

COUNCIL
20 JULY 2023

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.
2. I would like to acknowledge and thank the work of my predecessor Councillor Lorraine Tostevin.

Operational Services

3. The teams remain extremely busy with operational pressures including new referrals as well as supporting existing cases. We are currently operating waiting lists within our Adult contact team for new referrals. This currently is 104 cases, which is a reduction from the previous report which was over 150 cases.
4. The Adult Contact team (ACT have worked extremely hard to reduce this number) and continue to prioritise this list with regular contact to identify whether there has been any change in need / change of priority.
5. There is ongoing Recruitment to vacancies within the wider services, however for the first time in 1-2 years the Adult Contact team are fully staffed. Vacancies all filled and now in post. Further attempts at agency recruitment ongoing.
6. The Occupational Therapy team have a current waiting list of 138 referrals. Most cases that remain on the waiting list are requests for Disabled Facilities Grant's, mainly for level access showers. An Occupational Therapist is working through the waiting list.
7. The amendments to the Disabled Facilities Grant are now being implemented. A new Occupational Therapy van for the Handyman is being sourced. This will be electric.
8. The changes to the DFG also supported the appointment of additional staff to meet demand i.e., 2 x permanent and 1 fixed term OT and 1 x technician.
9. The Responsive intervention, assessment and care team (RIACT) continue to successfully support discharge pathway, including managing timely and safe discharges, referrals to the Reablement service and where required bed-based provision and 2 social workers continue to be based within the Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Communications and Marketing

10. A draft Communications and Marketing plan, linked to the Adults Portfolio, has been prepared.

Commissioning and Contracts

11. Carers Week took place from 5 – 11 June and its theme was ‘Recognising and supporting Carers in the Community’. A number of events were arranged including a drop-in event for carers and professionals which was organised by Darlington Carers Support at the Wellbeing Hub at St Teresa’s Hospice. 10 organisations were available to provide information and advice and 43 carers attended. Positive feedback was received from both carers and professionals who attended the event.
12. In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that an additional £400 million of new ringfenced funding for adult social care would be made available to local authorities in 2023/24 to improve adult social care market sustainability. The purpose of the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) is to make tangible improvements to adult social care services in Darlington with a particular focus on building capacity and improving market sustainability. The grant allocation for Darlington is £1,173,577. The Government has identified three vital target areas of improvement underpinning the overarching objective of building capacity and improving market sustainability. These are:
 - (a) Increasing fee rates paid to adult social care providers in Darlington
 - (b) Increasing adult social care workforce capacity and retention
 - (c) Reducing adult social care waiting times.
13. The Council submitted an interim funding return to the Government regarding how it intends to comply with the grant conditions of the MSIF. A final submission was sent to meet the deadline, which included qualitative and quantitative information on care capacity and our future plans for the local care sector.
14. The Commissioning, Contracts and Brokerage team are holding a number of engagement events over the Summer with key partners including independent sector care providers in both the Older Person’s care sector (including Residential and Domiciliary care) and in the Working Age Adults care sector (including our Supported Living and Residential care). The purpose of these consultation events is to work in partnership to refresh our Market Position Statement and to develop services which are personalised and deliver best outcomes as part of future contract relet and retender exercises.
15. The Tees Valley Complex Care and Support Framework Contract became operational on 1 April 2023. The Tees Valley local authority collaboration group have undertaken a wide range of engagement work with providers and users of services identifying the need for and develop the service specification for this new service contract. The aim of the service is to support individuals aged 16+ years who have complex autism and learning disabilities to remain living in or return from hospital or residential care to the local community. Providers on the framework are highly trained in Positive Behavioural Support and ensure individuals are supported in the most appropriate way achieving positive outcomes and reducing the need for longer term support and residential care.

Climate Change

16. This remains a high priority for Adult Social Care and Commissioning. The adult social care teams remain committed to supporting the climate change strategy and action plan ambition to be a carbon neutral council. The teams are actively aware of this and are

encouraged to avoid single use plastics etc. Teams are also committed to walking and cycling to reduce their carbon footprint and promote wellbeing.

17. In addition, Commissioning and Contracting Teams are working with care providers on their climate change strategies and are encouraging them, through dialogue and amendments to contracts at renewal point, to consider ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

18. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners met in February where they considered a Safeguarding Adult Review Referral. Partners agreed it did not meet the criteria for a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) but there was learning to explore which will be addressed by the Learning and Development Group. Partners were provided with an update from the Chairs of the Learning & Development and Quality Assurance & Performance Management Groups via an overview report which provide details of the key priorities, activity that is ongoing or has been achieved along with the key themes coming through the groups.
19. The Multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership Group met in March. The group discussed the partnership approach to working with challenging families to help understand the potential risks and challenges posed to frontline staff. There are examples of safeguarding issues with individuals who are being exploited, safeguarding issues can often be inter-generalised within families. It is an area to be challenged by the Partnership and a longer-term project to address how agencies can better work together. The group were provided with an overview of the Adult Social Care Regulation, coming into force in April; a more detailed presentation will be provided at the next meeting.

Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults