
OVERVIEW OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform and update Members on progress within Adult Social Care and Housing since the last meeting of Council. The following are the main areas of work under the Portfolio for Adult Social Care and Housing.

Adult Social Care –Strategic Commissioning

2. A new contract for Advocacy services commenced on 1 April 2013. The new provider is Darlington Association on Disability and provision includes a transferred responsibility from the Primary Care Trust to the Council to provide Independent Mental Health Advocacy.
3. Cabinet, at its meeting held on 5th March 2013, approved a procurement process for domiciliary care contracts for all adults with identified needs. The procurement process is underway and the aim is to award up to 15 contracts on a framework to provide standard and enhanced care and support services to meet individual outcomes. In redesigning the contracts, it is anticipated to achieve an efficiency saving for the Council. The new Contracts will commence 1st October 2013.
4. The new older people's Residential Care contracts 2013-16 commenced on 1 April 2013. All the current providers have signed the framework agreements, which include new outcomes for individuals and an improved quality standards framework.
5. Cabinet, at its meeting held on 9th April 2013, approved the Extra Care Housing Strategy and delivery plan. It also approved outsourcing the in-house homecare service. A procurement process is now underway and it is anticipated the new contracts will be in place in autumn 2013.
6. A strategic review of the RIACT service has taken place after the first year of the integrated intermediate care and re-ablement team. A number of recommendations are being taken forward through a joint intermediate care strategy group.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

7. Safeguarding – On-going work being undertaken with a local residential care provider, with a further meeting being held involving Health, Care Quality Commission, Darlington Borough Council and Provider. We are working towards a

clear action plan regarding quality standards, management and oversight of the establishment.

8. Excellent work programme underway with Scrutiny regarding a Task and Finish approach to Safeguarding Adults, this will cover a range of areas and priorities over the next few months.
9. The RIACT Team were not successful in the National Awards Ceremony but their achievement in being nominated for such a prestigious award in such a short space of time was outstanding. A celebration to say well done to staff was held at Hundens Lane on the 13th March; this was attended by Ada Burns, Councillor Dixon, Councillor Thistlethwaite and Councillor S. Richmond.
10. The RIACT service is currently undergoing a review by Commissioning staff; this will be completed over the next two weeks and will provide us with a framework and recommendations to take forward to ensure the best quality delivery of the integrated RIACT service.

Housing Services

11. Cockerton Regeneration - On 4th March 2013, Cockerton had the pleasure of inviting all of the key partners, Members, and a number of local residents to the formal commencement of the construction phase of the investment programme. The second and final stage of demolitions should be completed in April 2013 with cleared land then being made available to deliver up to 80 new homes for sale and rent. Partners, Esh Development Services, Northstar Housing and the Homes and Communities Agency all spoke of their excitement of moving into this new phase and about the commitment and close working relationships of all to deliver significant improvements to the local area. A number of local residents gave their thanks for minimising the disruption during the demolition works and for keeping the area clean and tidy, and spoke of their enthusiasm for the new construction phase to commence.
12. A number of local people have also commented about the radical improvements already completed to retained Council-owned properties both internally and externally essential to improving the whole area. The construction phase of the investment works will also seek to engage with local schools to ensure they are aware of safe practices in and around building works, engagement with the local University and College to try and secure training and employment opportunities for local people through the investment works, improve existing sustainable green routes to West Park, and, develop new quality open space.
13. Welfare Reform Update - Housing officers have identified around 620 tenancies affected by the bedroom tax. All of these tenants have been encouraged to have a personal home visit with a Housing Officer to look at their individual circumstances. At 5th April 339 interviews had been completed and those still outstanding being actively pursued. Officers have explained to each tenant visited the changes that the Welfare Reforms mean to their rent payments, the various options available have been explored and then support has been provided to help complete

applications for a transfer or mutual exchange to a smaller property.

14. 89 of the tenants visited have told us that they wish to move to smaller accommodation representing 26% of those visited and we have seen the number of mutual exchanges approved from around one or two per month to four or five. We anticipate that those choosing to be rehoused will increase as the welfare reforms and requirement for everyone of working age to pay some Council Tax impacts over the next few months. Tenants have been encouraged to apply for discretionary housing payments where officers believe there is entitlement and we will continue to do this over the coming year. During the visits we have also gathered information on household make up, disability and vulnerability, together with income and expenditure if the tenant was prepared to share this which will enable us to target the support available both now and in the future.
15. All appropriate Housing Officers have attended general money management and energy advice sessions so that they are able to give generalist advice and signposting. Specialist advice is also available. Officers are actively looking to encourage tenants to review their budget management and as appropriate encourage tenants to use facilities such as direct debit, standing order and the credit union. Where tenants do not have basic bank accounts they are being encouraged to set these up as this will also help them with the introduction of the Universal Credit.
16. Over the coming months it is the intention that the information gathered will be updated and used to inform how to continue to support tenants through the changes whilst not losing focus on the need to collect rent.

GOLD

17. GOLD members have been prioritising Dignity in Care and also their programme of evaluating some care homes taking part in the Gold Standards Framework (GSF) national training. They also maintain their three monthly groups and have had a real push for recruiting members and volunteers. There are currently 1028 people on the mailing list and the age range of members spans over 40 years. Eleven volunteers have worked hard to develop the Dignity in Care training pack which volunteers will use to train care staff. The Open College Network has agreed to accredit this training at Level 2, which means it will count towards training for care staff. Training is being set up for volunteers who do not already have training or teaching qualifications. We believe that the training will carry more credibility because it is being delivered by members of the public over 50. The project promotes a positive image of older people because it is people being active and involved and interested, they're learning new things, and it shows how much older people have to contribute.
18. Members of GOLD also held a celebration event at St Cuthbert's Church Hall on the 25th March 2013 attended by 60 older people and this helped to raise the profile of the Dignity in Care work and gave older people the opportunity to discuss issues that were important to them. Membership of GOLD continues to grow and the age range of members spans over 40 years which further highlights that GOLD

members still have a lot to contribute in Darlington in a work setting or in the broader community.

19. I have also:-

- (a) attended the Best of Darlington Awards;
- (b) compared at the GOLD Celebration Event organised by GOLD members;
- (c) met with the French Academics to discuss how Adult Social Care is organised in Darlington;
- (d) attended the GOLD Health meeting where the Chief Office of the Clinical Commissioning Group, Martin Philips, explained the changes in the organisation of the NHS;
- (e) attended a workshop looking at the future housing needs of the elderly; and
- (f) dined at the Officers and Sergeants Mess at the T.A. Centre on Neasham Road, 50th Signal Squadron to celebrate members long service and the work carried out by them at last year's Olympics in London.

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Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adult Social Care and Housing