
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. The Health and Social Care Bill final readings took place in The House of Lords and the House of Commons at the end of March. The Public Health amendments were accepted without further change. Consultation on The Public Health workforce of the future was launched at the end of March.
3. The Darlington Public Health Transition plan was quality assured and assessed by a team from North of England Public Health. The feedback was positive, that the plan was robust and the workstream was regarded to be performing well.
4. The transfer of the public health leadership, responsibilities and functions from NHS County Durham and Darlington by April 2013, in line with the changes outlined in the Health and Social Care Bill (2011), will provide the Council with an opportunity to embed health improvement and health protection across core services to enhance health and wellbeing. We have noted the new responsibilities on the Local Authority and the potential risks and steps being taken to mitigate them.
5. We have agreed to consider the option of disaggregation from the joint arrangements with Durham and the exploration of collaboration with Tees Valley authorities and we will receive a future report with specific proposals relating to the timing of transfer and the proposed configuration of the Darlington Public Health Service.
6. We are now working towards the effective transfer of the new functions and duties and in doing so, ensure value for money through the new working arrangements.

Equalities and Engagement

7. Public authorities have a specific legal duty to publish equality analysis by the end of January 2012. We have met this duty with information now available on the website. Further work, including stakeholder engagement has been undertaken in order to derive some objectives from this information. This will guide our work in the coming months as more detailed preparations are made to improve our wider approach to the equalities agenda. In times of tough financial pressures rather than containing anything that requires additional resourcing the objectives are reflective of a direction of travel that the Council is already moving in. Sixteen out of seventeen respondents who wrote to us about it felt this

was the right thing to do. The objectives were published in time to meet the 6 April 2012 publication deadline for public bodies.

Welfare Rights

8. A total of 543 people (11.5 per week) have been dealt with by Welfare Rights this financial year; 44 new enquiries were opened during February 2012 and 56 enquiries were closed. These include both complex and one-off enquiries. In addition, 4 enquiries were dealt with as anonymous enquiries or consultancy for local authority or voluntary agency staff.
9. During February £121,692 in additional benefits was secured for clients by the team. The total for the year to date is £1,053,454 (compared to £795,312 for the same period last year). The Director of People passed his congratulations to the team as they surpassed the £1m barrier.

Health and Well-Being Board Development

10. A workshop was held on 20 March 2012 with a variety of stakeholders to discuss potential arrangements for a formative Health and Well Being Board for Darlington. This included Members, representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), Durham and Darlington Primary Care Trust (PCT), Local Involvement Network (LINK), County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and the voluntary sector.
11. A joint engagement and involvement event has been held with patients from Darlington to look at the support available to enable patients to be as self-managing as possible whilst ensuring safe and quality services are in place when needed. The feedback from the event was very positive and the feedback will provide information for the CCG to look at its commissioning priorities.

Local Involvement Network (LINK) and HealthWatch

12. LINK AGM took place on 29 March 2012 and a contract has been agreed with the host organisation to continue to support them until April 2013 when Health Watch will be put in place.
13. Discussions are taking place across Tees Valley to look at the opportunity to commission the advocacy element within Health Watch together to maximise efficiency. Discussions are at an early stage and it will be important that the residents of Darlington have good access to a service that meets their needs. The remainder of HealthWatch activity will be tendered at a local level but the funding available is not yet clear and so initial discussion is considering a range of options.

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Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships