

COUNCIL
26 NOVEMBER 2020

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform and update Members on progress within Adult Services since the last meeting of Council. The following are the main areas of work under the Portfolio for Adult Services.

Operational Services

2. In house Day Opportunities for adults with a Learning Disability reopened on a phased return on 7th September. The Task and Finish group continued to meet on a weekly basis, monitoring progress and planning the next phase of re-opening. The aim was to re-open the remaining two buildings (Foundations and the Bridge) for the beginning of November 2020. Staff and attendees have been acclimatising to reopening in the first phase, which has proved to be very successful in combining a safe and secure environment with meaningful activities. In response to the new guidance issued by the Government, regarding CEV (clinical extremely vulnerable) individuals, the day opportunities Task and Finish group met with colleagues in Public Health and agreed to review all individual risk assessments. The outcome being all assessments were updated and most individuals wished to continue to attend. All 4, day opportunity provisions, are now open. The Links and Lakeside have now been open for 8 weeks, there have been no outbreaks and all bubbles are intact. We have returned to pre-covid opening times, of 9-3.
3. Currently, due to adhering to safe practises of working, we are not able to offer the full pre COVID level of resource. However, providing the second phase of reopening is successful, it is anticipated we will be able to return to near normal levels by the end of the year.
4. Further updated guidance was issued by the Department of Health (DOH) on 9th September in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (Dols). The updated guidance included a return to face to face assessments in Care Home settings, which had been suspended in April 2020 at the start of the pandemic. Operational staff had been preparing for these changes and have been working with colleagues in Commissioning and Contracts to ensure Care Homes were prepared for the changes. The guidance recognised that in some instances, for example, if there was a COVID outbreak within a home, face to face visits may not be possible, and alternative arrangements made.
5. Seven day working, and the discharge pathway continues to be in operation. Further guidance on the Reintroduction of Continuing Health Care (CHC) and the introduction of the Hospital Discharge Operational Model was issued by the DOH in September. A project group, including officers from across various departments within the council, has been set up to manage this transition. Close working arrangements are in place with health colleagues to ensure this piece of work is managed as smoothly as possible.
6. Social work teams continue to operate within a “business as usual” model. Staff have become adept and skilled in working in both community and care home settings whilst adhering to infection control measures and safe system of work protocols.

7. Winter planning is at an advanced stage. Colleagues in the council and across the wider health and social care continue to work together closely to ensure there is a coordinated response to supporting the system to manage the winter months. An area of focus will be supporting the care home sector to manage the additional demand from COVID-19.

Commissioning and Contracts

8. Five care homes have seen residents testing positive for Covid-19 since the 28 September 2020. Four homes are currently classed as having outbreaks, as per Public Health England guidance. 75 residents across all five homes having tested positive. There are currently 1238 residents across all care homes in the Borough. Not all of these cases are symptomatic. There are currently 57 staff who have tested positive across six care homes.
9. Monitoring calls continue to be made to all care homes on a twice weekly basis with calls being made more frequently if the home has an outbreak. Additional support is also being provided into care homes from the CCG Infection Control Team as appropriate. No issues have been reported in relation to PPE supplies.
10. Care home testing is continuing across both older persons homes and homes for people with a learning disability or mental health illness, with guidance and monitoring being provided from Public Health England.
11. Twice weekly Outbreak Control Group meetings are being held with Public Health with representation from commissioning and infection control.
12. The NHS is leading on ensuring that all eligible care home residents are offered a flu vaccination and providers are being encouraged to support staff to access a flu vaccination. All care homes have been able to identify a date their flu vaccination programme will be undertaken.
13. Work led by the Alzheimer's Society to support the development of Dementia Friendly Darlington continues, with delivery of further online Dementia Friends information sessions. Steering Groups are also being established to progress the establishment of Dementia Friendly Communities in Haughton, Springfield and Whinfield, Cockerton, Hurworth and Northgate.
14. North East and Cumbria commissioners have worked with Inclusion North in order to gather 'good news stories' from the region during the Covid pandemic. In Darlington a focus was on Supported Living providers and how these have adapted to meet social needs during a difficult time. The stories shared served not just to share best practice but also raised morale amongst providers.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

15. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners (SSP) meet every three weeks and continue to engage with wider partners to obtain an understanding of current issues about safeguarding and challenges they may be facing. Partners were provided with an assurance report on Elective Home Education following previous discussions on safeguarding concerns for Gypsy, Roma and Travelling community. It was recognised

there is a consistent and persistent approach to elective home education and evidence of good partnership working to ensure all are safeguarded.

16. County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust provided an overview of measures currently in place to protect the vulnerable as well as details of recovery/restoration of services. Partners were informed on the role the Clinical Commissioning Group has played in supporting organisations with PPE and infection prevention and control guidance. It was positive to see multi-agency arrangements continue to be maintained and agencies embracing the use of online platforms such as Microsoft teams to engage with families and each other.
17. Partners were provided with an overview of the findings of a thirteen-week review of the children's front door arrangements. Key highlights included a ten-fold increase in the number of telephone contacts. This was very positive with partners embracing the new processes and welcoming the opportunity for telephone conversations about their concerns, to enable support to be provided by services who are best placed to provide this.
18. The Quality Assurance and Performance Management and Learning and Development Sub-groups continue to meet via Teams. Partners were assured by Chairs of the groups, that multi-agency representation and attendance is good, and feedback from partners is positive. Work continues to ensure policy, procedure, guidance and safeguarding training, is made available to support those working on the front line. The Chairs are looking at how they can align the respective sub-group meetings more closely to ensure that learning has been embedded in practice. Partners recognised there is assurance in the multi-agency Performance data, and agreed reporting has come a long way, putting the partnership in a better position to make the right decisions.

Councillor Rachel Mills
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults