

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

10 October 2007

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

Direct Payments and Individualised Budgets

1. The aim of Direct Payments (DP) is to give more flexibility on how services are provided. A Working Group met recently to analyse the challenges and barriers to take-up and whether our systems and processes are easy to follow.
2. We used a detailed and comprehensive self assessment completed by the Directorate matched against the results of direct consultation with carers and users undertaken by myself and Councillor Paul Richardson. Some of the topics that emerged, where we have asked for further clarification include -
 - Arrangements for peer support
 - Lack of detailed statutory information
 - Greater clarity at policy level of what DPs can be used for.
 - How DP recipients are supported in terms of the employment and the training of staff they recruit
 - What level of Emergency cover might be available for DP users and the notion of a database of "pool of carers"
 - The advantages of disseminating general information and advice through user groups
3. Notwithstanding the above, our overall conclusion was that the Directorate is performing well but has also correctly identified areas needing attention. Our intention is to revisit these topics early in the new-year so that we can be reassured that the progress expected has been achieved. In the meantime I believe we can learn a little bit more on how other authorities run the support scheme for DP users.
4. Completing this part of our work will help us understand the challenges of Self-Directed Care and Individualised Budgets which offer even greater opportunity for individual choice and control. Planning for this new model of services is at a very early stage, and the group looks forward to being involved from the outset.

Older Peoples Strategy

5. The Our Future Lives policy was overseen, introduced and adopted by Members towards the end of last year. So it was important that leadership was retained during the recent review process. This was achieved in two ways. Firstly by consulting Area Committees, where we were able to tailor the information presented to reflect local activity and secondly by working with representatives from the voluntary sector and older people's groups in particular.
6. In the main, discussion in local areas focussed on Adult and Social Care issues and developments such as extra care housing. However, bearing in mind the idea behind the strategy is to foster and develop greater corporate and strategic support for older people's issues, it was pleasing to note there has been considerable debate about what all directorates and agencies can do.

7. The general conclusion is that much has been achieved to progress older people's interests in the work of the council; we are seeing signs of a wider cross directorate response.
8. A number of changes to how we measure progress and action were suggested which should result in improved monitoring arrangements but more importantly perhaps will better capture the sense of improvement for older people in their lives and in their communities that had resulted from meeting the aims of the action plan.
9. Some thought has been given about how we approached assessing the first year of implementing the Strategy and the role of Members within that. Whilst we can justifiably claim the engagement of older peoples through BGOP/Age Concern and the Older Peoples Champions was a success, arguably we need to be smarter in the way we coordinate the consultation groups and more directly how we involve older people in the review exercise.

Safeguarding Adults

10. Since the publication of 'No Secrets' which set out a framework for the development of adult protection work this Committee has maintained a watching brief over local and national developments that impact on the Council's implementation of an effective response to the protection of vulnerable adults.
11. We were therefore pleased to learn of good work being done in partnership with others as part of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (North Yorkshire and York). Our view of the the Annual Report 2006-7 was that it provides many examples of key achievements and documents well activity planned for the coming year. Most crucially, priorities have been clearly established and arrived at jointly.

SHELAGH MARSHALL

Chairman, Care and Independence Overview & Scrutiny Committee

County Hall

NORTHALLERTON

9 July 2007