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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO**

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**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**

**NHS Health Checks**

2. The NHS Health Checks programme is a mandated Public Health programme for which the Authority has responsibility to commission. This programme invites all individuals aged 40 to 74 years for a cardiovascular check once every five years. In Darlington, the NHS Health Checks programme is undertaken by all local GP Practices.
3. The number of eligible individuals who have received an NHS Health Check in Darlington has risen faster than the England average. Up to Quarter 3, 18 per cent of Darlington individuals have received a Health Check in 2014/2015 compared to 15.9 per cent for England in the same period.

**Teenage Conceptions**

4. Darlington continues to show a downward trend in the rates of teenage conceptions. The latest published data showed a rate for under-18 conceptions of 28.1 conceptions per 1000 women in the age group, which is a reduction of 56 per cent from the 1998 baseline. The gap between Darlington and England has also narrowed significantly over this time. These reductions reflect the overall reduction across the North East region although, as a region, the North East still shows the highest rates for under-18 conceptions in England.

**National No Smoking Day**

5. Public Health made the most of national No Smoking Day on 11 March to promote the opportunity for organisations to apply to run stop smoking services. The aim is to increase the diversity of provision and improve access to stop smoking services.

**Darlington Partnership**

6. At its last meeting on 11 March, Darlington Partnership Board undertook its annual review of its Action Priorities programme. This is the process that the Partnership adopted three years ago to help it focus its energy on issues affecting Darlington

where it is believed the collective action of partners can achieve a swift and measurable impact.

7. The process has proven successful and has been responsible for the creation of the award winning Foundation for Jobs initiative, which supports the vocational progression of young people; the Good Friends initiative, which enables people to help their elderly or vulnerable neighbours; and, more recently, the 'Minded to Help' scheme which provides a way for Darlington's businesses to support their employees mental wellbeing.
8. The Board was conscious that significant energy and resource was required to establish new structures and that, though the initiatives it has established have required only small amounts of funding, it is likely that public sector funding will continue to reduce. The Board therefore concluded that it would work to ensure the continued achievement of its current initiatives and that it would look to see how it could respond to emerging issues. Issues the Board considered included in work poverty and financial exclusion, where it was noted a Financial Inclusion Action Group was in the process of being established; career pathways for young people; and the potential for Foundation for Jobs to expand its remit under the guidance of the 11 to 19 group. The Partnership also agreed that it would like to support the celebration proposed for 2025 to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passenger railway. A programme of activity involving Partnership initiatives could be developed over the forthcoming years.

### **Welfare Rights**

9. During February the amount of £39,538 was secured in additional benefit for clients. The total raised to date for 2014/15 is £230,606.

### **Financial Inclusion Action Group**

10. The first meeting of the new Financial Inclusion Action Group took place chaired by Kate Roe of Darlington College and with representatives from the voluntary sector, the Food Store, the Credit Union, the banking industry, the DWP and the regional financial inclusion body Fin Can as well as Council officers. The group agreed an action focused set of priorities designed to improve the choice available to those excluded from using widely available financial products such as loans and insurances, as well as training and accessibility as key issues.

### **Alcohol Task and Finish Review Group – Final Report**

11. Cabinet noted the findings and recommendations of the Alcohol Task and Finish Review Group which was established by the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the indicators relating to alcohol within the Health profile for Darlington.
12. We also requested Officers to continue to action the recommendations deliverable within existing resources.

## **Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement between Darlington Borough Council and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group**

13. Cabinet approved the Section 75 (S.75) Agreement, which is an agreement made under S.75 of the National Health Services Act 2006 between a local authority and an NHS body in England (in this case Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group). S.75 Agreements can include arrangements for pooling resources and delegating certain NHS and local authority health-related functions to the other partner(s) if it would lead to an improvement in the way those functions are exercised.
14. Cabinet agreed to delegate the approval of the final wording of the agreement to the Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Partnerships and the Director of Commissioning.

### **Healthwatch**

15. Healthwatch Darlington recently organised a survey on individuals' views of Mental Health support from Health and Social Care. The survey was launched in March following a discussion at the Mental Health Network.
16. It is currently working with schools to obtain feedback from young people via postcards given to each pupil which asked them to give their experiences of health and social care. This is currently being piloted in one secondary school but the hope is to extend it to all secondary schools and colleges in Darlington.
17. Healthwatch is also currently working on a project to encourage better communication with ethnic communities to enable them to influence health and social care and make sure that they have opportunities to give their views but also to receive information. It is currently working closely with the Black and Minority Ethnic Network and others to recruit volunteers who will act as health and social care conduits.

**Councillor A Scott**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships**