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**OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**Work Programme 2016/17**

2. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2016/17 and possible review topics. The work programme is a rolling work programme and items can be added as necessary.

**Safer Homes Initiative**

3. Members received a PowerPoint Presentation from Andrew Allison, Community Safety Manager, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services detailing the Safe and Wellbeing Visits undertaken by the Fire Service since March 2016.
4. This initiative, supported by Age UK, Chief Fire Officers Association, Public Health England, NHS England and the Local Government Association, aims to provide early intervention and prevention to ensure that vulnerable people are supported to maintain their independence for longer and to reduce the number of hospital admissions and avoidable winter pressures.
5. Trained Fire and Rescue Service Officers visit homes, mainly via appointment resulting from referrals from friends, family or other healthcare providers, to offer personalised fire reduction advice and guidance.
6. Free smoke alarms are fitted where required and advice provided to ensure residents are safer in their home. Each appointment normally lasts about 20 minutes and covers topics such as using electricity safely, cooking safely, making an escape plan, what to do if there is a fire in your home, keeping children safe and good practice.
7. Information is also offered with respect to areas of wellbeing including winter warmth, flu vaccinations, dementia support, falls and social isolation, smoking and alcohol safety tips and support for those who want to give up or reduce or the amount they smoke or drink.
8. Members welcomed the Initiative which seeks to address many of the issues which are of concern. In particular Members were pleased to note the Dementia Charter which is the first of its kind in the Country and which is on the shortlist for the National Dementia Care Awards.

## **Better Health Programme Joint Scrutiny Committee**

9. Three Members of this Scrutiny Committee serve on the Better Health Programme (BHP) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee which was established under the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 involving all local authorities affected by the Better Health Programme and any associated service review proposals.
10. There have been four meetings of the BHP Joint Scrutiny Committee since it was established and wide ranging discussions have included the efficacy of Public Engagement; performance and emergency care statistics; patient flows for James Cook Hospital, The Friarage, North Tees Hospital, University Hospital North Durham and Darlington Memorial Hospital; and Transforming Urgent and Emergency Care in England – The Keogh Report. Despite these discussions, answers to many issues remain outstanding.
11. At the last meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Members received a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the key issues and up to date information relating to the Better Health Programme and how it will feed into a wider NHS plan – the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for the area covered by South Durham, Darlington; Teesside; and Hambleton, Richmond and Whitby.
12. Members also raised serious concerns during the meeting of Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at the recent announcement that £4.6m had already been spent on the BHP and costs would rise as work was continuing on that Programme. Yet County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust cannot apparently find £0.5m for the implementation of the relocation of Urgent Care at the Darlington Memorial Hospital which would have great benefits in the better management of urgent care. Members are also concerned about the further uncertainty which will arise now that the consultation on the Better Health Programme proposals will be put back from November 2016 to June 2017.

### **Access to GP Appointments**

13. Members are keen to progress this piece of work and will be focussing their attention on several key areas including further engagement with the public, patients and patient groups. Members acknowledge that G P services are under significant pressure and by using money from G P Access Fund measures have been taken to address these. We hope that the CCG will provide us with an update by April 2017 when we will have concluded our investigations and will be in a position to finalise our report and recommendations.

### **Urgent Care**

14. Members remain very frustrated and disappointed that the co-location of Urgent Care from Dr Piper House to Darlington Memorial Hospital is still unresolved. We understand that there will be no outcome from the funding source currently being pursued by County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust until 2017.

15. We will continue to monitor both the co-location of Urgent Care and the issues around the Maternity Services at Darlington Memorial Hospital very closely.

**Councillor Wendy Newall**  
**Chair of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**