

Public Participation – Cabinet 4 October 2022

Question 1 – Jamie Dunn

Statement

The possibility of injuries in school is always present, so making sure everyone based there are equipped to handle different types of injuries is important. Last year I contacted Cllr Parry and Theresa Leavy respectively asking for support within the DC community of schools. I introduced Zach Griffiths from the British Red Cross South division. Within six months, a large uptake of bookings have been placed with the BRC and delivered across a number of Dorset venues. Further discussions are ongoing on introducing first aid classes within the school day. Let's take the opportunity to lead on such an issue.

Question - First Aid in Dorset school curriculums

Whilst support for the importance of adding first aid to our school curriculums have been cascaded in such as the likes of my social media posts or tweets, no evidential support has been given to our local schools since. Only Lytchett Minster school have been a clear supporter of this, incorporating within their school day with the BRC.

Can I ask for a detailed response as to why this is and indeed what the educational lead of Dorset Council is going to do in liaising with the new education secretary on bringing First aid onto our Dorset school curriculums?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

On 12 September 2022, the Department for Education sent a survey to all schools in England to determine how many automated external defibrillators (AEDs) exist across the school estate nationally. The term 'automated external defibrillator' refers to defibrillators that can be placed externally on the body. The Department for Education announced that all state-funded schools across England will receive defibrillators and we have welcomed this announcement in Dorset. The defibrillators will make sure there is a life-saving device in every school and boost their numbers in communities across the country. We are working with the Department for Education to support the rollout.

Alongside this important announcement, we have promoted important information to our schools about the excellent work of the British Red Cross in their programmes to support schools, which includes workshops on First Aid, Empathy and migration and Coping with challenges. Whilst curriculum remains a responsibility for schools to deliver in line with the national curriculum, the Council plays an active role in promoting useful materials to support our school leaders.

We launched the Dorset Education Board in the Summer term of 2022. The Board includes key educational leaders in Dorset who have the passion and expertise across the education ecosystem and expert advisers to support the Board's work.

The Board ensures the voices of children, young people and families are heard and understood and will keep pupils' education performance, health, safety, and wellbeing to the fore in decision making.

At a Board meeting in July 2022, the group agreed three priorities, to be delivered through three task and finish groups:

1. Devise a student pledge – to ensure that all children and young people receive their entitlement to a well-rounded education that prepares them for life and work in modern society.
2. Devise a workforce pledge – to create a culture of openness, trust, stronger accountability, create commitment and sustainability by looking at recruitment and retention and continuing professional development.
3. Devise the Dorset Curriculum – to ensure that the curriculum is driven by students, including community, relationships, plans for skills in adult life, raising hopes and aspirations, employment opportunities which is representative of Dorset.

We will continue to play a key role in promoting the best education for our children and young people through a well-rounded and ambitious curriculum.

Question 2 – Mike Newland

RE Item 8 on the agenda

In response to a question, I recently asked at People and Health Overview Committee about the fairness and affordability of Blocked Book Beds at Residential Care Homes I was informed that '*A number of these homes were then replaced by Care South in return for long-term block contracts with the Council that formed an income stream upon which they could raise the funds needed to invest in the building programme*'.

However, according to Care South accounts, only one of the relevant homes (Maiden Castle) is owned and was built by Care South (on land leased to it by the Council). The other two homes (Buxton House and Fairlawn) are leased to Care South by Aster Housing Association (Buxton was subleased by DCC to Care South). The 2005 loan taken by Care South to build Maiden Castle appears relatively small compared to the amount of income from these contracts taking into account the very large difference between, for example, their weekly dementia bed rate of >£1200 to that of typical and FCoC fees highlighted in the report to be presented to Cabinet today, ~£700-850; And there are 130-140 total block booked beds, paid for (even if empty) for up to another 2 decades; Also, the assessed FCoC fee rate already includes a significant amount to account for return on capital.

Given that previous attempts by Adult Services to renegotiate the contracts were unsuccessful, I have the following questions:

1. Please can a full and more complete explanation be given as to why the blocked booked bed rates are so high and for so long?

2. Given the advertised '*huge hole*' in adult services budgets and the very large costs of these contracts, what new progress has there been to reduce the contracted block booked bed rate to a more affordable level for Dorset ratepayers and to a fairer level compared to that given to other providers?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

It should be noted that Mr Newland has asked this question and similar questions to this matter, including on the following occasions Dorset Council in December 2021 and People & Health Overview Committee in September 2022 and has received a response from me or my officers.

Response to question 1

1. As we have stated previously, the contracts were established in early 2000's under terms that this Council would not agree today. There has been thorough legal examination of all options for fundamentally changing or ending the contracts, and there are limited options available to us without the agreement of both parties or without incurring very significant contract penalties.

Response to question 2

2. I think the start of your question is a reference to the challenges of delivering the Council's plan towards paying the fair cost of care which is expected to be fully funded. As stated previously Commissioners are working closely with Care South to review the contract.