
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 continue to give consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee and are in the process of reviewing local care and services for people with autism.

Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Annual Report 2016/17

3. We received the Annual Report of the Board whose purpose is to help safeguard adults with care and support needs through effective safeguarding practice and collaborative working to prevent abuse and neglect where possible.
4. The multi-agency Adults Safeguarding Board in Darlington has an independent Chair, Ann Baxter, who attended the meeting to outline the annual report and answer a number of questions raised by Members of our Scrutiny Committee.
5. Ann highlighted the challenges associated with ensuring adults are safeguarded and referred, in particular, to empowerment and making safeguarding more personal and learning from the safeguarding experiences of those adults at risk; ways to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are proportionate to the risk of significant harm; and protection, which is a key role for professionals to work closely together to monitor arrangements for reports of abuse and neglect.

Better Care Fund Update

6. We have been advised that the Better Care Fund Plan 2017/19 submission has now received assurance from NHS England and will build on the foundations laid in 2015/17 and 2016/17 in the areas of admissions avoidance in 65+, a joint approach to discharge management, reablement and intermediate care services, improving health in care homes, and building a robust community and universal services offer in support of managing demand into the future.
7. The Local Government settlement announced in 2015 included an amount for Improved Better Care Fund and subsequently in the 2017 budget, an additional grant was announced.
8. The grant must be pooled into the Better Care Fund and the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will work together to meet the Better Care Fund National Condition 4 to implement a High Impact Change Model for managing

transfers of care. As NHS England has assured the plans we can now begin to spend this grant.

9. We also received the summary report of the findings of the review of Intermediate Care (RIACT and Reablement Services) and we noted that work is underway to develop the service in response to the findings and we will monitor its contribution to maximising the independence of people who require care and support.

Quality Assurance – Domiciliary Care Contract

10. We received an update on the new home Care and Support Contract which commenced on 2 October 2017.
11. The new contract divides the Borough into two geographical zones with successful providers Careline providing support within the West zone and Positive Life Choices within the East zone.
12. There will be 'safety net' of ten additional framework providers who will be offered packages in instances where either of the prime providers are unable to meet demand and a system of Direct Payment will be offered to individuals who wish to opt out rather than transfer to an alternative provider.
13. Careline and Positive Life Choices will be expected to accept 90 per cent of all packages offered to them and to date only one package has been refused for reasons outlined to the Committee.
14. We have requested a further report in six months to monitor how the new contract has progressed.

Visits

15. We recently visited Kings Church to look at their Foodbank Service. We were also shown the other social enterprises they have developed, such as the furniture recycling scheme, the community café, the gym and other rooms available for community use and these are all quite impressive.
16. We were told that 12,000 people used the Foodbank during the previous year and that this was an increase of 1,500 on the previous year. It was stated that delays to receipt of Universal Credit were the biggest cause for clients to request food parcels and that these delays were caused by Darlington Borough Council's delay in letting the department for Work and Pensions (DWP) know the Housing benefit and Council Tax benefits.
17. Members were quite concerned to hear this and on return I spoke to the relevant officers about this and was assured that payments of Universal Credit are the sole responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and that Darlington Borough Council does not have any control over the administration or any delays in Universal Credit application. Regular monthly meetings are held between our officers and local DWP officers to ensure that DBC's processes and systems are delivering information timely.

Councillor Marjory Knowles
Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee