

---

**OVERVIEW OF ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

---

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**Work Programme**

2. We have a full and interesting work programme and the key theme running through all of our topics is safeguarding. As well as looking at performance data and financial information we will be focussing very strongly on the narrative of services and the outcomes for people.
3. To help build a picture of the support and services which are available to the residents of Darlington, we have a programme of visits scheduled. To date we have visited Age Concern and Darlington Mind and we are planning to visit Darlington on Disability and the Medequip premises in Newton Aycliffe either later this year or early next year.
4. On 12 October 2015, we visited the facilities at Windsor Court, Newton Lane and spoke to some of the tenants. We then undertook a walking tour of Minors Crescent; Chillingham Court, Warwick Square and Richmond Close. Our next Housing visit will be to Rosemary Court where we will again meet tenants and look at the assistive technology available.
5. Our main piece of work this year will be in relation to Dementia. We hope to improve our understanding of the impact of Dementia, identify and highlight good practice in terms of delivery in line with local and national strategies; support the establishment of Dementia Friendly Communities and help to improve services to people with dementia and their carers and families. We set our terms of reference for this work will be held today.
6. We also agreed at our last meeting to write, jointly with the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, to the Government expressing our concern and objections to the proposed reduction in the public health grant to local authorities.

**Housing Plus Service**

7. We were pleased to receive an update on the progress and success of the new housing management service, Housing Plus, which became operational in December 2014. The service is 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.

8. The risk of tenancy failure has increased over recent years in view of the economic recession and the introduction of welfare reforms and tenancy failure can have significant personal and social consequences with a statutory homeless case estimated to cost £2,500 and an eviction over £7,000. The service is self-financing and, although there is a cost to the tenant, this cost is eligible for Housing Benefit and all 103 tenants currently receiving the service have the cost met through this.
9. Since its introduction, 148 tenants and their families have taken advantage of the service and those receiving the service have a mix of different types of needs and require support for different periods of time. The service operates on an agreed set of goals with the tenant and the aim is to start with an intensive level of contact and gradually withdraw the service as the goals are achieved.
10. We were advised of the different needs of tenants and the types of cases which are managed by the service and it was noted that ensuring that someone was successful with their tenancy had significant wider implications and significant benefits, including better health outcomes and life prospects.
11. We were interested to know how the service linked with other partners and agencies to provide more intensive support to tenants when needed and how support was given to those tenants who were not readily identifiable or who didn't present as needing support and we were assured that those linkages were in place and that Housing Officers were trained in safeguarding and were able to identify any problems and were aware of other agencies and services which could help with more intensive support and life skills.

## **Performance Management**

12. We received a presentation on the performance management information at quarter 2 for those indicators under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee in relation to Enough Support When Needed.
13. Particular reference was made to the indicator in relation to the percentage of individuals who met their goals following reablement which was not currently meeting its targets. The Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT) and reablement is a universal service and this does impact on the outcomes and performance of the service as not every individual receiving it will benefit from it. A review of RIACT will look at whether a more targeted service will need to be considered in the future to ensure best use of resources.
14. We were advised that a review of the performance management framework was being undertaken alongside the implementation of Liquid Logic and that, in future, the information presented to members would focus equally on delivery and outcomes. It is important that Members are equipped to support and challenge the delivery of services and are aware of areas where there might potentially be issues. Scrutiny will be involved in the review of how the information is reported in future to enable them to do this.

## **Better Care Fund**

15. The Better Care Fund (BCF) programme of work is mid-way through and we have received an update on progress against the work strands.
16. The key milestones and achievements at this mid-way point were highlighted and we noted that there was an expectation that the Council would meet the targets set out within the expected timeframe.
17. The approach to delivering the outcomes from the BCF is a whole system approach, comprising a basket of schemes and working arrangements that collectively attack unnecessary emergency admissions and re-admissions as a way of ensuring patients are cared for in the most appropriate place and reducing the demand on acute capacity. To date, non-elective admissions, admissions into 24 hour care and reducing delayed discharges have all been reduced.
18. We will continue to receive updates on the BCF and have asked for further quantitative data to be supplied to us so we can measure performance against targets. We will also be looking at the patient's journey through the services and look forward to seeing the results of the patient experience survey. We also intend to talk to some of the services involved in the Multi-Disciplinary Team's to seek their views on how the revised arrangements are working.

## **Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT)**

19. As mentioned in paragraph 13 above, we have been updated on the progress made in relation to the review of the RIACT service.
20. The review has highlighted a number of key actions and opportunities for further development to ensure that the service is efficient and effective and a number of remedial actions have already been put in place. There are a number of longer-term pieces of work to be undertaken and we will continue to receive updates on this review.
21. We will monitor performance indicators around the RIACT and reablement service to ensure it is meeting targets and delivering better outcomes for patients and will be looking at a patient's journey through the service.

## **Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board**

22. Scrutiny has been advised of the work of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board for 2014/15 and its future plans in light of the Care Act 2014.
23. Under the Care Act 2014, the Safeguarding Adults Board is now on a statutory footing and that Act sets out clear statutory requirements for the Board and its partners. There are three core duties placed on the Board and we were advised of the six key principles for effective safeguarding practices.
24. The Board is chaired independently and has a broad membership which is continually reviewed. It brings together a range of skills and experience to ensure

that it is able to discharge its plans. It does have a number of challenges ahead and has determined its priorities for 2015 - 2018.

25. It is important that we, as a Scrutiny Committee, continue to review and receive updates on the work of the Board.
26. All Members receive training in relation to Adult safeguarding, however there are additional training opportunities available which Members can access. Raising awareness of adult safeguarding is key.

### **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)**

27. We have been advised of the impact of a case in the United Kingdom Supreme Court in relation to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). As Members will be aware, the DoLS aims to protect people who lack mental capacity, but who need to be deprived of liberty so that they can be given care and treatment in a hospital or care home.
28. The Supreme Court judgement has, in effect, lowered the threshold which means that a significant amount of individuals will now be deprived of their liberty, meaning more authorisations will be needed and placing an increased burden on local authorities administering the DoLS.
29. Following the judgement, from April 2014 to the end of March 2015, there have been 914 applications to this authority which is an 842 per cent increase on the previous financial year. This does obviously place operational pressures on adult social care and we discussed this and the training requirements of the Best Interest Assessors.

**Councillor Sue Richmond**  
**Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee**