

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

15 FEBRUARY 2012

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

“THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND THE MORE WE CAN HELP”

1. Safeguarding

We reviewed the annual report of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board for 2010. The report has been considered by each of the local Safeguarding groups and widely publicised through the distribution of key messages.

All Councillors share responsibility in relation to safeguarding those adults whose circumstances make them vulnerable, but Scrutiny Committee Members have additional responsibilities to ensure that there is evidence of strategic commitment to the Board from each of the partners and that at a local level multi-agency practitioners are able to operate successfully.

We were satisfied from the evidence we saw that strategic commitment remains strong, not just from Board members but also from amongst agencies throughout North Yorkshire who submitted assurances that they have proper practices in relation to safeguarding within their authority.

The Annual Safeguarding Report for 2011 will be considered earlier in our Committee's cycle. In the meantime, we were happy to agree that this year's report demonstrates the commitment from all concerned we would like to see. Safeguarding must of course remain a concern for Members across this authority and we will do what we can to raise awareness.

2. Older People's Champion's Report

We were pleased to receive a report from Shelagh Marshall, Older People's Champion, describing her tireless activity in support of older people's issues and interests across North Yorkshire.

This year Shelagh majored on how she is promoting awareness of Dementia, which struck a chord, of course, with Committee Members who have long maintained an interest in this condition. She also highlighted the campaign being championed by Age UK to raise awareness of the scale and impact of isolation and loneliness of older people. The messages from this will be dovetailed with our work programme, especially when we assess whether the authority is moving in the right direction in promoting low level intervention and prevention.

3. Early Intervention and Prevention

The aim is to review the shape, impact and effectiveness of prevention and early intervention services that are being or are planned to be delivered in North Yorkshire. Supporting people to remain independent is central to a strategic approach to wellbeing and to cost effective services. This involves preventing them from needing intensive care services by intervening early before they reach crisis point. Prevention is best achieved through community action working alongside statutory services.

We will assess how local support networks and user led organisations are being assisted to reduce isolation and vulnerability. Such support goes well beyond the social care sector and must focus on what people can do for each other. For that reason we will ask individuals, providers and community interest groups to tell us their concerns and where they believe we should focus our attention. They will also have their own ideas about what represents best practice. All this will help us assess whether as an authority we are commissioning the right approaches and moving in the right direction.

4. Alcohol Related Harm

The long awaited meeting with PCT colleagues on alcohol related harm will take place on 10 February before the Council meeting. Work has progressed in the Health Authority on an Alcohol Needs Assessment. We believe this can lead to the development of a high level alcohol harm reduction strategy which in turn will give direction and focus to future commissioning intentions. This is an important agenda as the County Council assumes public health responsibilities and there couldn't be a better time for Scrutiny Members to make a difference.

5. Future Work

Future work includes the awaited National Carers Strategy and how as an organisation we facilitate the involvement of carers in service planning. The Government is expected to consult soon on proposals for the funding of Social Care. We will review how Personalisation and changed commissioning arrangements are impacting upon local organisations and the implications that has for user choice and stimulating a viable and diverse social care market.

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Chairman
Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall
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2 February 2012

Background Documents: None