

COUNCIL
28 NOVEMBER 2024

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Adults Portfolio.

Operational Services

Care Quality Commission

2. The Local Authority Information Return was forwarded on 12 July 2024, and we are awaiting a site visit date. Progress has been made in readiness for the inspection with the 50 case requirement. Adult Social Care Senior Leadership Team have monthly briefings with the teams as well as delivering two sessions to Councillors in readiness for CQC interviews.

Telephone changes

3. Calls which were historically answered within Customer Services (via 01325 406111), who acted as a switchboard have now been rerouted via an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) - a technology that allows telephone users to interact with a computer-operated telephone system through the use of voice and DTMF tones input with a keypad. The new IVR routes traffic to the correct Adult Social Care teams, this is an automated function which aims to ensure an interactive and efficient way for the public to access the right team easily.
4. The Safeguarding Team went live with Netcall Liberty Converse on 24 September 2024. Calls are outcome aligned and opportunities for feedback are built into the process. The IVR aligns to the Adult Social Care updated website pages with the aim of self-serve. We have seen our self-assessments increase, albeit currently small numbers following this change.

Internet review and updates

5. The Darlington Borough Council internet pages have been updated for Adult Social Care with the aim of clear signposting and clear process for self-assessment. Positive feedback has been received following these updates.

Support Plan review

6. This function has now been launched to enable outcomes to be reviewed more easily and responsively. Launched in live LAS October 2024. This will support the reduction in overdue reviews moving forward.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

7. Adult Social Care have experienced a significant increase in demand for major works and a new process has been implemented to manage the demand and flow. To date this year, we have concluded approximately 143 Disabled Facilities Grant with 67 in process (210 in total) and forecasted for another 15 and one child case. The total for 2023 was 185 cases. A risk assessment identifies those at highest risk and urgency which may result in delays for progression for those assessed at moderate or low need. Communications are being agreed for the website as well as letters for those people waiting.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

8. DoLS referrals have reduced and this has led to a reduction in agency allocations. Adult Social Care are in the process of planning allocations within teams following Best Interest Assessor (BIA) refresher training and shadowing.

Safeguarding (SG)

9. Referrals remain stable with lower numbers of Safeguarding concerns however complexity has increased. SG contacts closed with no further action to SG remains consistent at around 53%.
10. The Risk Notification pilot continues to impact positively avoiding SG referrals where the s42 criteria hasn't been met.

Executive Strategy Process

11. Following x3 care homes in ESP earlier in the year Adult Social Care are in a positive position with organisational safeguarding with only one care home remaining within this process. The care home has evidenced significant sustainable improvements and plans to end the ESP are underway.

Adult Social Care Teams

12. Activity remains demanding; however, appropriate governance in place enabling prioritisation. Hospital discharge referrals have been allocated in a timely manner and discharges continue to be progressed as a priority. The number of people awaiting allocation for assessment has increased in the last two months to 140, however all people have had contact and risk assessed for prioritising support.

Commissioning and Contracts

County Durham & Darlington Medequip Community Equipment Service (All Ages)

13. Darlington Borough Council, NHS North of England Commissioning Support Service (NECS), Durham County Council and North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) have agreed to extend a jointly commissioned Medequip Equipment Service. The service will operate from 1 July 2024, for a three-year period until 30 June 2027. It is provided by Medequip and is essential in providing a flow of uninterrupted community equipment such as minor adaptations, hoists and handrails to vulnerable people. This

service facilitates timely discharge from hospital settings and also supports people to live independently, in their own homes, for as long as possible.

Quality and Monitoring Visits

14. The Contracts Team have started a programme of quality assurance monitoring visits under new contract arrangements. Initial focus will be on 20 older people homes, and it is anticipated that the team will complete these visits by the end of November 2024. This programme of monitoring visits follows the introduction of the Council's new Quality Standards and Outcomes Framework. The Framework is aligned with the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) regulatory monitoring arrangements.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

15. Darlington Safeguarding Partnership published a Discretionary Learning Lessons Review (LLR) for Philip and Loraine in September. Philip and Loraine were father and daughter who lived together in a privately owned home. Link to Published Report: [Philip & Loraine LLR](#)
16. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group have not met in this period and therefore, there are no further adult safeguarding updates to provide at this time.

Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults