
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. Just Checking is an assessment tool which provides objective evidence of a person's capability to live as independently as possible in their own home. The technology is particularly useful in a multi-occupancy setting to understand an individual's needs and tailor care packages to safely provide the right level of care. Following a successful pilot of the assistive technology system, Just Checking, an additional 15 units have been purchased.
3. In addition, single use sets of the equipment will also be used for people undergoing a period of reablement to monitor their needs, to see how they can be supported with assistive technology, to remain in their own homes. The benefits to the Council of using this assessment tool is to ensure that service users are being supported to maximise their independence and achieve their full potential safely, and contribute to the wider community, in the most efficient and cost effective way as possible.
4. Work continues to prepare for the re-tender of domiciliary care services, with a renewed specification being developed to ensure fit for the future care provision.

RIACT Review

5. To ensure that the Council is Care Act compliant, it must have an effective way to meet its duty to prevent, delay or reduce the need for care and support. An essential component of delivering this is through Intermediate Care Services, which are provided in partnership with Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. This includes the Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT) service, provided by the Council. To ensure it continues to operate effectively, both the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have commissioned a full service review, as part of the Better Care Fund joint working. This will ensure that the service is efficient and effective and is fit for purpose, to deliver the key role required in the future health and social care economy in Darlington. It is anticipated that the final report will be produced early in 2017.

Staff Training

6. Ensuring staff are properly trained to carry out their roles continues to be an essential area in Adult Services. The Workforce Development (WFD) team have provided face to face delivery, E-Learning and 'Lite Bite' sessions to ensure staff development is based on the identified needs and requirements of the Adult Workforce. WFD provide training and development in three distinct ways – the commissioning of external training providers, the internal delivery of training/development by staff (Train the Trainer trained) and the 'Developing Darlington' collaborative approach (where partner organisations deliver training free of charge as part of the Developing Darlington collaborative group/partnership).
7. Examples of the programmes delivered include Assessing for Effective Care and Support for People on the Autism Spectrum and their Carers, Effective Complaint Handling in Adult Social Care, Medication Awareness, Infection Control, Assistive Technology, MCA DoLS, Moving and Handling of People, Strengths Based Social Work, CHC Training, Palliative and End of Life Training, Dementia Care and Dementia Friends, Assessment and Eligibility, Whole Family Training (seeing the individual in the context of the family) and 'Care Act in a Nutshell'.
8. Throughout 2017, Adult Services staff will continue with the agreed training programmes, as well as accessing training and development relating to Adult Services Legal Training Programme, Working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities, Effective Writing and Recording, Advocacy, Carers Assessment. There is also be a big emphasis planned on Liquid Logic training in preparation for 'go-live' later in 2017.

Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (DSAPB)

9. The last Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (DSAPB) meeting was held on 24 November 2016. The Board received a presentation on the research report by Durham University 'Aging Sex Offenders: Managing the Risk in the Community'. The MAPPA¹ (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) Co-ordinator highlighted the challenges experienced to date as there is resistance from residential settings and care homes allowing aging sex offenders to be supported in these establishments with 'care and support needs'. The MAPPA Co-ordinator sought the DSAPB's support to strengthen the membership on the working group to look at the development and implementation of risk management procedures that will support staff within residential settings/care homes to effectively manage the risk posed by Ageing Sex Offenders with care and support needs.
10. The Board has approved the Multi-agency Information Sharing protocol to strengthen information sharing across its partners in Darlington.

¹ MAPPA stands for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements – a set of arrangements established by Police, Darlington Borough Council and the prison service in the area to assess and manage the risk posed by sexual and violent offenders.

11. It has engaged with the voluntary sector to better understand what engagement work is undertaken and how this information can be shared to inform its work. It is a priority of the Board to ensure that the adults at risk voice is seen throughout the work of the Board and the Board are improving how it does this.

Housing Services

Red Hall Estate Regeneration

12. The residents of Red Hall organised a celebration event on 30 November 2016 at the Red Hall Community Centre. This was an opportunity to thank the residents for their patience during work on their properties and for the valuable contributions they have made so far to improve the quality of life on the estate. The event also signalled a new stage in the work as consultation took place for play equipment in a new play area.
13. There was an excellent turn out with 24 stands or stalls from a range of public and voluntary organisations as well as local individuals and groups. The Police were building on their Mutual Gain initiative and in particular were further developing their mini-police scheme. Having secured funding from Helix Art they were promoting their work to support families and groups on the estate and leave a lasting legacy. In particular there was a theme of health promotion, with representatives from the Healthy New Town Steering Group, Slimming World and Bike Stop, as well as, free fresh soup prepared by one of the residents. The local school and parents continued to provide support and the performance from the school choir was very popular. There was also strong interest in setting up a Brownie group.
14. Following our initial expression of interest bid for Estate Regeneration funding for Red Hall in March 2016, Lord Heseltine and several Government officials recently attended a meeting on the estate to discuss our proposals with local residents and key stakeholders. We received very positive feedback to proceed with a bid which builds on the work already undertaken and addresses the wider issues around how to ensure Red Hall plays a key role in the overall development of the Eastern Urban Fringe.

Rental Income

15. Despite the pressures of Welfare Reforms our rent arrears have decreased over the year from £593,212 in January 2016 to £542,705 in December 2016, representing an 8.50 per cent decrease. This has required a significant amount of pro-active work and unfortunately as more reforms are implemented the challenges will increase. For example:

Housing Benefit Cap

The Government further reduced the Housing Benefit Cap from November 2016 to £20,000 per annum. Housing Officers have been in contact with the 54 Council tenants who were affected in order to provide support. In total benefit reductions are calculated to be £1,689 per week (£89,848.80 per annum).

Of the 54 originally affected:

- (a) 8 are either no longer affected or there is a marginal impact
- (b) 7 either did not respond to contact or turn up for an appointment
- (c) 13 are exempt (4 as a result of intervention of Housing Services Money Wise team):
 - 7 have found work
 - 4 are now receiving Carer's Allowance
 - 1 is in receipt of a Personal Independence Payment
 - 1 is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance

Of the 23 who actively engaged:

- 17 have been awarded Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)
- 3 are waiting for a decision on DHPs
- 1 person marginally affected has set up a Direct Debit
- 4 have been assisted with Personal Independence Payment applications
- 4 have been assisted with Disability Living Allowance application forms and are waiting for decisions.

Local Housing Allowance Cap

16. Preparation works are also on-going for the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance cap which will impact not only on the individuals affected but also on the future lettings of Council properties. This means we need to make potential new tenants aware that in the future they may not be able to afford the rent charges.
17. The Government is planning to introduce a cap on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit for social housing. The cap will be based on the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which already applies in the private sector. The cap will affect any tenancy in general needs housing taken up after 1 April 2017. Tenants who are in receipt of Housing Benefit in April 2019 when the change is implemented will only be paid up to the cap. It will not affect existing tenants who have not moved home unless they are in receipt of Universal Credit. For single people who are aged under 35 a "single room rate" will be applied which is significantly lower than rents for one bedroom properties. In Darlington the single room rate is £59.20 while the allowance is £75 for a one bed flat.
18. The Government has recognised that Supported Housing is particularly at risk due to the introduction of the LHA Cap. Supported Housing is generally more expensive than ordinary housing as it includes higher levels of service charges and often communal facilities. In Darlington the LHA for a one bed flat is about £30 per week below the average rent and service charge for Supported Housing while the single room rate would be significantly lower.
19. The Government understands the valuable role that these types of schemes play in maintaining people within the community. They also help reduce the need for health and care services. Consequently the Government have produced a proposal to introduce a new "top up" fund that will hopefully cover the gap between the LHA and the actual cost of these schemes. This fund will be devolved to Local

Authorities.

20. The Government is consulting on how the fund and its administration may work and a response is being prepared for when the consultation closes on 13th February 2017.

21. I have also attended :-

- (a) two meetings of the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust Governing Council;
- (b) the GOLD Christmas party;
- (c) a meeting of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board;
- (d) a day training session for members of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board;
- (e) a special meeting held for Lead Members for Adults and Children's Social Care and Chairs of Health and Well-Being Boards; and
- (f) a meeting of the Tees Valley Armed Forces Forum.

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