
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. There has been some local progress in delivering the national learning disability transforming care programme. The programme continues the work started following the Winterbourne view scandal. The North East and Cumbria have been designated a ‘fast track’ site and been allocated just over £2 million to affect significant change in how people with a learning disability and /or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition are supported in the community. In return for this investment there is a requirement of a reduction in in-patient assessment and treatment beds by 50 per cent over the next three years and a similar reduction in the number of in-patient beds for those in forensic services. The closure of in-patient beds will release funding and resources which will be used to develop local community alternatives to hospital admission.
3. The regional allocation has so far committed £200k to workforce development, £100k to project management, £50k to advocacy and £50k to support voluntary and community sector development. The remainder remains uncommitted; however it will be used to develop the community models needed to support this transition. The regional work is being developed through four broad work streams: workforce, advocacy, developing community models and finance and contracting. Darlington has met its commitment to those who were audited as part of the Winterbourne review in that all of those people in assessment and treatment units at that time have been discharged. The work looks to link together services and support for children and young people and adults. Officers are actively involved in progressing the work regionally.
4. Work continues on developing the local action to deliver the actions outlined in the Crisis Care Concordat. The local delivery plan, like the national plan, is built around four broad themes, commissioning early intervention and responsive crisis services; access to support before crisis; urgent and emergency access to crisis care and support when needed; and people should expect any treatment and care when in crisis to be of good quality. In line with parity of esteem, the concordat looks to ensure that those in mental health crisis are given the same priority as

those in general health crisis. Healthwatch have led on a number of local events designed to map out the current services and support in relation to crisis. A local priority has been the conveyancing of people in crisis to hospital to ensure their needs are met. A number of people have waited too long for an ambulance to be available to ensure they are admitted into hospital. The action plan is monitored through the Darlington Mental Health Network.

5. On 15 October 2015, commissioners were notified by one of the Home Care and Support Framework providers that it wished to terminate its agreement with Darlington Borough Council with effect from 10 January 2016. At the time of the provider giving notice, it was delivering 35 per cent of all of the domiciliary support commissioned from the Framework. Commissioners have successfully managed the transfer of all of the packages of support to one single support provider and, as such, those staff employed by the outgoing provider who wish to, will have the opportunity to TUPE transfer to the new care provider. The aim is that the transfer of the staff will help to ensure continuity of care. All individuals who currently receive support from the outgoing provider have been visited by social work staff, to advise them of the change in support provider and to complete the required paperwork. Where required, a review of support needs will be carried out for individuals and a revised support plan will be produced.
6. I attended the launch of the Darlington Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) on 8 December 2015 by the Mayor in the gallery at the Crown Street Library. The event was attended by approximately 40 people and provided an opportunity to showcase the work of the Alliance in Darlington and to flag the importance of Darlington working towards becoming a dementia friendly community. The launch event took place on the same day as the second staffed session of the Darlington Dementia Hub, which provides a permanent information resource for people with dementia and their carers in the reference section of the library. The Hub will be staffed on the second Tuesday of the month from 12 noon to 3.00 p.m. The Dementia Hub is run and staffed as a partnership project by a number of members of the Dementia Action Alliance.
7. I was pleased to open the Carers' Rights Day employers' event on 20 November 2015 which was attended by approximately 30 people from a range of businesses and organisations in Darlington. The event looked at the business case for supporting employees who are, or who become, carers, and good working practices in relation to supporting carers. It also provided information about the variety of support that is available locally to both carers and to the people they care for, so that employers are in a better position to be able to support their staff, who also have caring responsibilities. Those attending found it an informative event and found the case study presentations particularly useful. One example was of a carers support network run by the DfE and a number of participants intend to explore the possibility of setting up a carers support network in their own workplaces.

Adult Social Care – Operational Developments

8. Work continues in relation to the Better Care Fund and the key projects, including the review of RIACT eligibility criteria; this work is progressing and should be ready

in the New Year. This work is being completed within the Multi-Disciplinary Teams operational steering group and will be shared via the appropriate governance structures. Performance metrics remain all very positive, leading to a 'green' assessment overall and for delivery. In every quarter for the past year, there have been fewer Non-elective (NEL) admissions to hospital than the year before, and in every month since February 2015 there have been fewer again than the same month in 2014. Work in relation to reducing the numbers of delayed transfers of care has also been very positive.

9. A full evaluation of the projects will commence and a successful bid has been made to the Better Care Fund Local integration Support fund, securing additional funding for independent evaluation of the schemes and interventions made using the Better Care Fund during 2015. A service experience questionnaire is being piloted with people who have had services delivered following referral from Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings.
10. As part of the preparations for managing additional demand over the winter period, two new schemes are now up and running. This includes a rapid response service for domiciliary care; the service is to provide support to individuals within their own home to prevent admission or to facilitate a timely discharge from hospital. The service can provide support during the day as well as overnight support. A full evaluation of the service will take place following the winter period.
11. In addition to the rapid response service, nine community beds have been commissioned from Ventress Hall for a six month period. Again to assist with the increased demand during winter and to provide appropriate care for individuals who are residents of Darlington, reducing the likelihood of them needing to go to Bishop Auckland or the Richardson Hospital. Once again a full evaluation of the scheme will need to be completed, this information will be used to inform the ongoing procurement in relation to future intermediate care and step down provision within the local area which the CCG are currently leading on with support from Adult Social Care.
12. The Care Act continues to a key priority for Adult Social Care as well as partner agencies. This development is supported through the *Me-Learning* programme. There are now over 200 people that have accessed the training across all areas. This has meant that the target set by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services has now been achieved. The knowledge and awareness of staff working in social care continues to grow with the use of Practitioner Forums, embedding theory into practice. The use of Care Act Advocacy has also continued to grow in line with Department of Health guidelines. The Advocacy contract with Darlington Association on Disability has therefore been extended to April 2016 with an option to extend further. The development of a new Care and Support Needs Assessment is ongoing. Currently there have been two sessions considering the new assessment with Third Sector involvement. Ongoing development is to include a six week programme where service users consider the new assessment. The Charging Policy has been revised and is to be consulted upon in 2016. There is also a requirement to be compliant with the new 'Assessable Information Standard'. There is a requirement to be compliant by 1 April 2016. The standard is a joint health and social care standard which includes developing an assessable

communication policy and ensuring effective ways of communicating with the public.

13. The adult safeguarding function moved on a temporary basis from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub at the police station to Central House on 14 December 2015. The interim arrangements will likely remain in place up until the end of January and are a result of staffing changes within Adult Social Care. The safeguarding function will continue to operate within a multi-agency framework during this time and partnership arrangements will remain unaffected.

14. Assistive Technology/Telecare Project :-

(a) 80 workers from Adult Social Care have now been trained and 20 workers from Health, Multi-Disciplinary Teams/District nurses have also been trained as part of work with the Telehealth project. As a result of training, telecare referrals have increased by 50 per cent compared to the previous year. Telecare champions meetings are held monthly with several social workers and an Occupational Therapist from Health.

(b) The Reablement Telecare pilot has been in place for four months. It has been agreed to continue to support winter pressures, increase in referrals from hospital in RIACT where free Telecare for six weeks can support people with low level needs. Free trials with Lifestyle /activity monitoring equipment from *Just Checking* for people with dementia and high cost packages of care have been completed. One trial of this equipment provided service user activity data that identified potential annual savings of £14,000 by removing the need of a sleep over service. Four *Just Checking* units at a total cost of £11,634 over three years have been purchased and a six month pilot within teams across Adult Social Care has begun. Focus will be on high cost packages of care in Learning Disabilities including waking night and sleep over services.

(c) Other areas will include testing the equipment in reablement to help assess the level of care needed for people discharged from hospital. Staff are working with an independent pharmacy in supporting people in filling automatic medication dispensers and look at reducing 15 minute home care calls to prompt medication. A project studying location devices/GPS devices has looked at testing the latest technology in this area that helps people maintain their independence when going out into the community. Small and discreet devices can be carried by individuals that have push button alarms, automatic falls alerts and location finding technology. Trials have been carried out on three different GPS units. In addition to giving people independence and reassuring family members, it can also reduce the need for people to have one to one carers and be an effective alternative to paid for carers. Work is also ongoing with the CCTV team on how their systems can support people using these devices and options in it providing a 24/7 call monitoring response for this type of equipment.

(d) The project is also developing a specification for what Adult Social Care need to meet future demands for providing a telecare service. The specification will also contribute in proposing how the current model of providing Assistive

Technology and telecare throughout the main functions of calls monitoring, response, install, and maintenance can be adapted or changed to meet the requirements of Adult Social Care. Further work also needs to be carried out with Housing to establish these requirements and identify any blockages and inefficiencies with current processes.

15. A Resource Allocation System (RAS) Review Scoping workshop was held on 2 October 2015 to outline the requirements and objectives of the project. The RAS is an indicative budget assessment tool that is generated through the adult social care assessment. It provides people with an upfront indicative budget, to help them plan their care in order to meet their needs. Research within the region has taken place and identified areas of RAS that can be changed and improved to ensure it meets the three main principles of the Care Act - transparent, sufficient and timeliness. Since the introduction of Care Act the project has identified what is required from a RAS and potential changes and re-modelling that needs to take place. The potential changes will help make the RAS more accurate to reflect the current needs of people within Adult Social Care and save time for assessing officers resolving any challenges regarding the indicative budget. The implementation of the new RAS will work in conjunction with the date that the new IT system, Liquid Logic, goes live to ensure system configuration, testing and training is done in line with the Liquid logic project plan.

Housing Services

16. The Housing and Planning Bill is currently progressing through Parliament and is being very closely monitored as it introduces a number of significant changes to housing :-
 - (a) As part of the Government's shift in priorities to owner occupation, the Bill requires local authorities to promote the supply of Starter Homes. It also only allows planning permission for residential development to be granted if starter home requirements are met. This could include the requirement for a certain proportion of Starter Homes to be included, or a 'commuted sum' to be paid to the LA for developing Starter Homes as part of planning obligation, i.e. Section 106. This means that Section 106 requirements are likely to be met through the provision of starter homes rather than affordable rented properties;
 - (b) The extension of Right to Buy to Housing Associations will now be on a voluntary basis and phased in gradually with five Housing Associations being identified as the first to offer properties for sale. Housing Associations will be compensated for the sale of properties but are expected to provide replacement homes. There is no requirement for like for like replacements and no requirement to provide properties to rent;
 - (c) The Government intends to fund the above extension of Right to Buy through the compulsory sale of high value Council properties as they become void. The proposal is to estimate how much money should be raised through the sale of high value properties by each stock holding Local Authority and impose an annual up-front charge on local authorities, irrespective of actual sales that

take place;

- (d) The Pay to Stay scheme will affect occupants of Council housing with a combined income above £30,000 per year and they will have to pay a higher rent, possibly up to a full market rent. The Government has recently announced that it intends to amend the Bill to allow Housing Associations to voluntarily introduce this. Housing providers will be required to gather information on household income and tenants will be obliged to provide information but details of how this can be achieved are not yet fully worked up. This information is not currently available so there will be additional costs involved. The additional money raised by Council's will be taken by the Government while Housing Associations who participate will be able to retain the money to help fund new housing; and
 - (e) In a recent amendment to the Bill, all Council housing relets will be let on a Fixed Term tenancy of between two and five years. Tenants who remain in their current home will retain a secure tenancy but tenants who transfer will move to a Fixed Term tenancy. This is specific to Council Housing but the Government has said they may introduce this change to Housing Associations at a later date through regulation.
17. Local Authorities in the Tees Valley have come together to develop a new sub-regional Housing Strategy. The strategy has been produced to support the role of the new Combined Authority. Local authorities will however still produce their own Housing strategies and be responsible for development in their own area.
18. The first new Council homes included in the current new build programme were completed in November, comprising of eight two-bedroomed flats at Deepdale Way, Red Hall. All eight flats were quickly let and I was delighted to officially open these in December 2015. Work is also at an advanced stage on 12 two-bedroomed flats at Badminton Close Red Hall, due to be completed in March 2016. Children from the Red Hall Primary school have followed these developments from inception to completion and took part in a visit in November to see the new flats as they were completed. They were given an opportunity to learn about the design, the technology installed and how it was contributing to the sustainability agenda as well as how to apply for accommodation.
19. Groundwork Trust, on behalf of, and in conjunction with, the Council has been working on growing the capacity of local residents at Red Hall in accordance with the local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Over recent months they have built relationships with an increasing number of residents, as well representatives of the local Community Centre, primary and secondary schools, Police, Ward Councillors and Council Officers. What has become clear is that whilst many residents express a wish to be involved, alternatives to structured meetings are needed, so Groundwork Trust has facilitated a range of more informal meetings and opportunities to build intergenerational relationships and develop confidence. A community litter pick was attended by 18 adults and five children and a wild food walk attracted 87 children and six adults. There has also been two Christmas walks/wreath making sessions attended by 26 adults and 9 children.

20. Partners in both statutory and voluntary organisations attended Mutual Gain training funded by Durham Constabulary and in January every home will be visited. This will be a further opportunity for households to get more information about how they can make a difference in their community and get involved. Over the spring it is the intention to establish and develop groups that can be supported to work to the priorities in the master plan. These groups will be supported and developed to make funding applications to sustain the work.
21. Progress on the way customers engage with the Council in respect of Housing Services is due to take another step forward with the introduction on the Council's website of Housing Connect. This will be a virtual forum that allows tenants and other customers to engage with the service, passing comment on policies and plans as well as the quality of the service. This opens up a new option for those who do not want to attend meetings. Other options are available for those who do not have access to the internet or prefer another means of communication. The forum will go live in January 2016.
22. I have also :-
- (a) attended the GOLD Christmas party, which was well attended;
 - (b) attended the Ageing Well Forum;
 - (c) attended the GOLD Focus Group;
 - (d) chaired a meeting of DAWN; and
23. Can I also take this opportunity to welcome Suzanne Joyner, the new Director of Children and Adult Services to Darlington.

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