
OVERVIEW OF ADULT SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Adult Services Portfolio:

Learning Disabilities

2. Cabinet has given its approval to the report on the formal adoption of powers under Section 31 of the Health Act 1999 (Health Act flexibilities), and the report will be considered by Council on 19 April.
3. The revised management structure in Learning Disability Services is taking shape, with a number of key appointments made in recent weeks.

Mental Health

4. The contract for the joint Darlington and Durham Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Service has been awarded to “Skills for People”, a national organisation that was one of the successful pilot service providers in the Tyneside area.
5. An innovative Social Care Consultant post has been created in Darlington to raise the profile of social care in mental health work.

Substance Misuse

6. Adult Social Service staff are working in partnership with colleagues from the NHS and the DAAT to improve services to people who misuse substances, with a particular emphasis upon vulnerability and public protection.

Older Persons/People with Disabilities

7. Adult Social Services, in conjunction with Darlington PCT, Durham PCT and Durham Social Care and Health Services Department, has submitted an application to be one of three national Demonstrator schemes for the extension of assistive technologies and service redesign for people with long-term conditions. There is intense competition for these schemes, but the exercise of working alongside partners to develop the submission has been of value. Even should we be unsuccessful in the bid, we will be included in a “learning community” that will allow us to benefit from the experience of other applicants.

Integration with the PCT

8. The Project Plan for Learning Disabilities is on-target.
9. Meetings have been arranged with PCT colleagues to explore immediate opportunities that will deliver improvements in Older Persons services. The strengthening of practical relationships will form a platform for more structural integration between services in the future.

Improvements to Sheltered Housing Schemes

10. The following improvements have recently been undertaken in the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes:
 - (a) Communal facilities are being improved at Roxby Court at a cost of £27k including the redesigning of the kitchen, the upgrading of the laundry and warden's office as well as full redecoration.
 - (b) Communal facilities at Wesley Court are being improved and remodelled at a cost of £46k, including a new kitchen and central heating system, improved lighting and redecoration.

Get Everyone Motivated (GEM)

11. GEM, the programme of gentle exercise for older people delivered initially at sheltered housing schemes and then rolled out to other areas of the community, continues to further develop. In addition to weekly classes operating from 17 sheltered housing schemes new classes have been developed in 2006/07 at ED Walker Homes, the Arts Centre, Dolphin Centre, Coleridge Centre, St. Andrew's Church and Lawson Street.

Engagements

12. I have undertaken the following:
 - 12 March – Briefing Meeting with Adult Services Managers.
 - Several briefings with the Director of Community Services.

Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adult Services