

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
1 MARCH 2021**

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**DEVELOPING DARLINGTON CARE COLLECTIVE**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an outline and overview of the Developing Darlington Care Collective (DDCC), including aims and objectives of the group.

**Summary**

2. To provide an update on DDCC progress and group future planning discussions.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that:
  - (a) The contents of the report are considered in terms of the DDCC progressing and supporting Social Care succession planning and partnership development
  - (b) MECC (Making Every Contact Count) is considered as an informal local area approach to convey health related information to residents

**JAMES STROYAN, DIRECTOR, CHILDREN & ADULT SERVICES**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used.

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|--|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder                           | N/A  |
| Health and Wellbeing                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential impact on progression and employability in the borough</li> <li>- MECC – potential impact on health and wellbeing via conveyance of simple health and wellbeing related messages</li> </ul> |
| Carbon Impact and Climate Change                 | There are no implications arising from this report   |
| Diversity  | There are no implications arising from this report   |
| Wards Affected                                   | Potentially borough wide   |
| Groups Affected                                  | Potentially all groups   |
| Budget and Policy Framework                      | N/A  |
| Key Decision                                     | This is not a key decision   |
| Urgent Decision                                  | This is not an urgent decision   |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed                 | Aligned  |
| Efficiency                                       | New ways of delivering support and care of the capacity to generate efficiency   |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers   |

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

4. The concept of a 'Care Collective' followed on from the National Social Care Recruitment Campaign ("We need you now, they need you always") and was initially discussed during the first Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. The rationale included providing support to the Care Sector in response to Covid-19, particularly in terms of low-level role capacity and need, supporting mental health and resilience, whilst creating opportunities to develop partnerships and multi-agency working across the health, social care and education sector in Darlington.
5. A number of priorities were discussed with cross sector partners across the borough, including:
  - (a) To support the development of capacity across the Children and Adults Care Sector, particularly Care Homes/Children's Residential Care, should a second wave of Covid19 manifest.
  - (b) To design and provide a consistent, sustainable and agreed collaborative training and development model/programme.
  - (c) To further develop mutually beneficial support networks across Darlington.
  - (d) To develop opportunities for partners, staff (DBC and partner staff teams) and volunteers to progress to further training, Higher Education and/or employment/volunteering opportunities.
  - (e) To promote good mental health and make every contact count (MECC).

## Partner Appetite

6. After discussions and agreement from the Director of Children and Adults Services, the Workforce Development Team linked with key partners from across the borough to gauge appetite in supporting and being part of the DDCC.

## Initial Key Questions regarding the Care Sector and Covid-19

7. A number of key questions were identified and answered in the initial DDCC Steering Group Meetings, including:

| Question  | Steering Group Response   |
|---|---|
| What roles are in short supply / danger of being in short supply?   | Feedback indicated that Care Manager and Specialist Health Nurse Practitioner roles were most likely to be the most 'at risk' as they were deemed more specialist roles. The Care Sector fed back that relationships with local and national recruitment agencies was positive and this meant that they had been able to support the sector in terms of lower level care cover.   |
| What Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) do all partners have in place? How have they been strengthened to mitigate issues that may arise? | All partners fed back that BCPs had been changed and strengthened in terms of responding to Covid-19. This included linking to local and national recruitment agencies (as above), support from Local Provider Forum and linking to NECS Recruitment Hub (North East Commissioning Services) for more specialist support. Partners also felt that being part of the DDCC would support and strengthen the Children and Adults Sector in terms of communication, training and succession planning.                 |
| What training is needed, what can we provide and who can deliver?   | It was decided by the DDCC group that training would be generic for potential bank members, meaning that elements of both Children and Adults Training would be provided. This model would follow the Skills for Care 'Care Certificate', a nationally recognised training programme for care provision. The model would also include bespoke programmes for Children's Services. It was decided that DBC Learning and Skills Service would be the main training provider, supported by partners across the DDCC. |

## A change of emphasis?

8. Through November and December 2020 National and Local Covid-19 Testing has progressed significantly, as has the development and introduction of vaccines. As discussions progressed it was recognised by all DDCC partners that staffing cover, whilst important, was not the main priority for the group (as partners indicated they have this area covered internally). Care Homes fed back that staffing shortages were not currently occurring in any worrying way in Darlington provision. This was due to a number of reasons, including the fact that a large percentage of Care

Homes were not operating at full capacity, therefore staffing rotas were not overly stretched.

9. Partners discussed training, development and succession planning in great detail. This issue became the main emphasis of the DDCC group. Partners were keen to focus on forthcoming issues that the pandemic may bring in terms of areas such as youth unemployment, material deprivation, poverty and mental health. Partners included that they felt embedding MECC methodologies throughout any training and support opportunities as a means to promote health and wellbeing related approaches to working with organisations and residents of Darlington would also add value.
10. Partners were also keen to stress that their organisation in Covid-19 circumstances is not for example what a Care Homes or Children's Residential Care is really like for potential new staff, volunteers or students on a work placement. These are extreme and difficult times, whereas working in said areas are usually warm and nurturing environments that are extremely rewarding.

#### **Specific Headline Plans for DDCC in 2021:**

11. The DDCC aims to develop mutually beneficial relationships and opportunities between all parties. All objectives planned are designed to benefit the people of Darlington.
12. The guiding principles of the DDCC are founded in collaborative working and mutual aid. All partners are equal in standing and operate in a non-hierarchical agreement.
13. Going forwards into 2021 the DDCC hope to focus on supporting the Children and Adults sector-based training and development of young people, volunteers and existing staff across multi-agency partners and the borough of Darlington. The aim is to link closely with the Darlington Partnership/Darlington Cares to support and deliver development opportunities that will help to address issues Darlington may face during and post Covid-19, such as youth unemployment, material deprivation, poverty and mental health.

#### **Outcome**

14. All DDCC partners have been contacted to confirm the developmental approach to the project and are keen to co-produce a shared project plan for 2021 onwards.