is a strong commitment from the Department to identify and engage with seldom heard groups and to providing an inclusive and accessible service. The Review found that a lack of trust, stigma around using services, and a lack of understanding about services were the biggest barriers for seldom heard groups and communities and made a number of recommendations to help overcome those barriers. The Review also recognised that who is seldom heard will change over time, so it was important for the Department to continue to identify and listen to the needs of the community.

2.4 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 10 October 2023. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on this Cabinet meeting agenda there is a separate report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

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