
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 procurement of a framework agreement for the provision of residential care for disabled adults has been completed. The Framework Agreement is in three Lots, Lot 1 for those with a learning disability, Lot 2 for people with a physical or sensory impairment and Lot 3 for people with a mental health problem. Following the evaluation of the tenders there are 20 homes on the framework for Lot 1, 10 homes on Lot 2 and 11 homes on Lot 3. Under this new Framework Agreement, when there is an assessed need for an individual to be placed in residential care, a 'mini tender' exercise will be carried out with all of the providers who have been successful in obtaining a place on the framework. This will identify the homes that are able to meet the needs of the individual in the most cost-effective way. The Framework Agreement will also ensure that disabled adults with similar support needs will receive equitable support, which is based on need. By utilising a framework agreement which is focussed within a 30 mile radius of the Borough, individuals are offered a choice of care home which is within a reasonable distance of their family, friends and social networks, and hence will ensure they can retain their links to their community.
3. A joint service review of the Home Equipment Loans Service (HELS) has been undertaken by Darlington, Durham, Dales, Easington and Sedgfield and North Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups and Durham County Council commissioners. The Home Equipment Loans Service is currently provided by County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and supplies and installs equipment which enables individuals to live independently and safely in their own homes and in residential and nursing homes. The review considered whether the current model was still fit for purpose, whether it meets the needs of the population of County Durham and Darlington, and has determined a sustainable service model able to cope with future changes in demand within current financial constraints. The revised service will be tendered later this month with the aim of a new service model being operational by July 2015.
4. In 2012, the Prime Minister launched a programme of work which aimed to deliver major improvements in dementia care and research by 2015 – The Prime

Ministers Challenge on dementia. In response to this challenge and objective 11 of the National Dementia Strategy: 'Living well with dementia in Care Homes' (2009), the North East Dementia Alliance, in partnership with North East Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, are funding a Progress for Providers project to implement person-centred practices and personalisation in care homes supporting people with dementia, across the North East.

5. The key aim of the project will be to engage with 20 care home managers in each of the 12 Local Authority areas within the North East and support them to implement person-centred practices in services which are supporting people living with dementia. The vision is to foster person-centred environments where people with dementia and their families will be nurtured, empowered and cherished. Darlington Borough Council has invited all of its contracted homes and St Teresa's Hospice to participate in the project. I look forward to receiving updates on the project and how it has enabled the providers to support those with dementia in a person-centred way.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

6. An update report on the Care Act update was presented to the Joint Management Team on 5 August 2014 which outlined the progress to date, in Darlington, on the implementation of the Act and how and where it aligned to wider Health and Social Care integration and, in particular, the Better Care Fund implications of the Act. The Care Act is now in the first of two periods of consultation. This consultation is on the 'Regulations and Guidance' and closed on 15 August 2014. This consultation was responded to locally by the Council's Adult Social Care teams, with input from Finance, Legal, Commissioning etc.; regionally by the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) and Association of Directors of Adult Social Service (ADASS), and nationally by ADASS. There has been further work in relation to the financial modelling and impact of the Act, which originally was going to be based on the 'Surrey Model'. The Department of Health has now changed this guidance in respect of the financial impact part and has asked all Local Authorities to complete a model created by NE Lincolnshire Council in order to assess affordability. Work is progressing well within the workstreams with an 'overarching' Care Act 2014 Workstream Action Plan which outlines the Guidance and Regulations; Definition i.e. what this means; Actions required; 'Workstreams' that it relates to and 'Timescale'.
7. A Darlington care home is planned to be closed. The provider has taken the decision due to changes in their funding streams and decided that the service is no longer viable. Residents, families and staff have been notified and we will work closely with the provider and health colleagues to ensure suitable new placements are identified and the transition and closure goes as smoothly as possible.
8. A short consultation was held with staff and two new Operations Managers posts are currently being recruited into to strengthen the management team and provide additional support to the Heads of Service and Assistant Director as part of the Adult Social Care restructure.

Housing Services

9. The Council's bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for grant funding to support a new house building programme has been successful. The grant of £1.2 million will be a valuable contribution towards the overall cost of providing 56 two bedroomed flats and 10 two bedroomed houses at Lascelles Park, Skerne Park and Redhall. A further bidding round is expected to commence in the Autumn and we have been encouraged to put forward proposals for additional housing sites. In addition to this, four other Registered Housing Providers operating in Darlington are being supported to provide a further 130 new homes for rent and 27 new affordable home ownership dwellings as well as 20 empty homes being brought back into use.
10. A new housing management service, Housing Plus, will start in September 2014. The service is only available to new and existing Council tenants and has the aim of helping to ensure tenants are able to sustain their tenancies in the long term. The service will provide an intensive housing management service and tenants who receive the service will have access to a dedicated Management Plus Officer throughout the length of the contract. Typically the contract will last for between six and 12 months but can be for shorter or longer periods. There is a charge that will be included in the service charge of those who receive the service. The service is eligible for Housing Benefit and Officers will discuss the charge with the tenant before the contract is signed. Cabinet approved the charge for the new service in July 2014.
11. In the period April to the end of June 2014, 110 homes have benefitted from a heating systems upgrade as part of the Housing Capital Programme. A-rated energy efficient combination boilers are fitted, together with new pumps and radiators and a top up of the insulation as required. The work is routinely completed in a day and is well received by the tenants. The more efficient boilers have reduced CO2 emissions and use less energy therefore helping tenants reduce their fuel consumption. During the work, Officers give tenants advice on how to ensure that they are on the best tariff for their situation and signpost people to fuel switch and to organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK, who will support individual situations. 49 kitchen and bathroom upgrades have been completed and 115 homes have benefitted from the installation of new double glazed windows and energy efficient composite doors.

GOLD

12. Council Staff have continued to work on the future of GOLD after the end of Council funding by April 2015. One organisation is interested in working with GOLD. There remain questions about the TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) situation for transfer of staff (one half-time post). There will be a consultation meeting this month and an Equality Impact Assessment.
13. The GOLD Focus Group (management committee) has confirmed its workplan and priorities for this year. Priorities are the future; Dignity training; involvement in developments on dementia care; supporting the two monthly groups (Positive Images and Publicity and Health); ensuring effective administration of the project and of the devolved budget; ensuring effective communication through the website

and social media.

14. Six learners from the second 'pilot' course of the Level 2 training course Dignity and Respect in Care: Theory and Practice have achieved the qualification. The training pack is being finalised with maximum interactivity and less repetition, and a meeting will be held shortly with volunteers, to establish their availability for training. The next courses will be arranged very shortly. Information leaflets have been distributed. Providers will be charged £10 per learner and further funding is being sought. A training course/session for the volunteer trainers is in development, to maximise their confidence in delivering the course.
15. The Health Group continues to meet monthly. The Group has recently heard from NECA (North East Council on Addiction) about alcohol awareness. The Chair of the Group has written to the Chair of the Clinical Commissioning Group to enquire about waiting times for cataract treatment, toenail cutting service and the move of the Muscular Skeletal Service to the Arena. These items are to be taken to the Community Council by a GOLD member.
16. Members held a stall and instant raffle at Darlington Carnival on 28 June. They organised and funded the GOLD Tea Dance on 13 August, which saw four hours of dancing and entertainment and information provided by 27 organisations/Council departments, including Clinical Commissioning Group, Mencap, Darlington Town Mission and Age UK. Extremely positive feedback was received from organisations (evaluation forms are available). Members have spoken to staff from the Council's Events Team and Markets to try to ensure the Tea Dance will continue annually, whatever happens with GOLD. Over 1000 copies of the newsletter were distributed at the end of July, with more sent by email than ever before.
17. Members continue to represent GOLD on various boards and meetings and have attended for example the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee and the Neighbourhood Resolution Task and Finish Group.
18. I have also :-
 - (a) attended the GOLD Tea Dance;
 - (b) attended the GOLD Focus Group; and
 - (c) visited the Veterans Café to congratulate those who did the recent parachute jump.

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