
Public Questions as specified in the Council's Procedure Rules of the Constitution

Item (A)

Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting on 12 September 2024

(A) Question submitted to the ICB Executive Director for Berkshire West by Paula Saunderson:

'Four years ago in September 2020, I started to raise Continuing Health Care in relation to late stage Dementia, then in February 2021 I was advised that Berks West rates of awarding CHC were under review, and on 20th May 2021 I asked for a further update on progress, so how are we getting on please with this review, what are the reported findings and recommendations and when will they be reported to this Board or the Health Scrutiny Commission?'

The Executive Director – Adult Social Care answered:

Thank you very much for your question. You are going to get a two-part answer to this – the local authority perspective and ICB perspective, which reflects the fact that there's a little bit of a gap between how we're looking at this item. The data shared on screen illustrates concerns that we as a local authority have. This is CHC data, excluding the fast track element, per 50,000 population. What you can see is that, as of four years ago, the quarter one position is no better than it was. We recognise that the direction of travel nationally and with our neighbours in BOB is downwards, which is an important contextual factor. But, broadly speaking, the local authorities have worked closely with the ICB on trying to shift the position, but as you can see from the data, eligibility decisions are fundamentally unchecked.

The ICB Director of Primary Care answered:

The ICB are aware of the variation across the System and continue to work through the agreed, with Partners, to address the recommendations of the recent independent review. The actions are for the wider health and care partnership to take forward and will be monitored together.

There is no evidence to suggest that the variation is unwarranted, and it is indicative of the population need across the Berkshire West Place. However, there is a significant transformation programme in place across the ICB which includes quite a lot of further investment in the Continuing Health Care Assessment Team. This will also help in accelerating the work already committed to. So, in essence, we understand that there is variation, and we are working together with partners to address that and move forward with the recommendations of the review, and also we're getting input from the regional team to help us look at the picture more closely.

Paula Saunderson asked the following supplementary question:

'Is it normal to take four years for this sort of reviews and can you check that we can have access to the results from the independent review? It does seem to be taking a long time to come up with the transformation programme – is there any way it can be sped up?'

The Executive Director – Adult Social Care answered:

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I'm happy to go away and establish whether the findings of the Peer Review can be made public. I think there might be some difference in the perspectives of the three local authorities in Berkshire West and the ICB. Of course, we are mindful that significant cultural / organisational change does not happen overnight, but I would agree with you that we should be seeing more change than we are seeing across a four year period.

Paula Saunderson provided additional information:

'I've actually experienced the system – back then I was the full-time unpaid carer for my Mum, but all of the three stages failed my Mum, so having a transformation programme and better clarity for family unpaid carers is quite important. If you can get an output where people are much clearer about this system and how it applies, especially for dementia (because there are differences), I think that would be a very successful outcome.'
