
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 Holder for Adult Services and Housing.

Strategic Commissioning

Transformation of Adult Social Care

2. A report and Equality Impact Assessment was presented to Cabinet on the 13 September 2011. It was decided to defer the final decision to approve the revised policy until the Medium Term Financial Plan was presented in November.

Mental Health Day Opportunities and Supporting People Contracts

3. The implementation plan is underway to support the transfer to new providers where appropriate and assessing people for the new eligible social care day opportunities. The deferment of the eligibility criteria policy approval has caused some additional issues with the day service. However, as the non eligible “drop in” service will continue until the end of March 2012 people are being supported by Adult Social Care through this transition period.

Intermediate Care Plus Strategy

4. The strategy has been approved by Cabinet. The focus is on integration and work is progressing towards developing formal partnership agreements with the Community Health Provider and commissioning the Single Point of Access to include improved management of the Intermediate Care beds over the winter period.

Community Support Network

5. A feasibility study continues with a number of people across the statutory and voluntary sector being interviewed. A “Full of Life” Day organised to celebrate the UK Older Peoples Day provided an ideal opportunity for people to gain a taster of wider activities and for the consultants to interview the public to gain their views.

Safeguarding Adults

6. Positive progress is being made in the current Executive Strategies with robust action plans to take forward any issues and concerns.

7. We have also recently agreed to put forward a request for a Serious Case Review in relation to the sad death of a lady in residential care. A decision will be made in the near future by a Sub-Committee of the Adults Safeguarding Board.

Operational Developments

Modernising Day Opportunities for People with a Learning Disability

8. The closure of the four day services has now been completed and all 57 clients are settled into services. Although this was a large and complex piece of work, it was completed with minimal disruption to the individual clients and staff concerned. The next stage will be the full review of the remaining 6 day services which is underway and will be completed by April 2012.

Intermediate Care and Reablement

9. The Single Point of Access at Hundens Lane, created through the Dementia Collaborative, is proving to be very effective. The next stage will be the wider integration of all health and social care staff linked to intermediate care and reablement services. The next phase of this will be a joint appointment between health and social care of an Integrated Intermediate Care Coordinator who will manage the services.

GOLD

10. Work has continued on the Gold Standards Framework and volunteers have been carrying out interviews with around 78 older people in six different residential settings. The volunteers have been positive about the experience and the homes seem to have been happy with the process.
11. GOLD members have also been active participants in the stakeholder events to look at how we may provide prevention services in the future. Ten members attended the recent service user event to inform the options appraisal for the future. GOLD members have also been involved in the review of the Older People's Partnership to make sure that it is able to deliver priorities for the range of older people, including those people that work and those that are more frail. This increased involvement should ensure that the priorities of a broad range of older people can be delivered.
12. Age UK and GOLD continue to work in partnership and a successful event was held on 30 September with over 200 people celebrating ageing well. The event was based in five venues within the town and included dance activity, Nordic walking, Tai Chi, music, crafts and poetry. It also included a look back at the history of Darlington and came up to date with computer demonstrations. The event also provided an opportunity for consultation on the future options for prevention services in Darlington.

Windsor Court Sheltered Scheme

13. Windsor Court at Cockerton has re-opened after a £2.4 Million refurbishment and the official ceremony took place on 14 October 2011. This sheltered housing scheme provides 32 remodelled flats; two of which have been enlarged to make them fully accessible for the disabled. Each tenant lives independently with 24 hour support from Lifeline Services.

14. The scheme has been transformed with new areas for social activities and the inclusion of a lift, so that all tenants can move around much more easily. A beautiful guest bedroom has been created to enable tenants' families and visitors to stay over if they wish. The creation of a glazed coffee area fitted out in a contemporary style is a special feature which allows residents and visitors the opportunity to relax in a comfortable and pleasant area with a view over the courtyard where a new landscaped garden area, complete with water feature, has been provided.
15. The external façade of the building has been improved with the addition of cedar board cladding and new signage. Hard and soft landscaping alterations have improved the external communal areas of the complex. Tenants chose the type and colours of the plants and shrubs with the help of Groundwork North East. The planting of the grounds was carried out by Groundwork's Dream Team with young people on the Future Jobs Fund Programme and Motiv8 project, one of whom has progressed onto a Horticultural Apprenticeship.

Council Tax Benefit Reform

16. Cabinet considered and approved the response to the Government's consultation in relation to the Council Tax Benefit (CTB) Reform and agreed that the final version of the response be delegated to the Director of People to allow further work and consultation with colleagues in the region to be undertaken, prior to the response date and also to ensure the views of this Council are fully heard in the consultation on the future of Council Tax relief for vulnerable and low income residents.
17. From April 2013, the Government are proposing to replace CTB with local Council Tax rebate schemes designed and administered by Local Authorities, possibly within certain parameters. This will be in the form of a grant to Local Authorities, but the overall amount will be cut by 10% from existing levels and pensioners will be protected.

Councillor V Copeland
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adult Social Care and Housing