
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Health and Partnerships Portfolio were as follows:

Public Health

2. Work has continued to develop the governance of the Tees Valley Public Health Shared Service (TVPHSS). It is hosted by Redcar and Cleveland Council and provides support to the five Tees Valley Local Authorities, through the Director of Public Health, in discharging their responsibilities to protect health, reduce health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing.
3. Since the last meeting of Council, our authority has joined the Smokefree Action Coalition (SFAC). This is a national campaign network for tobacco control. Membership is free to local authorities and the other benefits are considerable. They will provide information which will support our local public health activity. As Chair of the Darlington Tobacco Alliance, I support local actions to cut smoking rates and reduce tobacco use.
4. The LGA, Public Health England and the Department for Health published guidance on the new health protection duties of local authorities following the Health and Social Care Act (2012). The arrangements for health protection from April 2013 build on the strengths of the existing system and the strong local working relationships. Under the new regulations, the council is required to support and promote the preparation of local health protection arrangements. This includes commissioning plans aimed at prevention of infectious disease as well as joint approaches for responding to incidents and outbreaks agreed locally with partners.
5. Public Health England (PHE) launched "Longer Lives" in mid June 2013. It is one of PHE's first major initiatives. "Longer Lives" is a new website to show how premature deaths (deaths under the age of 75) vary between English local authorities and provides links to examples of how some of the most important causes can be reduced, i.e. cancer, heart disease and stroke, lung disease and liver disease. A presentation on the application of 'Longer Lives' to Darlington is available from the Director of Public Health.

Darlington Partnership

6. Darlington Partnership has decided that 'Developing a Good Neighbour Scheme' will be its single Action Priority for 2013/14. The Partnership has fostered discussions between Durham Constabulary and Age UK Darlington in exploring

how Neighbourhood Watch might play a part in a good neighbour scheme. The proposal is that a network of Good Friends will be established across Darlington, these people will keep a watchful eye on their older and vulnerable neighbours, providing support and friendship and assisting them with a range of issues which if left unaddressed could compromise their ability to live safely and well independently. A project outline was presented to a meeting of stakeholders chaired by the Chairman of Darlington Partnership, Alasdair MacConachie and work is on going to realise the initiative.

7. Darlington Partnership is overseeing work to align support available for people adjusting to the Welfare Reforms. A baseline assessment is being compiled with a survey to map services offered within Darlington currently underway. A series of indicators have been agreed which will help monitor the impact of the Welfare Reforms on issues such as homelessness, security of housing, debt, crime and mental health. As a Digital Inclusion strategy is being developed, early action will focus on ensuring there is access to computers for those without to allow them to claim on line and that IT skills support available. Central to the Darlington collaborative response to Welfare Reforms will be a universal booking system which will effectively knit provision together. This will involve an on line system that allows workers in different agencies to book clients for advice sessions with other agencies automatically. The skill and knowledge of the 'Gateway' workers (those dealing directly with clients and making bookings) to triage appropriately is critical to its success.
8. Darlington Citizen's Advice Bureau has been successful in a Big Lottery bid to provide a two year rolling programme of training within third sector organisations. This will provide additional skills for benefit advisors and ensure a consistent and high quality Gateway triage.

Welfare Rights

9. Appeals dealt with by Newcastle Tribunal Service are currently taking approximately 52 weeks to be listed in Darlington. It is expected that there will be a further increase in the number of appeals when Disability Living Allowance is replaced later in the year.
10. The move from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance has significantly lengthened the time for appeals to be heard.
11. Caseload for Welfare Rights at the end of May 2013 stands at 78 open cases compared to 143 in the previous year. This is as expected but still exceeds current capacity.

Community Advice Project (CAP)

12. The CAP Project has now ceased and the exit strategy has been implemented and the final evaluation is due later this year. Partners will continue to work together in the future and they are all involved in the Welfare Reform work within Darlington Partnership. It should be noted however that the loss of CAP staff has further reduced the capacity to provide advice to the residents of Darlington.

Healthwatch

13. Healthwatch Darlington is now operational and has launched the new website which can be found at <http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk>. This gives contact details for the signposting service which can be contacted by telephone on 0808 801 0383 (Signposting and Information) or on 01325 380145 (Landline) or by Text on 07575237723.
14. Healthwatch Darlington has appointed a partial board and this includes representatives with particular responsibility for governance, equality and young people's voice. Recruitment of new members is continuing and the first newsletter has already been published.
15. Healthwatch hosted an event on 10th July 2013 at the Dolphin Centre on behalf of the Council and the Clinical Commission Group. The aim of this event was to reflect on the changes that have occurred over the past twelve months in relation to health and social care. This event also included workshops to inform the commissioning intentions of the Clinical Commissioning Group, increase understanding of the Health and Well-Being Board and the development of Healthwatch.

Health and Social Care Provider Forum

16. On 25 June I facilitated a forum for Health and Social Care providers to hear from members of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The work of the Board was outlined and attendees questioned board members. Representatives from over 30 organisations attended.

Councillor A Scott
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships