

**COUNCIL
24 NOVEMBER 2022**

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Health and Housing Portfolio were as follows:-

NHS Winter Plan

2. NHS England recently outlined plans to prepare local services for additional pressure, by creating the equivalent of 7,000 more beds through a mixture of new hospital beds, 'virtual ward' spaces and initiatives to improve patient flow over the coming months.
3. Campaigns such as the COVID Booster and Flu Vaccines campaigns are a key part of a broad range of efforts to avoid preventable illnesses and hospital admissions over the winter period.
4. Flu vaccination is safe and effective. It's offered every year through the NHS to help protect people at risk of getting seriously ill from flu. The seasonal flu and COVID – 19 vaccination programmes are now fully underway locally. In addition, school-based programme for school aged children is underway and many of our local primary schools have had their school-based vaccine session.
5. Those residents eligible for free seasonal flu vaccination can access seasonal flu vaccinations from their local GP as well as from community pharmacies in Darlington.
6. COVID vaccinations are available in Darlington from the Vaccination Centre at Darlington Arena and some community pharmacies. Eligible residents can book their vaccination slots via the NHS National Booking System. Residents should NOT contact their own GP as they will be unable to help them with their COVID vaccination.
7. Darlington Memorial Hospital has created an additional ward to support, in particular patient transfers at Accident and Emergency. I recently undertook a visit to see the process in operation and to better understand the challenges faced by teams at Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Public Health

8. The new Section 75 Partnership agreement has been agreed with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust for our Health Visiting and School Nursing service in Darlington and went live on Monday 3 October.
9. Harrogate and District Foundation Trust has provided this service in Darlington since 2015 and have consistently provided a high-quality service throughout this period.

10. There will be no immediate difference noticeable to children and families, but this gives more opportunities for closer joint and partnership work between the 0-19 Service and other partners in Darlington.
11. A programme of community activities and taster activities took place over October half term for Adults with Learning Disabilities which included Aqua Aerobics, Carpet Bowls, and walks at South Park. An exercise to music class is taking place at Eastbourne Sports Complex, as well as food preparation session in collaboration with Age UK.
12. Darlington Borough Council Adult Day Services are providing Healthy Lifestyle information sessions and an offer of free 6-month membership at the Dolphin Centre, as part of the exercise on referral scheme.

Housing Services

Anti-Social Behaviour

13. I'm pleased to report that our Housing Tenancy Enforcement Team were recently successful in 2 further cases to resolve ongoing and serious issues relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Council accommodation.
14. Firstly, they secured the eviction of a tenant living in a Council property in the Lascelles area and the tenant was subsequently evicted as a result. The tenant had subjected neighbours to various forms of ASB which included drug related activity and damage to council property. Tenancy Enforcement Officers worked collaboratively with the Police and residents to secure this eviction.
15. In addition, Officers were also successful in obtaining an ASB Closure Order for a Council property in the Firthmoor area. Officers worked with Police and local Ward Members in relation to reports of disruption and ASB from visitors to the property, noise nuisance and criminal activity.

Homelessness

16. As part of a North East regional bid to secure £3.7m of Government funding from the Rough Sleeper Initiative for 2022-25, our Housing Options service has obtained the following for the next 3 years:
 - (a) 2 "Housing First" properties that will help alleviate homelessness for people with complex and multiple needs.
 - (b) A Housing Options Navigator post, to help us deliver the Homelessness Duty to Refer function of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017.
 - (c) An Outreach Support Worker, to deliver daily street checks, work on the streets to get individuals into services, support the Rough Sleeper Action Groups and bi-monthly rough sleeper counts, Street Link alerts and responses.
 - (d) A Regional Rough Sleeper Coordinator to work alongside our regional partners to plan and identify gaps in services and help deliver this element within the Preventing

Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy.

17. In addition, our Housing Options team were also successful in securing over £300k of Government funding as part of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, to deliver 5 units of accommodation for homeless clients with high level complex needs. This was a joint bid with our voluntary sector partner, the 700 Club who will develop the scheme.

Dolphin Centre

18. The Dolphin Centre was extremely fortunate to host one of the Army's finest bands, Band of the Coldstream Guards, for a poignant commemorative concert, raising funds for ABF The Soldiers' Charity on the 30 September. The Band of the Coldstream Guards is one of the oldest and best-known military bands in the world and attracted an audience of 450 children from Darlington schools during the day and a further 400 attendees on the evening.
19. The Dolphin Centre gym underwent a refurbishment to update equipment to the latest models provided by global fitness equipment leaders, Technogym, and modernise the environment for customers. Current membership numbers now exceed 2,000 in addition to casual users, which is in line with the highest membership figures in the history of the gym.
20. The October half-term school holiday focused on celebrations for the Dolphin Centre's 40th birthday. This included the installation of a roller-skating rink in the sports hall to acknowledge the popularity of its roller discos in previous years. Free family entertainment was included during the week, including face painting, balloon modellers and 80's themed mascots. A competition was also held with primary schools to design a t-shirt that staff wore during half-term. The winning entry was from a year 5 pupil at Reid Street School, who won the opportunity to bring their class to DC Bowl on 2 November; the Dolphin Centre's official birthday.

Holiday Activity Project

21. For the October half-term holiday period, 15 events were organised at venues across the town with 540 places available, working with the Parent Carer Forum who organise sessions for families and children with SEN. Sessions took place at Pendragon and DC Bowl.

Sheltered Housing Project

22. The Move More team delivers 13 sessions weekly in sheltered housing schemes, which vary from chair-based exercises to Tai Chi and carpet bowls. The majority of residents are aged 60 years plus.



Councillor Kevin Nicholson
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing