
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. We are continuing with our work in relation to nutrition and hydration and, following our initial visits to a number of care homes within Darlington who are currently contracting with the Authority to seek views in relation to this, Members are now in the process of undertaking unannounced visits to some of those care homes with Officers. We are hoping to conclude this piece of work shortly and a final report will be submitted to our next meeting on 18 June 2013.
3. Arising from the work we have been doing in relation to the above, we were made aware of some work being undertaken in relation to the future of GP practices in care homes within Darlington and Dr. Matt Sawyer attended one of our meetings and provided us with some information on the background to the work he was leading on. We were made aware of the current system of individual patient choice for their GP when they are in residential care, together with the options which had been looked at, which included, retaining the existing system, introducing a system whereby three of four GP practices covered all of the care homes with Darlington or the possibility of one GP practice covering them all. Discussions had been held with the GP practices and the care homes and we were advised that the Clinical Commissioning Group had recently given approval to implement the option whereby GP practices were aligned to care homes, with individual patient/GP choice still being available to those residents already in care. The presentation was extremely interesting and we are confident that, following the implementation of the new arrangements, a better standard and quality of care will be provided to the residents. We will, however, be inviting Dr. Sawyer to a future meeting to update us on the progress and the improvements as a result of the revised arrangements once they have been embedded.
4. Safeguarding Adults is a major part of our work programme and we will continue to include this in all aspects of our work programme. We have identified a number of areas in relation to this where we will be focussing our work over the next 12 months, which include financial assessments for the calculation of an individual's contribution towards the costs of care and the guidance and support to people in relation to this; medication and polypharmacy in care homes; the Dementia Strategy and Dignity in Care, particularly in relation to incontinence.

5. We will continue to keep Members briefed on the work we are undertaking.

Adult Social Care Context for Darlington

6. We have been advised of a piece of work currently being undertaken which will help to set the context for any further discussions about adult social care provision in Darlington. There is currently no single document which brings together key information about adult social care provision made by the Council, and Officers have been working on a document which will achieve this and we have received a draft working copy for comments. The document gives contextual data for Darlington (such as demographic and employment data); how social care is organised; what changes and savings have taken place over the last few years; what demographic trends tell us about likely future service usage; and what our performance is and, importantly, how our performance compares to that of other local authorities. It is envisaged that this document will assist both external regulators in undertaking any visits and Scrutiny Members in determining any future work programme.

Development of Multi Agency Safeguarding in Darlington

7. We received a presentation from Lisa Summers, Head of Review and Development, on the establishment of the Darlington Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The MASH is a multi-agency co-located service which shares information between agreed partners in a secure environment to reduce risks of significant harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults. The establishment of the MASH will provide a single point of contact regarding all adult and children concerns, collate multi agency information about those concerns; enable swift decisions to be made to ensure the safeguarding of children and adults and will facilitate swift action to safeguard those who are vulnerable.

**Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite
Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee**