

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 February 2013

STATEMENT OF THE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CLARE WOOD

Government announces a cap on care costs

As I write this statement, I am aware of the considerable press coverage over the weekend concerning the cap on long-term care costs. It is expected that the Government will announce a £75,000 cap on the maximum amount that individuals would have to contribute towards their care. This, along with the announcement of a more generous means test, will introduce much needed certainty and help people and their carers to better plan for their care and give them peace of mind. Whilst much of the debate has been about the level of the cap, I welcome this change as a key step forward in the wider reform of adult social care services.

As this area develops, it will be important that the Government takes into account the differential impact of the cap on different councils and this will be a key aspect that I will be asking officers to contribute to.

Severe weather

I am proud to be able to report that staff in Health and Adult Services have responded magnificently to the challenges recently presented by the poor weather. They truly have gone that extra mile to ensure that vulnerable people continued to receive the care and support they needed. Floods and heavy snow appear to have become a regular feature of our winters. Whilst they affect the whole community, they can present a severe risk to elderly and disabled people, particularly in the rural areas of North Yorkshire.

Safeguarding campaign

Members will be aware of the critical role played by Health and Adult Services in protecting vulnerable people through its safeguarding arrangements. I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention a recent campaign launched by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board. This is aimed at reaching the community and ensuring that vulnerable people in North Yorkshire get the help and support they need.

The campaign's theme is "Seen it? Heard it? Report it" to increase the knowledge of safeguarding and encourage the reporting of abuse. We have produced a new guide called 'Keeping People Safe' together with a series of posters showing real stories in real settings.

Voluntary Sector Innovation Fund – community hubs in rural areas

Rural Action Yorkshire were successful in their bid to the Health and Adult Services Innovation Fund for a grant of £50,000 to develop Community Hubs across the districts of North Yorkshire. Six hubs have been identified which will be based in community buildings such as village halls and libraries. Local community volunteers in partnership with the Council will develop a range of initiatives which are likely to include activities such as a community cafés, allotments, drop-in centres, support groups and social activity groups.

Dignity Action Day – 1st February 2013

The promotion of dignity and respect has been on the Council's agenda for a number of years. I am delighted to continue to support this area of work to ensure that people who receive care are treated with the respect they deserve. Dignity Action Day was on 1st February and the theme of the day was 'Taking the time to...'. The aim was to encourage everyone to pledge what they will do to make sure that people are treated with dignity and respect. Staff across the Council once again arranged a number of events to celebrate Dignity Action Day. Many of the initiatives will be carried forward into the future.

Progress with Extra Care Housing

I am delighted to be able to announce that we have made further progress with the plans to develop Extra Care housing throughout North Yorkshire. Last week it was confirmed that two planned schemes at Cherry Garth and Middle Deepdale have received planning consent.

The Cherry Garth scheme in Thirsk will comprise of 52 apartments and will include a library and a restaurant and is due to be completed in March 2015. The Middle Deepdale scheme in Eastfield, Scarborough will include 60 apartments, a restaurant, a health and fitness suite and four retail units and is due for completion in late summer 2014.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

Members will recall that our local Clinical Commissioning Groups were recently assessed as part of a national authorisation process. It is anticipated that all six Clinical Commissioning Groups covering North Yorkshire will soon be authorised to lead the commissioning of health services. This will happen from April 2013 when they will take over from North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust. I look forward to working with the CCGs in our Health and Wellbeing Board as we develop joined-up approaches to health and social care for the benefit of our local communities.

The Director of Public Health

Members will be aware that Public Health is coming "home" to the Local Authority from April 2013. Our Director of Public Health, Dr Lincoln Sargeant has attended a number of events, including a seminar for Members, to explain his role and that of his Public Health team. Although Lincoln and his team are being hosted by the Health and Adult Services Directorate, quite clearly they will be working with colleagues throughout the Council to ensure that we all understand our Public Health responsibilities and work together to make a success of this returning responsibility.

CLARE WOOD