
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 Services and Housing.

Adult Social Care –Strategic Commissioning

2. Direct Payments - A procurement exercise is underway to re-commission the direct payment service as the current contract expires. The specification is aimed at greater flexibility to support personalisation.
3. Residential Care Agreement - The agreement documents are now in final drafts, a new specification for Care Homes will be outcome focused and fees are anticipated to continue to be linked to a quality standard framework. Meetings with individual providers are now taking place and it is anticipated that a report will be submitted to Cabinet in November. The Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee will be updated at this time.
4. A Joint Learning Disability Strategy and efficiency plan will be submitted to Cabinet for approval in October. The Strategy's outcomes and aspiration have been developed with the Learning Disability Partnership Board.
5. Work is continuing to establish a Darlington Community Network. A co-ordinated network based on community asset mapping and development will support the Council to maintain support services for vulnerable people in future years.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

6. The Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT) - The launch of the service was held on 31st August, 2012, at the Dolphin Centre. The Mayor opened the event which was attended by myself, representatives from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, Community Health Services, GP practices, Darlington Borough Council staff and the voluntary sector. Presentations outlined the journey to RIACT and an overview of Case Studies by RIACT staff.
7. Eligibility Criteria - This Policy was previously approved by Cabinet on 22nd November, 2011, but was subsequently revoked in February 2012. Further consultation events were held between 19th June and 31st July 2012. A revised report was submitted to Cabinet on 11th September 2012; this further report has remedied the area of possible legal challenge and again recommends that Cabinet approve the review of the Adults Social Care Eligibility Criteria.

8. Self Directed Support - Further in-depth work will be undertaken to ensure continued increase in the numbers of individuals in receipt of a personal budget. The National Performance Indicator for Self Directed Support (NI 130) states that the percentage of people in receipt of a personal budget will be 100% by April 2013. Due to the fact that some people receive equipment, adaptations, reablement or professional support only it is difficult for authorities to achieve 100%. Darlington Borough Council's current performance is 68.1%. Work is being undertaken at a national and a regional level. Officers from Darlington Borough Council attended and were part of a Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) Regional event which was held on 17 September and was undertaken by the TLAP Team from the Department of Health.

Safeguarding Adults

9. We are currently involved in four Safeguarding Executive Strategies with local Care Home providers. The multi agency teams involved in the Executive Strategy process are the Police, Health, Care Quality Commission and Senior Officers from Darlington Borough Council, providers themselves are involved, with the views and feedback of individuals, their Carers and Families being taken fully into consideration.
10. The Safeguarding Adults Board has a number of high priority areas one of which is 'Working with Providers' - a Sub Group has been established and this group will lead the work to feedback to Safeguarding Adults Board regarding Dignity and Respect in Care settings as well as Organisational responsibilities in the work that is being undertaken.

Housing Services

11. **Welfare Reforms** - There is ongoing work with both new and existing Council tenants to publicise the changes that will be implemented as part of the Welfare Reforms in April 2013. From this date the Under Occupancy legislation will be live. This is commonly referred to as the Bedroom Tax and will affect all tenants of working age who claim Housing Benefit entitlement and who are considered to have at least one spare bedroom. The amount of Housing Benefit will be cut by 14 per cent (an average of £9.50) for one spare bedroom and 25 per cent (an average of £17) for two spare bedrooms. Information about the Welfare Reforms appears on all Choice Based Lettings adverts and is being discussed with new tenants when they sign their Tenancy Agreement. Existing tenants have received information about the Welfare Reform changes and loss in Housing Benefit and are also being supported to look at other housing options.
12. **Queen's Diamond Jubilee** - Housing Tenants, supported by Housing Officers, have celebrated the Queen's Jubilee with various events in the majority of our sheltered, good neighbour and extra care housing schemes. On the 20 June, various teams, together with GOLD and the Tenants Board, organised an afternoon of fun and games whilst promoting their individual services and the benefits of inter-agency working.
13. **Improvements to Parkside** – On 26 June, I attended a meeting with the Deputy Chief Constable, Michael Barton, along with Ward Councillors, Cyndi Hughes and Paul Harman and tenants and residents of Parkside to view the improvements which have been carried out to the area. DCC Barton praised the Council's investment and acknowledged the significant improvements in the area.

14. **Cockerton** - Work is progressing with the Cockerton capital works scheme. It is expected that all of the internal planned maintenance to individual homes will have been completed by mid September and the environmental improvements are anticipated to start in October. The areas identified for the first phase of demolition are empty and in the process of being transferred to the developer.

GOLD

15. GOLD has successfully completed the first review under the Gold Standards Framework which is a national programme for raising quality in residential and nursing homes. The second phase is currently being rolled out and volunteers are being interviewed, CRB checked and trained. Volunteers have been very well received in the residential and nursing homes and the value of the involvement has been helpful in designing the contract and specifications for the future to further improve quality.
16. Volunteers within GOLD have raised funds and submitted funding bids for the annual Tea Dance in a move to make them more self-sufficient and build the skills that they have. The event also provided a venue for a variety of support to be offered to the public including:
 - (a) Digital switchover information and support.
 - (b) Health and Partnerships Scrutiny engaged people about the value of the 111 service and how, when and if people had used it.
17. I have also attended the following meetings/events :-
 - (a) the signing of the military covenant along with veterans, Officers of the Armed Forces and Officers of the Council;
 - (b) the Lead Members meeting;
 - (c) the Shadow Health and Well Being Board; and
 - (d) the Annual General Meeting of the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.

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