

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 February 2008

STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER (Adult Social Care, Library and Information Services)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR CHRIS METCALFE

Changes within Adult and Community Services Management Board

I am delighted to announce that Seamus Breen has been appointed as Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships within the Directorate.

Seamus will be joining us from the Care Services Improvement Partnership where he is a Regional Social Care Change Agent. Seamus will be known to many of you as he was an Assistant Director with the Directorate between 1999 and 2004.

Michael Hunt will continue on a temporary basis as Assistant Director – Commissioning and Partnerships until Seamus takes up the post.

Brown Paper Exercise

In November 2007 a team of operational staff started a project to look at the care management process within Adult Social Care, with a view to streamlining and standardising working practices across the county by February 2008. The ultimate aim of the project was to increase contact time with clients.

The team worked closely with the Care Services Efficiency Delivery Programme (CSED) using their “Brown Paper” technique – quite simply mapping out current processes onto rolls of brown paper – to engage staff in identifying and commenting on the current process and suggesting better ways of working. Through a series of structured interviews and workshops with staff across the county a number of “quick win” changes have already been identified and implemented, with further medium and longer term initiatives identified for which planning is now taking place.

This has been a very successful and worthwhile project that has received a positive response from staff, and will bring more efficiency, reducing bureaucracy and improving outcomes for staff and service users.

Restructure of Adult Social Care Operations

The management realignment for Adult Social Care Operations has now been completed and the new structure went live on 1st February 2008. The purpose of the realignment was to modernise care management and streamline pathways for service users, and follows the remit of the White Paper “Our Health, Our Care, Our Say” in focusing on communities.

The new structure is based on 23 defined communities across North Yorkshire, with a dedicated locality team for each, providing leadership and engagement with the community. Key changes include a quicker service to citizens through simplified systems, locally delivered services with consistent practice and eligibility across the county, and integrated services with the NHS for people with complex conditions.

A new operations manual has been developed for staff to support the new approach to service delivery and a full learning and development plan is being provided to support staff in their new roles.

In House Service Provision

The Directorate has 21 older people's homes, four adult respite units and a domiciliary service currently with eight branches, all of which are regulated via regular inspections from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). In line with phase three of the Directorate restructure, it is proposed to rationalise the number of domiciliary service branches to four in 2008 following appropriate application to CSCI.

Of the inspection results received for December 2007, 36% of these services were rated as "excellent", 58% were rated as "good" and 6% were rated as "adequate". This shows an improvement from the previous six months with a rise of 11% in services rated "excellent". None of our regulated services received a rating of "poor".

In addition, a further £230,000 of funding has been allocated in continuation of the Dignity in Care initiative launched by the Department of Health, to further improve the overall environment in residential establishments and support initiatives in individual homes to enhance the dignity of service users and their quality of life. Examples include redecoration, replacing furnishings, improvement to gardens and outside areas, increased opportunities for entertainment or trips out, and provision of up to date IT, audio and communication equipment in communal areas in older people's homes.

Strategic Commissioning Consultation Events

We have almost completed a series of consultation events on the Strategic Commissioning Strategy across the county, with the final event to be held in Harrogate in March.

All of the events were well attended by a range of partners, including service users, carers and carer representatives, and have resulted in a lot of positive and constructive comments and feedback. A series of workshop were also held which proved to be very useful and stimulating.

All of the events were organised in partnership with local community and voluntary organisations in order to emphasise the partnership nature of the strategy, and to stimulate a wider attendance.

Putting People First: Social Care Concordat

A new cross-government protocol has just been published. “Putting People First” is a concordat between key government departments, the Local Government Authority, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and stakeholders in the social care sector. The concordat sets out a series of priorities for which local authorities and partners will be held to account. It includes many of the priorities identified in our commissioning strategy but there are some areas that we will have to prioritise in addition to this.

Key themes include the personalisation of social care, meaning responding in a way that is tailored to individual need and places the services users and their families in control of the support they receive, and ensuring all people, irrespective of illness or disability, are supported to live independently. Increased use of personalised budgets and direct payments will be the preferred model for delivery.

The protocol is likely to be a catalyst for reform and innovation and is the first stage in an attempt to co-produce, co-develop and co-evaluate a major public service reform.

Access to Services

The most significant development in the last quarter has been the publication of the Council’s new website. This has been well received and provides greater stability, a sharper design, an improved search facility and greatly increased flexibility to provide more interactive and transactional services. Work is already underway to use the same technology that drives the new website to redevelop the Council’s intranet.

I look forward to the work of the Scrutiny Working Group that will be evaluating the first year’s operation of the Customer Service Centre and the development of joint access centres with District Councils. The Working Group has been established jointly by both the Communications and Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committees and will start its work next month.