
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

2. Cabinet welcomed the third Annual Report of the Director of Public Health Darlington, entitled 'Mental Health and Wellbeing for Children and Young People in Darlington'.
3. The theme of mental health and wellbeing for children and young people was chosen in recognition of the fact that in order to develop resilience in adult life the foundations needed to be set in childhood.
4. Whilst informing us of the risk factors and protective factors that influence the individual child, families, school-life and communities, Cabinet was also advised of the local actions in Darlington to promote good mental health, build resilience to protect mental health and treat mental health.
5. Public Health is in the final stages of re-procuring a new Stop Smoking Service which will be operational from 1 April 2017.

Darlington Partnership

6. I welcomed people to Darlington Partnership's Volunteering Fair which was held in February. The fair was host to 57 voluntary and community groups who were looking to talk with potential volunteers about the work they do and ultimately recruit new volunteers. The fair was well attended and busy all afternoon.
7. Exhibitors were surveyed after the event and of the 29 respondents 80 per cent stated they had new potential volunteers as a result of the fair. There were high expectations that 8 per cent of these would actually undertake volunteering with them. Twelve of the groups quoted they collectively had 103 new potential volunteers. Discussions are already underway to repeat the fair.
8. The Partnership is committed to supporting voluntary and community groups and increasing volunteering as this is a key element of 'Building Strong Communities', an important ambition of the One Darlington: Perfectly Placed strategy.

9. Darlington Cares, an initiative established through the Partnership which aligns Darlington's major employers' corporate social responsibility activity, is enjoying significant growth and will be launching a rebrand in March. To date it has delivered 15,000 hours of volunteering, however, within the first two months of this year it will have delivered an additional 1,500 hours. The initiatives provide support across a wide range of areas from the maintenance of Darlington's Parks and open spaces to helping children with their reading. Funded by contributions from its members, it has now secured a significant grant from County Durham Community Foundation which will help to expand its activities.

Healthwatch Darlington (HWD)

10. The most recent Mental Health Network focussed on the Crisis Care Concordat; the lack of services and support for individuals suffering with low to mid mental health problems; how monies could be freed up to re-invest into the lower level services; and how, as a group, it decided what it wanted to see for Darlington. The group explored and discussed a range of ideas, such as a telephone helpline, involving college students, advocacy projects, identifying service users who could be trained to work with newer service users, and promotion and marketing of existing services.
11. The most recent Learning Impairment network included a presentation from Lifeways, which is opening a residential service called Delphine Court at Cockerton Green. This specialist residential service is designed to meet the needs of individuals with a learning disability, Autism, Asperger syndrome and other complex needs. Also discussed was Darlington Association on Disability's new peer support group and the need for explanation and clarity on who letters being sent to 14+ year olds about health checks were aimed at.
12. The latest Darlington Organisations Together meeting included two presentations: Debra Wright spoke about her role as a Senior Nurse, on the North East Roadshow Team, delivering community engagement activities to increase understanding of cancer prevention and early diagnosis; and Saeed Iqbul discussed his charity Ethnic Minorities Training and Education Project (EMTEP) which is involved in a range of initiatives focused around Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities across the North East.
13. The Credit Union ran a workshop at the December Youthwatch meeting focussing on saving, budgeting, employment and car insurance. The Youthwatch Team have been looking into 'how young people friendly' pharmacies are, and spent a day in the Healthwatch Darlington (HWD) office producing a survey and undertaking some mystery shopping in Darlington's 23 pharmacies to rate them. The Youthwatch Team and have produced a written a report on their findings.
14. The BME Health Connector volunteers have recently disseminated information regarding:
 - (a) The Herbert Protocol;
 - (b) NHS Urgent Care (Walk-in);
 - (c) Independent Complaints Advocacy;

- (d) Free mental Health First Aid training for young people;
 - (e) NHS England's Workforce Race Equality Standard;
 - (a) The Urgent Care (Walk-in) Centre relocation to Darlington Memorial Hospital; and
 - (b) The transformation of care for people with learning disabilities and/or autism who have a mental illness or whose behaviour challenges services.
15. HWD continues with the induction process of five new Health Connectors and maintain the support of all 15 BME Health Connectors. It also met with the Council to discuss barriers to carer organisations supporting BME residents and with Darlington Safeguarding Board to discuss BME engagement with the Gypsy community. A meeting has been arranged with EMTEP and members of the Sikh and Bengali communities to discuss ways to encourage participation.
16. Recently HWD has met with commissioners to discuss the 2017/18 budget cuts and to draw up a new service specification. The cuts will involve a drastic reduction of both staffing capacity, from six part-time employees to two, and HWD's core offer.

Welfare Rights

17. The new modernised Bereavement Support Payment will be introduced for those bereaved from 6 April 2017. The new benefit is available to people of any age up to state pension age and extends support from twelve to 18 months. In addition, the new payment will not be taxed and will be subject to a disregard in the calculation of means-tested benefits and the benefit cap.
18. Universal Credit is due to transfer to the Full Service in April 2018 in Darlington. The number of new claimants for Universal Credit in Darlington now exceeds the number of new claimants for all other benefits. Officers are meeting with the Department for Work and Pensions to discuss funding arrangements for 2017/18 in March, which is due to change from a retrospective invoicing arrangement to a grant based arrangement, on anticipated numbers of new claimants.
19. A Department for Communities and Local Government consultation recently closed on the local system to fund supported and sheltered housing. From 2019, under the proposed new system, tenants and residents in supported and sheltered housing will be entitled to claim housing costs up to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) level. The local authority will then pay a top-up to cover any difference between the LHA rate and the scheme cost. Darlington Borough Council, after consulting with local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and supported housing providers, has submitted a response to the consultation. A Green Paper on the detailed arrangements for the local top-up model and approach to short-term accommodation is due to follow in the Spring, with an announcement expected on models and funding distribution in Autumn.

Health and Well Being Board

20. The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 31 January and covered a varied including a presentation from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority on

the Safe and Wellbeing visiting programme. The programme builds on the fire alarm safety checks and extends the signposting to cover smoking, trips and falls and loneliness, among other issues

21. A joint report of Simon Hart, Independent Chair of Darlington Children's Safeguarding Board, and Dr Mike Lavender, Chair of the Child Death Overview Panel was presented and discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board. The thematic review gave assurance to the Board of robust processes in place to review and learn from the cases.
22. Councillor S Richmond shared the final report of the Dementia Review Group with the Board; the challenge is for each organisation to consider how to respond to the recommendations.
23. Darlington NHS Clinical Commissioning Group presented the County Durham and Darlington Urgent Care Strategy (2015-2020).

Councillor A Scott
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships