

**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

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

Staff testing and vaccinations

2. From early January, social care staff have been participating in the community testing programme. Staff have been able to utilise the facilities at a range of designated venues, including the Dolphin Centre. This has given staff and the individuals they have contact with additional reassurance against transmission of the virus. From the 19th January, front line social care staff have been able to access the COVID vaccine. This has represented a significant step forward in enabling the social care workforce to continue to provide an essential service to the most vulnerable within the community.

Digital survey/working group

3. As part of the Adults Transformation Programme, a new digital strand has been included, to explore the potential benefits to the service that the use and implementation of digital technologies could bring. Social care staff have participated in a recent survey and the results of this will frame a workshop where this can be explored further. This is a particularly relevant area as the reliance of digital technology has increased since the pandemic

CHC training

4. Social care staff have benefited from attending Continuing Health training facilitated by a national expert in the field. The training has been valuable in increasing social workers skills in joint assessment work with health colleagues. This work is essential in not only identifying the appropriate care and support for individuals with complex needs but also the most appropriate funding stream to meet their needs.

Carers

5. Operational services continue to work closely with carers, to ensure their needs are recognised and addressed. Social workers continue to ensure support is in place to provide respite for carers. There is still some anxiety from carers regarding the use of respite facilities due to COVID 19. Alternatives such as sitting services have been arranged. Day opportunities for older adults remain closed. St Hilda's staff have maintained telephone contact with existing families that attended prior to the closure. Working age adults' services for carers at Mind and DAD Independent

Living Hub are still operational. The Young Carers service has continued to operate. A Welfare list of all known carers is in place. This is RAG rated to identify carers with the greatest level of need to ensure we target our support and resources most effectively.

Commissioning and Contracts

6. Since 28 September 2020, care homes have reported that 284 residents and 271 staff tested positive for the Covid 19 virus. Infection rates are now plateauing which reflects the reduction in community transmission rates, the testing programme and the infection control support that the Council has provided. There are currently five care homes that have been classified as an outbreak and are currently being supported by Public Health colleagues.
7. 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 continues to be provided into care homes from the CCG Infection Control Team as appropriate.
8. As of 1st March 2021, 94 per cent of care home residents have been vaccinated. In addition, 95 per cent of Priority 1 social care eligible staff (older people care homes, older people domiciliary care, assisted living, private sheltered housing and Direct Payment personal assistants) who want to have the vaccine have now received their first dose of the Covid vaccine. Over the next few weeks, vaccines will continue to be given to the remaining staff (newly recruited as well as a small number of staff who weren't able to be vaccinated earlier due to being tested positive for COVID). The vaccination programme is now being undertaken for residents within Learning Disabilities or Mental Health care homes and is also being extended by the PCN to carers. We continue to work with Public Health and PCN colleagues to encourage those staff who are currently not engaging with the vaccine programme.
9. Alongside Darlington's mass community testing programme, Care Homes are also continuing to administer the COVID-19 lateral flow testing of visitors. This programme is specifically for families of residents as well as visiting professionals.
10. Darlington's Carers' Action Plan for 2020-22 has been developed by the Carers' Strategy Steering Group as a local response to the needs of carers and continues to be based on themes identified in the national Carers Action Plan 2018-20, which remain relevant:
 - (a) Services and systems that work for carers
 - (b) Employment and financial wellbeing
 - (c) Supporting young carers
 - (d) Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
 - (e) Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers
11. The aim is to ensure the continuation of responsive support to carers in particularly challenging times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to look ahead to the broader needs of carers as the effects of the pandemic ease.
12. The commissioned Carers Support and Young Carers Services have continued to operate throughout the pandemic by rapidly developing a remote service offer including: virtual carers groups and events for both adult and young carers; well-

received courtesy calls for carers aged 70+; setting up a chat facility on the Carers Support Service website; use of Facebook pages by both the Carers Support and Young Carers Services. The Carers Support Service has also sent out hard copy newsletters to those individuals for whom they do not have an email address.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

13. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners (SSP) continue to meet monthly. In December, partners were provided with an overview of current safeguarding arrangements within the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. Robin Turnbull, Group Manager, assured partners of the fire service's commitment to continually raise awareness of safeguarding across its workforce including the delivery of mandatory training packages to provide all staff with the skills to identify safeguarding concerns.
14. Elective Home Education was an area Partners were keen to seek assurance as there has been an increase in parents electing for home education since the start of the Pandemic, a picture being seen nationally. Partners were assured of ongoing work by the EHE Advisor, Education Safeguarding Officer, Vulnerable Pupil Panel and Monitoring Panel who continue to make every effort to ensure all children are seen.
15. In January, partners were provided an overview of current safeguarding arrangements within the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). At the start of the Pandemic, only the very high risk service users were being seen. Both services have reported, as offices begin to open they are now able to see more service users. NPS continued to undertake interventions and accredited programmes and the courts continue to hear priority cases, with no outstanding backlogs as was seen in the first lockdown. CRC is running unpaid work and accredited schemes and are now providing more face to face engagement for critical cases including MAPPA and safeguarding. It was highlighted that CRC will become the responsibility of NPS from June 2021 and both organisations working through how they will operate in readiness for this.
16. Partners continue to receive an overview of child and adult multi-agency performance data on a quarterly basis. Partners were assured measures are in place to address themes or trends highlighted to further understand the changing landscape which will shape what needs to be taken forward.

Climate Change

17. The service continues to promote the completion of the Climate Change Academy 10 module for all current staff and new-starters to encourage awareness.
18. Throughout the COVID period, a huge reduction in the use of paper and printing has been noted as the service operates electronically. This way of working reduces our carbon footprint and it will be carried over into the post-COVID period.
19. The Council's electric car leasing scheme has been positively received by staff.

**Councillor Rachel Mills
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults**