
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

2. The Annual Learning Disability Self Assessment has been completed and returned on time. The Self-Assessment combines what were two separate assessments, the Health Self Assessment and the Partnership Board Return. The Self-Assessment is based on a traffic light model of red, amber and green, indicating local progress. The focus of the assessment this year was built around three key outcomes :-
 - (a) Staying Healthy
 - (b) Being Safe
 - (c) Living Well
3. The Assessment seeks evidence to support these three outcomes through local information on compliance, data and individual shared stories. The return is evaluated by NHS England and ADASS and a position statement returned to Darlington. This allows the opportunity to develop a local action/improvement plan.
4. Work is underway to develop and procure a framework contract for residential care for disabled adults. There are currently three separate contracts for the provision of residential care for working age adults, the new single contract will look to consolidate the contracts into a single agreement and look to secure value for money residential care within a 30 mile radius of Darlington.
5. The Tender for a 'Shared Lives Service' has recently been evaluated and a decision with regards to the successful Provider will be reported at the next meeting.
6. Contracts and Commissioning staff are working in partnership to review the Home Equipment Loans Service. This is one of the priority areas for the CDDFT Community Contract review in 2014. The proposal is that Darlington CCG will lead the review, and that the revised service will be jointly commissioned by Darlington: Durham Dales Easington and Sedgfield: and North Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups and County Durham and Darlington local authorities.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

7. A Peer Challenge took place within Adult Social care from 19th- 21st November 2013. They key areas we requested the Peer Challenge Team consider were:
 - (a) How is the assessment and care management function operating at the present time, and how might this develop/be developed in the future?
 - (b) How do staff and organisational culture support Adult Safeguarding as an integral element of the assessment and care management function, and with wider partners and partnerships, including the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub?
 - (c) How are staff and other resources deployed to deliver safe and effective services, and to improve quality of assessment/packages of care?
 - (d) How does existing provision impact on the assessment and care management function, including RIACT (The Responsive Integrated Assessment and Care Team) Reablement service, Learning Disability Life stage Service, and in-house provision?
8. The team held interviews and discussions with Councillors, Officers and Partners; focus groups with managers, practitioners, frontline staff, as well as people using services and carers; and read documents provided by the Council, both in advance of and during the Challenge.
9. The Peer Challenge Team will produce a report of their findings and this will be made widely available.

Housing Services

Major Works in Hundens Area to Renew Windows, Doors and Roofing

10. Properties in the Hundens area were identified as having low levels of energy efficiency and, as part of our on-going commitment to provide warm and well insulated homes, it was agreed to prioritise this area for improvement works. Once works are fully completed, tenants should see a typical saving in energy costs of £90 per year as well as improvements to the carbon footprint.
11. Around £1 million is currently being spent on the improvement work to 165 properties in the area. We are currently replacing all of the windows with new A-rated double glazed UPVC windows, including security locks to all opening sashes. The work includes the replacement of all front and rear doors with new double glazed composite doors with a three point locking system and anti-bump cylinder locks. This work commenced at the end of November and is due to be completed by the end of January 2014.
12. The next phase of work includes the replacement of the roofs with new breathable sarking felt, roof tiles, UPVC soffits and fascia boards, UPVC gutters and rainwater

pipes. Work will also be carried out to the flat roofs (extensions, canopies/bay windows) with new roof decking and felt. Where required, the loft insulation to all houses will be topped up to 300 mm and flat roofs that are over living spaces will be insulated to meet current building regulations. This project is, at present, going through procurement to determine a suitable contractor to carry out the works and is programmed for completion by the end of Spring 2014.

Fire Safety Awareness and the Identification of Vulnerable Persons

13. This initiative involves the Durham and Darlington Fire Service, engaging with the most vulnerable people within our community. This is partly in response to an increase in fire fatalities within the Durham and Darlington area. Task and Finish groups were established to fully investigate each fatality and record the findings. The information was then pooled and work began to identify key risk factors which may have contributed to the fires and the consequent fatalities.
14. National analysis of Fatal Fire Investigations noted that alcohol, mobility and mental illness are the biggest single influences on whether a fire starts and/or whether it has fatal consequences. This information, coupled with analysis of fatal fires in Durham and Darlington, suggests that older people living alone with some form of incapacity (mobility, physical, mental) and a dependency of some description (smoking/alcohol) were more likely to be involved in a serious fire. This, in turn, indicated a need for all partners to focus upon 'vulnerable persons' in an effort to reduce such fatal fires and make Durham and Darlington a 'safer place to live'.
15. I am pleased to advise you that both Housing and Adult Services are active partners in the forum and the Fire Service has also delivered awareness raising and training to our Lifeline Services Team. This knowledge will be used during home visits to refer vulnerable clients to the Fire Service so that they can undertake a home assessment visit and can provide a range of measures and support. Examples include the provision of flame retardant bedding, application of flame retardant spray to furniture and carpets, assistance for people who are hoarding and the fitting of battery-operated smoke detectors.

Health and Safety

16. As part of the Council's on-going commitment to well embedded health and safety practices, a further eight managers and team leaders from Housing Services have successfully completed accredited training delivered by the Chartered Institute for Health and Safety Professionals. This means that they are skilled in the identification and safe management of health and safety risks in their workplaces, housing complexes and estates. The Building Services Team who undertake repairs and maintenance in Council housing have also received this training.

Welfare Reform

17. Housing Services continues to place a strong emphasis on managing rent accounts and arrears in the current economic climate. Our two Money Advisors are working very closely with tenants and housing colleagues to provide day to day

support, advice and training to ensure we are maximising rental income as well as providing proactive and timely practical assistance. They work very closely with Housing Benefits staff to ensure that all tenants, who are eligible, claim for Discretionary Housing Payment to help them meet their rent payment, whilst encouraging and supporting households to down size to smaller properties including helping them to access the Council's Social Fund. The Money Advisors are also working in partnership with the Tenant's Board and we will shortly be issuing to all our tenants, a self-help guide to encourage them to maximise their benefit entitlements, pay their rent regularly and review their weekly budgets to ensure that they are on the best tariffs for energy and other household matters such as the phone and television. The guide also has advice on bank accounts and the credit union.

18. Two additional temporary housing advisors were recruited during November in response to an increase in rent arrears, particularly in some of our more deprived areas where the Welfare Reforms are impacting most and more targeted work is required. Whilst rent arrears have increased from last year, the income collected is £407K (6.54%) higher and we are well within the income targets set based on national trends from the Welfare Reform pilot authorities. These two new posts are being recruited to now on a permanent basis and it is hoped that this will help us to consolidate our position as we go forward and the impact of the Welfare Reforms continue. We need to ensure that the income collected does not reduce and that we are in a strong position to respond quickly and flexibly as issues arise in order to limit any impact on our Housing Business Plan and our ability to provide good quality homes and services.

Extra Care Housing - Review of Meals

19. The review of the meals service in our three Extra Care Housing Schemes is now complete .A pilot scheme was tested initially at Rosemary Court with more flexibility and choice being available instead of just offering the traditional lunch time two course main meal. Lunch time snacks, such as sandwiches, soup and Panini's have been particularly popular, as has the introduction of some early evening meals and opportunities for more social interaction including themed events linked to food. After consultation and evaluation, this arrangement is to remain in place at Rosemary Court Going forward this service is to be offered in all three Extra Care schemes at Rosemary Court, Dalkeith House and Oban Court and if there is demand, the Council's catering team are also willing to provide snacks in our sheltered housing complexes.

GOLD

20. The Dignity in Care training which was developed by GOLD volunteers was piloted with the in-house home care staff within the Dalkeith House extra care scheme. Approximately ten members of staff attended the training which was well received. All staff have now completed their workbooks and they will be marked by the GOLD volunteers over the next few weeks. Although the training was well received, the volunteers will consider the feedback from the delegates and their own experiences of delivering the training and will review and amend the training pack, before it is

offered to other home care staff in the New Year.

21. The annual GOLD Christmas party was held on the afternoon of 7 December, at Hopetown Club, with over 100 members attending the event. I opened the proceedings and music was provided, once again, by local band Willow Creek. Guests were also entertained with a Christmas carol sing-a-long, a quiz and a raffle.

22. I have also :-

- (a) met with Reservists and firms who support them;
- (b) attended a meeting of the Adult Safeguarding Board;
- (c) visited and met with the Chief Executive of the Disclosure and Barring Service;
- (d) attended Christmas lunch with Adult Social Care staff;
- (e) visited the Veterans' Café at Age UK; and
- (f) attended the GOLD Focus Group

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