
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

Domiciliary Care Contracts

2. A report was presented to Cabinet on 5 March 2013, to approve the procurement plan for the Adults Domiciliary Care Framework Contracts. The recommendation was to approve one contract to cover all adults, including people with learning disabilities, which was previously a separate contract alongside Housing Related Support. The contract will include a standard rate and an enhanced rate where there is need for additional skills or experience to care for people with complex needs. It is anticipated that Adult Social Care will achieve a saving by managing the allocation for the enhanced rate through robust criteria. Savings are also planned through a review of the sleepover arrangements and rate. The tenders will be issued shortly to enable the new contracts to be in place by 1 October 2013, when the previous contracts expire.

Extra Care Housing

3. A new strategy has been developed and consulted upon. The key changes for Adult Social Care is a proposal to outsource the current in-house homecare service. An impact assessment was conducted on this element of the strategy alongside the consultation process and a report has been presented to Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the consultation and impact assessment. A report will be presented to Cabinet on 9 April recommending approval of the Strategy, together with an action plan which includes outsourcing the current in-house service.

Carers

4. The Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board approved the Darlington Joint Carers Strategy and action plan. A key component of the action plan is to re-commission the Adult Carers Support Service and Young Carers service to include Young Adult Carers. Currently the Adults Carers Service is commissioned by the Council to identify and assess the needs of Carers. The Darlington Clinical Commissioning

Group (DCCG) has added some resource to the service provided by Darlington Association on Disability (DAD). The DCCG has agreed to match fund both services and a tender exercise will begin in March 2013.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

5. Following the review of the management structures, I will continue to receive reports monitoring the quality of the Safeguarding we provide for both vulnerable adults and staff.
6. The Care Quality Commission undertook an unannounced inspection at Hundens Lane on the Reablement Service which is part of the RIACT Team. The Reablement Service has a number of in-house Home Care staff and the inspection was focussed on provision of care, recruitment and complaints. We have received a verbal update to state that the inspection was positive and we will receive further feedback at a later date.
7. Visits to Operational Teams – I, together with the Leader, have visited and met with specialist Mental Health Social Workers and discussed their roles with them. Along with the Team Leader, we also visited Central House to look at the work of the Adults in-take Team, the Occupational Therapy Team and those social workers who specialise in Sensory impairment. Again, along with the Team Leader, we visited Harewood House to meet with the Learning Disability Team and discuss current changes to support in the community and the changes to welfare benefits.

Safeguarding Adults

8. Executive Strategies continue in respect of a Private Hospital, a local Care Home and a Supported Living Scheme; this work is across all agencies with CQC, Police, Health, Providers, Commissioners and Darlington Borough Council Contracts and Management/Operational staff from Adult Social Care.

Housing Services - Welfare Reform Update

9. One of the Housing Services' key tasks is to inform Council tenants of the impacts of the Welfare Reforms. A leaflet 'Weighing up the Benefits' has been delivered to every home. Around 620 tenancies have been identified that will have their Housing Benefit reduced as a result of the bedroom tax. Officers are attempting to visit all of these to ensure they are aware and are planning for the reduction in Housing Benefit. We are encouraging those that cannot meet the new rent to consider moving and are promoting mutual exchanges and registration on Compass, the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme. Advice is also being given on taking in lodgers and trying to establish how many tenants are in debt and signposting these appropriately. Where possible they identify those tenants who should be eligible for a Discretionary Housing Payment. The payment of rent by direct debit/standing orders is strongly encouraged and for those that do not have a bank account they are signposted to the Credit Union.

10. Working as part of the Corporate Welfare Reform Group housing officers have participated in briefing sessions for Members and Officers and the Council's web site is continually updated. Preparations are ongoing to update the computer programme to ensure that the agreed revised Compass allocation policy is implemented in April 2013 to recognise financial hardship and we are also actively looking to advertise more two bedroom flats as suitable for children.

Social Fund

11. Work is underway to implement the new 'Social Fund' local welfare provision. Elements of the existing Social Fund, currently being delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions, will transfer to the Council from April 2013. These are :-
 - (a) **Crisis Support** which aims to prevent an immediate deterioration to an applicant's health by providing short-term access to food and limited supplies of clothing and baby consumables, such as nappies and milk; and
 - (b) **Community Care Support** which aims to help applicants remain in the community or move back into the community after a period in supported or unsettled accommodation. It does this by providing access to a range of standard items such as beds, bedding, furniture and white goods.
12. Provision of goods and services will be through local voluntary sector organisations such as the King's Church and FRADE, whilst the Council will also benefit from a Tees Valley procurement exercise currently being undertaken for the provision of furniture and white goods.
13. Administration of the new scheme will be through the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service, which has considerable experience of delivering means tested discretionary awards. Access for customers will be through a new dedicated telephone service.

Cockerton Redevelopment

14. Investment work to improve Cockerton is well underway. The Council's investment programme has already delivered 31 new hard-standing areas and paths, 32 new fences, 30 new perimeter walls, 67 improved roofs, and rendering works have commenced. In respect of the private investment element, the first phase of 42 property demolitions has been completed, with the second phase of 32 properties for demolition expected to be completed by mid April 2013. A planning application was approved in February 2013 to allow commencement of the new build element of the programme which will consist of up to 60 new affordable homes for rent managed and owned by Endeavour Housing Association, and up to a further 24 new market sale properties. The programme of new build is expected to be completed by July 2014. Further community engagement is being planned to finalise how each of the three new open space areas will be improved, and feasibility work examining options to improve the Nickstream Lane shopping area has also commenced.

GOLD

15. GOLD members have been prioritising Dignity in Care and their other programme of evaluating some care homes, 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.
16. Eleven volunteers have developed the Dignity in Care training pack which they will now use to train care staff. The Open College Network has agreed in principle 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. Volunteers want learners to have the experience of seeing dignity from the point of view of being a person cared for, being care staff, being a manager or being someone who commissions services. They think if they have a range of experiences and time to think about what it might feel like to need to receive care, they can have even more empathy with people they care for. Training the care staff will begin after Easter, following finalisation of the training programme and pack, training of volunteers and arrangements are being made with the care providers.
17. Reports are currently being drawn up on the care homes that have been evaluated by volunteers. These homes are all doing the GSF training and some have already applied for accreditation. The findings this year are being compared to those from last year and the homes will be able to respond to the findings and assessments in their individual reports. As previously stated, there will be an overview report available for everyone, which will not identify individuals or the homes taking part but will explain key themes found and what has changed since last year.
18. I have also attended the following meetings/events :-
 - (a) 1 February 2013 - Attended the launch of the Dignity in Care event organised by GOLD.
 - (b) 5 and 6 February 2013 - Attended a two day event organised by the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust reviewing how we care for the frail elderly.
 - (c) 5 February 2013 - Attended the Shadow Health and Well Being Board.
 - (d) 11 February 2013 - Attended the Tenants Board Meeting at which the Housing Revenue Account was discussed.

- (e) 12 February 2013 - Attended the GOLD Focus Group Meeting.
- (f) 26 February 2013 - Attended the Governing Council of the Foundation Trust.
- (g) 4 March 2013 - Attended the ceremony at Cockerton Regeneration Scheme.
- (h) 5 March 2013 - Attended the Shadow Health and Well being Board.
- (i) 6 March 2013 - Attended the launch of the Dementia Café at the Lawns Residential Care Home.
- (j) 11 March 2013 - Met with officers from the Alzheimer's Society to discuss the Dementia Friendly Community.
- (k) 12 March 2013 - Attended the GOLD Focus Group.
- (l) 13 March 2013 - Attended the LINK into Healthwatch Event.
- (m) 15 March 2013 - Attended event for Older Persons Champions where I spoke about my role in Darlington.
- (n) 18 March 2013 - Attended the Lead Members, Adult Social Care meeting.
- (o) 20 March 2013 - Attended the Adult Safeguarding Board.

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