
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 Autism Self Assessment was completed and returned within the planned timeframe. The self assessment allows each area to use a traffic light system and assess progress in delivering the actions from the national autism strategy, ‘fulfilling and rewarding lives’. Darlington has rated itself predominantly as amber, moving towards green. Further work needs to be done in relation to engaging with people who have autism and their carers.
3. The Clinical Commissioning Group, in partnership with the Local Authority and other key stakeholders, plan to develop a delivery plan for the mental health strategy ‘no health without mental health’. The delivery plan will be co-produced with people with a mental health problem.
4. A specification for a ‘shared lives’ service has been developed and is currently out to tender. A ‘shared lives’ service, involves local people being approved to provide accommodation and support in their own homes to people who need social care support. There is an existing service that provides support to people with a learning disability. The revised specification offers the opportunity to expand this to other user groups, e.g. older people.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

5. RIACT Service now operates an 8 till 8 service 7 days a week. The main focus of the service is to achieve Independence for Older People through Rehabilitation and Intermediate Care. Capacity has been increased by introducing new roles into the service – a Community Matron who can now support with complex long term conditions and a Pharmacy Technician who is supporting with our Fall’s initiative.
6. In 2011/12, approximately 73 per cent of older people discharged from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services were still at home 91 days after discharge. This was just over 4 per cent below the target and the lowest in the region. As of 2012/13 this figure had increased dramatically, with 90 per cent of older people discharged from hospital still at home 91 days after discharge.

7. RIACT is continuing to support residents of Darlington who are in need of short term intervention following either a social or health care crisis. There has been an increase in referrals into the service from those with a Dementia and/or other mental health needs. It continues to offer focus with supportive hospital discharge, avoiding admission into hospital/24 hour care and/or ongoing social care service. Additional support is offered to support people home from 24 hour care where appropriate and to prevent avoidable readmission into hospital.
8. Winter Pressure Plans are now confirmed through the Health and Well Being Board with ongoing events which test its robustness, ensuring all agencies are prepared for winter.
9. Adult Social Care has undergone a Peer Challenge Review. The Review took place over 3 days from 19th to 21st November. The Local Government Association led a team consisting of a Director of Adult Social Care; a Lead Member and an experienced Assistant Director from Adult Social Care. The Peer Challenge is not an inspection, it is a focus on sector led improvement, utilising 'peers' from other Councils. Peer Challenge helps to identify what is working well and where improvements could be made. It also provides resource and time to look at and reflect on existing practices.
10. The theme for Darlington Borough Council's Adult Peer challenge is the strategic positioning of Assessment and Care Management, including the present position in relation to use of resources, and the effectiveness of adult safeguarding. Adult Social Care has gone through a number of restructures, reduction in management capacity, service reviews and changes to Eligibility Criteria since 2010. Following the Review Adult Social Care will focus on the feedback to help in our work to shape future direction.

Housing Services

11. On 10th October 2013, I visited the Food Store and Furniture Scheme operated by the King's Church on Whessoe Road.
12. The Food Store at the King's Church is a community wide project which began in February 2012. It provides emergency resources for anyone in Darlington who has found themselves unable to provide food for themselves or their families. Enough food for one hot meal per day for a week is normally provided and each individual's situation is considered separately. Food comes from the HIS Food charity with the rest being individual donations of items such as UHT milk, pasta, tinned soup and baked beans.
13. The Furniture Scheme at the King's Church offers good quality used furniture at very reasonable prices to those on income based benefits. The scheme has everything from beds and sofas, to desks, bookcases and electrical items. The King's Church collect and receive donations of furniture which are then available to view and purchase at the King's Centre. Delivery is also provided.

14. The Council currently contracts with the King's Church, via the new local Social Fund Service, to provide food parcels for people in crisis and furniture, as part of the Community Care Support service. From April to September 2013, the Council has issued 407 food vouchers to people in crisis, which can then be exchanged for food parcels distributed by the King's Church. An alternative distribution point in Bondgate has also been set up, for people unable to access the King's Centre in Whessoe Road.
15. In the same period, over £2,000 of furniture has been purchased from the King's Church, funded from the Council's Social Fund, to assist people as part of the Community Care Support service. Items include sofas, armchairs and dining room tables and chairs.
16. The Council is currently in discussion with the King's Church to review how the Social Fund has operated since the start of the scheme, to ensure that we make the best use of resources available, to help those most in need.

Grounds Maintenance on Council Estates

17. Concerns were raised earlier in the year about the standard and quality of grounds maintenance on Council estates. Officers from Housing Services and Streetscene have worked together with the Tenants Board to develop a revised specification standard to address these issues. The voluntary organisation, Incredible Edibles, have also agreed to work with residents and Scheme Managers in sheltered housing schemes on a regular basis to further enhance the planting arrangements in these schemes.

Tenancy Enforcement

18. The Tenancy Enforcement Team are experiencing increased legal enforcement activity and are working with various voluntary and statutory organisations to address the more complex and challenging tenancy breaches. In particular they are working with Family Intervention and Troubled Families Teams, as well as Restorative Justice, recognising that significant resources and inter-agency working are sometimes needed to bring about change in behaviour and attitude. Recent work with the police and the local community resulted in a closure order for a property in a block of flats where anti-social behaviour by one individual was having a significant detrimental effect on the rest of the tenants in the block.

GOLD

19. The Full of Life Day took place on 1st October, 2013, an event, in Town Centre locations, including the launch of the 'Good Friends' initiative. Organisations involved included GOLD, Age UK, Adult Social Care and the Library.
20. GOLD volunteers are almost ready to deliver the first course of Dignity in Care training to care staff, to be accredited at Level 2 standard.
21. The regular groups are continuing. The Health Group members hear from speakers, share information and experiences, and take action where they feel it

appropriate. In October, they held a meeting with an Associate Director of Nursing from the Hospital to feedback experiences from themselves and others and ask questions about improvements taken place. Members continue promoting a positive image of older people, and are arranging more activities for themselves including a craft stall and the Christmas Party which usually has 150 attendees.

22. I have also :-

- (a) attended the launch of the Good Friends Scheme;
- (b) attended a meeting of the Long-term Conditions Steering Group;
- (c) visited the Kings Church to look at the workings of the Food Bank and the Furniture Store;
- (d) attended a meeting of the Adults Safeguarding Board;
- (e) visited the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- (f) attended the Darlington Assembly; and
- (g) Taken part in the Adults Social Care Peer Review

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