
OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO

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

Dry January

2. Following on from last year's success, the DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team) Durham Constabulary, Public Health and Healthy Darlington Hub are planning an event to raise awareness of the Dry January campaign. The challenge is to give up alcohol for thirty-one days with the aim of stimulating discussions with friends and families about the place of alcohol in our lives. A 'Dry Hatters' tea party was held at the Glasshouse Restaurant, Darlington College on 22 January which I opened alongside an individual who shared their experience of recovery.

Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health

3. The annual Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health Stakeholder event was held on 20 January, at Teesside University, Darlington. Partners and stakeholders had the opportunity to propose priorities for the 2015-2017 Delivery Plan and initial consultation was also undertaken on developing the Children's services 0-19 years pathway.

Personal, Social, Economic and Health Education (PSHE)

4. Agreement has been gained for the Council's Relationships, Education and Sexual Health Co-ordinator to work with the DAAT on enhancing the use of the social norms survey data in schools. This year we will strengthen the use of positive messages and increase targeted work on areas identified as a priority.

Fuel Poverty

5. The fuel poverty service is being reviewed with support from Housing and Economic Growth Teams to reflect wider Council priorities. Draft National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on excess winter deaths (June 2014) highlights the risk of death and ill-health associated with cold homes and provides a Public Health evidence base on fuel poverty. A new service would prioritise capacity building frontline Health and Social Care to staff to identify and refer individuals at risk of fuel poverty.

Mental Health in the Workplace Place Programme ‘Minded to Help’

6. The collaboration with Darlington Cares to address mental health in the workplace through a network of peer support has been named ‘Minded to Help’. The website is now under development and will contain a range of approved practical materials and tools and a space for workplaces to offer and request specific support. A launch is planned for early February and a number of organisations have come forward to offer support. A very positive article was published in the Northern Echo citing the project as innovative good practice.

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction

7. Mindfulness based stress reduction is a service commissioned through public health. The programme is currently delivered for adults targeting those out of work, pre and post natal women and teachers. Outcomes have been consistently positive and there is growing evidence of the effectiveness in children and young people with positive effects on anxiety, stress, creativity and attainment. The current providers of mindfulness in Darlington have proposed piloting a school-based programme which will train staff in the sustainable, long-term delivery of mindfulness (see <http://mindfulnessinschools.org/>). A bid to pilot the programme in schools was agreed with Children’s Services and shortlisted by the Engagement Team for a Department for Communities and Local Government Grant. The bid was unsuccessful however; Public Health has reviewed this work further with Darlington Youth Partnership in light of mental health being one of its priorities.

Darlington Partnership

8. At the meeting on 5 November Darlington Partnership Board considered a report from Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service about the work it has undertaken to reduce demand on its services. This has had a significant positive impact on its service and was subsequently considered by the Council’s Heads of Service. Durham Constabulary gave report back from the community consultation exercise it had undertaken in Northgate. Early signs are that it has had a positive impact with the potential of reducing crime in the area.
9. The Partnership’s Chair and Vice-Chair are elected biennially. At the Partnership Board meeting held 5 November 2014 Alasdair MacConachie was unanimously reappointed as Chair and Mike Airey unanimously reappointed as Vice-Chair.

Healthwatch

10. Healthwatch has recently recruited a range of volunteers to the organisations during the last nine months. Healthwatch Darlington Limited has a Board of four and as a very active organisation this was a challenge. Nine volunteers have now been recruited to a Committee that will help and support the Board to implement the work plan and deliver the outcomes required.
11. The Committee brings a range of experience and skills and includes patients, carers and retired health practitioners. Other volunteers take part in Task and Finish Groups. Some Task and Finish Groups are in place already and others will

be developed in the coming year. The Task and Finish Groups are to cover the following work areas ‘:

- (a) Enter and View;
- (b) GP Access;
- (c) Data and Intelligence;
- (d) Equality and Diversity;
- (e) Cancer Services;
- (f) Mental Health; and
- (g) Children and Young People.

Further details can be found at the Healthwatch website by following this link:
<http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/>

Voluntary Sector

12. The voluntary and community sector is helping to co-design services linked to the Better Care Fund and this has involved Age UK Darlington, MIND and DAD (Darlington Association on Disability) being part of a multi-disciplinary team based in eleven GP surgeries in Darlington. The aim of this pilot is to prevent people needing admission to hospital by ensuring clinicians and patients know what support is based in the community. Referrals will be made to a wide range of community organisations providing support that will improve health and well-being.
13. Work is also ongoing to implement the infrastructure review and an action plan has been developed with Evolution, the current infrastructure body. Progress against the action plan will be reviewed in the Spring and a specification for priorities will be developed for implementation from September.

Welfare Rights

14. Seven new enquiries were opened during November and ten enquiries were closed. In addition, ten enquiries were dealt with as consultancy for local authority and voluntary agency staff. During November £27,742 was secured in additional benefit for clients. The total raised to date is £150,591.

Equalities Group

15. The Equalities Darlington Group was established as part of the Equalities Scheme with membership from people representing various protected characteristics groups. The Council needs to understand the impact of strategic decisions on all protected characteristic groups so that appropriate action can be taken.
16. Members attend on a voluntary basis, in many cases are self-selecting and each have different reasons for attending the group. Consequently it has been difficult to achieve full representation for all protected characteristics within the Group. Some members are well informed about broad equalities issues and legislation whilst others have significant knowledge but only in focused areas.

17. Attempts have been made to merge this Group with a similar Group that is chaired by Durham Constabulary with the intention of achieving broader representation for protected characteristics, discussing strategic issues that relate to both the Police and the Council and to jointly reduce the administration overhead of managing two Groups. Unfortunately the proposal was strongly rejected by a number of people from within the group on the grounds that they felt Police and Council issues needed to remain separate therefore limited progress has been made.
18. The Engagement Officer will visit Group members individually with a view to gathering more information from them to help understand equalities issues within the Borough, the cause of them and how we can strategically work with our partners and members of the community to address them.

Performance Management Quarter 2

19. Cabinet received a report providing an update on the Council's performance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2014 which included progress against key performance measures and outcomes identified within the Council's agreed performance management framework.
20. It was noted that in total 178 performance indicators were reported in the period April to September 2014 and of those 40 did not have comparable data available. Of those that did 49 per cent had seen an improvement since the same period last year, 41 per cent a decline and 10 per cent had no change.
21. Strategic indicators that measure One Darlington: Perfectly Placed showed a mixed performance with some indicators demonstrating that Darlington performed better than the national average and some performed worse. A range of indicators in Darlington continue to have a significant variance in performance between different geographies and demographics and this remains a challenge.

Strategic Grants

22. Cabinet agreed a way forward for the future of strategic grant to deliver savings which had been identified in the MTFP.
23. The original timetable for the review of strategic grants assumed a saving of £100,000 in 2015/16 and a further £95,000 in 2016/17. The 2015/16 MTFP, anticipated a shortfall in the original savings with an anticipated saving of £50,000 in 2015/16 rather than the £95,000.
24. To achieve these savings it was proposed to cease strategic grant funding Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) from March 2015 and seize the opportunity to bring together advice provided under the Social Fund, Community switching and other contracts.

25. Cabinet have therefore agreed to fund CAB at the current level until new financial advice arrangements are put in place linked to the Financial Inclusion Strategy, fund Evolution for a period of six months whilst options for the future commissioning of infrastructure report are developed and fund Age UK Darlington, First Stop, DAD and Groundwork for a period of up to 12 months at the current rate to allow a review of these services to take place.

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Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships