
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. **Residential Care Home Agreement** - Cabinet has given approval to proceed with a new Agreement for the Provision of Residential Care 2013-16, when the current Agreement expires at the end of March 2013. The new Agreement includes outcomes for individuals and a revised Quality Standards process. Cabinet also approved the setting of a 'Usual Cost Care' of £356 per week per resident where the Agreement is not in place in line with Department of Health Directives. Approval has also been given to change historical practice where Full Fee Payers (also addressed as Self Funders) could access the Councils Agreement. This facility will now only be used for people who do not have the capacity or means to organise their residential care.
3. **Community Support Network** – Cabinet also gave approval to implement a phased approach to developing a Darlington Community Support Network. The first phase will be to gain greater insight to untapped or unknown community assets through Social Capital Mapping which will in turn inform areas where more support may be needed for Older and Disabled Adults to live independently in the community.
4. **Direct Payment Support** - Following a tendering exercise, Darlington Association on Disability, has been awarded a new contract to provide a support tailored to individuals need.
5. **Darlington Age Well Network (DAWN)** - The former Older Peoples Board continues to meet four times per year but future meetings will be in a new format. The next meeting on December 12th will be reviewing the progress of the Dementia Collaborative. The Alzheimer's Society has filled the post of Dementia Advisor developed through the collaborative and funded through Department of Health additional funds for Memory Services. The network meeting will be held at AGE UK Darlington who is also developing a dementia café, providing additional informal support for people with dementia their carers and family.

6. **Extra Care Housing** - Officers are reviewing the future of Darlington's Extra Care Housing and support. A new strategy, providing a vision for the future and delivery plan, will be consulted upon early in the New Year.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

7. **Eligibility Criteria** - The new Eligibility Criteria Policy will be implemented from 1st December 2012. From this date, the Local Authority will be focussing on those people with Substantial and Critical needs. All care management staff will attend refresher training sessions to ensure a consistent approach across all areas of Adult Social Care. There are clear links between the work being undertaken regarding the Community Support Network and ensuring that those people with low or moderate needs are sign posted, or given information, regarding other options available to them.
8. **Self Directed Support** - Darlington Borough Council's current level of individuals who are in receipt of a personal budget (excluding those people who receive equipment, adaptations, reablement or professional support) is 69 per cent.

Safeguarding Adults

9. We remain involved with three local care home providers, multi agency meetings continue and focussed work is being undertaken to ensure a positive outcome for the individuals who live within the Care Homes, their Carers, families and staff to agree actions and timescales to resolve the issues.

Housing Services

10. **Cockerton** - We have successfully rehoused the tenants of the 45 properties in the first phase of the Cockerton redevelopment area. These homes are now empty and ready to be demolished and redeveloped. The internal modernisation of 67 properties at Cockerton has been completed. These homes have benefitted from new kitchens, bathrooms, heating, new front doors and rewiring. The designs for the external work have been developed following consultation with local tenants and agreed with the partner organisations. The works have now commenced including new fencing, footpaths and off street parking and are to be completed by the end of March 2013. On completion of the regeneration works in 2014, 60 new affordable homes for rent and up to 24 market sale properties will be available. Discussions are on-going with the local community about new quality open space.
11. **Tenants Board** - On 17 October 2012, I was pleased to attend a meeting of the Tenants Board and answered their questions and heard of the recent work they had undertaken both via the Board and their focus groups. Of particular interest were their mystery shopping of Customer Services and Estate Walkabouts.
12. **Welfare Reforms** - In preparation for the next round of Welfare Reforms that are to be introduced from April 2013, a Welfare Reforms Working Group has been established. This group is considering the impacts of the reforms on Council tenants, those on the waiting list for rehousing and on the Housing Business Plan. A booklet entitled 'Weighing Up the Benefits' is being published and made available

to all tenants. It will also be distributed to statutory and voluntary organisations so that they can consider the impacts and inform their respective officers and partners.

13. A key change is the introduction of a limit on the number of bedrooms eligible for Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit will be recalculated in April for claimants of working age that are under occupying their rented homes. The aim is to encourage people with bigger homes to move somewhere smaller, so that we can provide accommodation to families needing larger homes.
14. Tenants are classed as under occupying their home if they have more bedrooms than they need, some examples of this are : -
 - (a) A single person or a couple living in a two bed roomed property
 - (b) A couple with one child in a three bed roomed property
 - (c) A child under the age of 16 is expected to share with another child of the same gender
 - (d) Children under 10 are expected to share with another child regardless of gender
15. What is the change : -
 - (a) If tenants are under occupying Housing Benefit will be reduced, for one extra bedroom Housing Benefit will be reduced by 14%.
 - (b) For two or more extra bedrooms Housing Benefit will reduce by 25%.
 - (c) It is expected that this will affect between 300 and 400 Darlington Borough Council tenants.
 - (d) Those affected will be written to in the coming weeks setting out the options available. They can pay the difference themselves and stay in their current home or they can move to a property with the number of bedrooms for their family size. Alternatively they can take in a lodger. These letters will be followed up with personal visits to obtain detailed information on individual households to assist with identifying where further support is needed.

GOLD

16. GOLD volunteers have once again begun to evaluate how standards are changing following implementation of the Gold Standards Framework national training programme, by spending time observing and by interviewing residents, their family members and staff. Eight volunteers have undertaken training and are participating in this work. Aspects of last year's findings are currently being used by Adult Social Care to inform the commissioning process.
17. GOLD staff and members worked in partnership with other organisations, notably Age UK Darlington, to celebrate UK Older People's Day with a 'Full of Life Darlington!' event. There was entertainment in the market square, including bowling, a choir, dancing, and brass bands; tours round some voluntary

organisations for a behind the scenes look, and GOLD volunteers served refreshments to 124 people in St Cuthbert's Church Hall. There was also IT advice from Age UK volunteers and modern and traditional games from dominoes to the Wii, played by older people and by younger people. We've had some very positive feedback, the event cost nearly half as much as last year's and had an intergenerational aspect, as well as highlighting the contribution people over fifty make to our community and promoting the benefits of volunteering.

18. I have also attended the following meetings/events :-

- (a) 16th October, 2012 – Shadow Health and Well Being Board;
- (b) 17th October, 2012 – Tenants Board;
- (c) 1st November, 2012 – Lead Members briefing for adult social care;
- (d) 5th November, 2012 – Learning Disability Network;
- (e) 9th November, 2012 – Signing of the Regional Military Covenant;
- (f) 13th November, 2012 – Gold Focus Event;
- (g) 21st November, 2012 – Governing Council for the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust;
- (h) Darlington Association on Disability's Annual General Meeting; and
- (i) Veterans and Military Covenant Information Event.

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