
OVERVIEW OF ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-

Work Programme

2. We further discussed the work programme and the work we are currently undertaking. As reported to the last meeting of Council, a number of Councillors from the Committee visited a selection of care homes within Darlington, who are currently contracting with the Authority to seek the views of residents, their family and friends, and staff on nutrition and hydration in those homes. The visits were announced visits and a summary of the results was considered at meetings of the Task and Finish Review Group held on 7 and 27 February 2013. Generally speaking we are satisfied with the responses we received, however, there are some slight concerns and we will be continuing with this piece of work.
3. We have also commenced a piece of work in relation to Safeguarding Adults, both in homes and in the community, and the first meeting of the Task and Finish Review Group has been held and we received a very interesting and informative presentation from the Assistant Director, Adult Social Care on which adults were perceived as being 'at risk', the types of abuse that might be suffered by somebody perceived to be 'at risk', the use of the Executive Strategy process, the key agencies and the roles within Adult Safeguarding and the action planning required. We also revisited the role and responsibilities of the Safeguarding Adults Board. This area of work obviously covers a vast area and we feel it is an important part of our role to scrutinise and raise awareness of the safeguarding agenda. We have therefore, as one of our actions from the meeting, agreed to develop an on-going work programme to enable Members to further their knowledge and involvement in Adult Safeguarding.
4. We will continue to keep Members briefed on the work we are undertaking.

Extra Care Housing Strategy

5. As reported to the last meeting of Council, we received a further report on the outcome of the consultation on the Extra Care Housing Strategy and the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken with tenants on the possible use of an alternative provider for the care and support delivery. The consultation meetings were chaired by an independent facilitator with Council Officers undertaking 1:1 discussions with those potentially affected by the proposals to gather comments and to identify any potential impacts. The sessions were well attended and overall, 49 per cent of all extra care residents/their families took part with the key themes emerging being

concerns about lack of continuity of carers, decrease in the quality of service and the loss of 24 hour, seven days a week on-site support. We were assured that, as part of the on-going Equality Impact Assessment, Officers will be considering whether there are any actions that can be taken to mitigate these potential impacts.

6. To help us understand the various levels of care provided within Extra Care Housing and the pressures on the adult social care budget, we also received information on the number of hours of care provided to individuals within the schemes, which gave an indication both of the levels of needs and the variation of needs, together with the actual hourly cost of the extra care service. There is an increasing number of older people living in Darlington, with a projected growth over the next 15 years and beyond and the subsequent growing demand for support will create increasing pressure on the adult social care budget.

Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite
Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee