

COUNCIL
24 NOVEMBER 2022

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 some of the areas of work under the Portfolio for Adult Services.

Operational Services

2. Teams continue to maintain waiting lists for referrals and reviews. These are mitigated through a dynamic risk management process.
3. The safeguarding team are undergoing a review of their caseloads and will be undertaking additional safeguarding training in January to support and develop the team further.
4. We continue to drive our recruitment campaign to support vacancies within the teams- at present we have posts available in our mental health team, adult contact team and reablement service.
5. As part of the work the teams undertake in partnership with the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust social workers have now returned to be based with the discharge team in the hospital. This has been highly successful, improving communications and maintaining our focus on supporting people prior to and on discharge from hospital.
6. We are seeing an increasing in the numbers of people we are supporting on discharge with referrals increasing from on average 70 per month from November 2021 to over 90 in October 2022.

Communications

7. Colleagues recently attended Darlington Jobs Fair with their own adult social care stand, including new pull up banners and a unique engagement activity inviting visitors to 'try the job of a support worker on for size.' The event was very well attended, and the team received eight vacancy applications on the day. Pictures below of the support worker cut out used to entice people to the stand, open a conversation with them and provide information about opportunities to work with us.
8. As part of the Jobs Fair marketing and communications plan, a newspaper was printed and distributed across town in the weeks running up to the event, one was also given to every person attending on the day. The paper included a career case study from reablement coordinator, Rachael Kay.

- Social media updates and adverts continued to be published across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn promoting opportunities with the council and specifically within adult social care. The vacancies page received over 100 visits just from social media this weekend 15/16 October.
- The next edition of One Darlington, which is distributed to thousands of homes across the borough, is to go to print. This edition, along with four previous editions before it, includes a double page spread featuring a team within adult social care. We hope that by shining a spotlight on a new team each time, this educates our community about the services we offer, help available and career opportunities.



Care is more than toilet rolls and bed baths.

Meet Rachael, a reablement coordinator with the reablement team at Darlington Borough Council. We asked Rachael to tell us about her journey into her career and if care was always something she wanted to do.

"When I left school, I had no real idea of what I wanted to do when I was an adult! I suppose I was more focussed on making money – this led me to work in retail for six years until I realised time was ticking and I'd become the adult I had envisioned, and I hadn't progressed in terms of a career. I stumbled into a job with a care agency, something I never envisaged myself doing to be honest. I was desperate to leave school, so this was hazy option, but something I am so glad I did! Within my role as a carer in the community I was able to learn so much on the job, the experience was honestly invaluable. I was also able to gain qualifications like my level 2 in adult health and social care among other qualifications. The fact I was learning and earning made such a difference and opened my eyes to the opportunities in front of me. "Fast forward a few years and I was still within the care industry, now working in residential care – so in a care home. I was in the home throughout the Covid period, and I have never experienced anything like the teamwork, compassion, emotion, and work family strength like this before. It was an incredible experience to be part of, as some residents had no family, or their carer you become their family, their friend, their shoulder and that such a rewarding part of the role. We would all laugh so much and of course cry so much, it unlike any other job. I progressed to a senior care and support worker before deciding to take on a new opportunity with the council."

"I wish I could give my 16-year-old self a shake and steer myself down the path of adult health and social care sooner."

As a reablement coordinator, my role now is to assess those that have been in hospital, for short term support, with the aim of regaining independence, enabling them to remain in their own homes and where possible reducing the need for long term support. Every day is different for me, from writing assessments to understand how someone is coping at home, to planning support and working with other teams and we have set together."

"It's strange when I think back to my younger years and how I just didn't have a clue what I wanted to do or where I wanted to be. My perception of working in care was so wrong! I honestly thought I'd be helping people in the toilet, essentially wiping, tums, and giving bed baths, but caring is so much more than that. I have built some incredible relationships with those I care for, for them I may be the only person they speak to for a couple of days at a time, I am lucky for them."

I wish I could give my 16-year-old self a shake and steer myself off down the path of adult health and social care sooner, but then again, I believe my choices have led me to where I am now, and I am grateful I've had the journey I have. Yes, it hasn't been straight forward, but I have got here, and I could not be happier."

"I feel I have learnt through experience, I don't realise how a college which I think proves that it is never too late for a career change."

My advice to anyone considering moving into a new career or starting their own care would be – Go for it! Don't be afraid! It's really not as scary as you think. Care isn't for everyone, but I wouldn't be quick to assume that it's not for you. I was one of those people and I will hold my hands up that I was wrong and slightly ignorant to the world of adult health and social care. There is so much more to it, it is providing support, it's kindness, it's being there to listen to someone, holding their hand, helping someone to feel good and look their best, helping them feel empowered and motivated! It's also providing the essential support that some may need in the last few days of their life, making them comfortable and ensuring they are not alone. A career in care is so rewarding, something I feel is hard to match in other roles – we really do make a difference."

We have a variety of roles available within adult health and social care at Darlington Borough Council, so get in touch.

www.darlington.gov.uk/workwithus or call the adult contact team on 01325 342111

Commissioning and Contracts

- The Team continues to work alongside Public Health in the monitoring of Covid outbreaks in Provider services, as we continue to see outbreaks occurring in both residential care and in the community. The seasonal flu vaccination programme and the Autumn Covid Booster programme has commenced.

12. Work has commenced with carers and multi-agency partners to refresh Darlington's Carers' Strategy, which will be renamed 'Our Commitment to Carers'. We will work with carers and other partners to identify what support is required and how this will be provided over the coming years. Key themes will be:
 - (a) Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
 - (b) Services and systems that work for carers
 - (c) Employment and financial wellbeing
 - (d) Supporting young carers.
13. The Commissioning and Contracts Team have completed the annual Quality Standards Assessment Scheme in the Older Person's Care Home Sector. The quality assessments consist of a review of essential care standards including effective recruitment procedures, social and leisure outcomes, medication management and health and safety. Levels of compliance and resulting grades are linked to the weekly fee levels for the Council's commissioned placements. This year's process involved a combination of a self-assessment process and on-site visit by officers. As in previous years, any fee amendments will be back dated to April 2022.

Climate Change

14. We continue to encourage teams to develop themes and ideas to support climate change. The current theme is energy efficiency within the home.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

15. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners met in August and discussed the re-establishment of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group which has not met since the start of the Pandemic. A face-to-face meeting was scheduled and took place on Monday 17 October 2022. I, as the Elected Member with Adult Portfolio joined the session. The session provided an opportunity for agencies to reflect on the successes and challenges of partnership working over the past couple of years and how all the good work can be built upon to move the partnership forward.

Care Reforms

16. There is a continued programme of activity around the implementation of the care reforms. Timescales are as follows: submission of the Fair Cost of Care Market Sustainability Plan February 2023, April 2023 for the CQC quality assurance framework and October 2023 for the liberty protection safeguards and charging reforms. We are on track at present to achieve these timescales.
17. The Council has already submitted its Market Sustainability Plan and Fair Cost of Care Statutory returns to Government for review on 14 October 2022. The Council has notified the Department for Health and Social Care of its spending plan for the 2022-23 allocation of Grant Funding to providers as we "move towards a Fair Cost of Care". For Darlington this equated to £253,718 and in recognition that the whole of the care sector is still facing significant challenges, the Council determined that the funding be granted to both residential and domiciliary care service providers. For residential and nursing care this will equate to an additional £13.26 per week per resident and for standard hourly rate for

domiciliary care this equates to an additional £1.50 per hour. Client contributions to their own care will not be affected by this grant allocation.

Councillor Lorraine Tostevin
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults