

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

21 May 2014

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

Department of Health visit to North Yorkshire

On 2 May, senior Department of Health colleagues, including Jon Rouse (Director General for Social Care, Local Government and Partnerships), visited North Yorkshire. Their programme included discussions with Executive Members, the Chief Executive and other senior officers, as well as chief officers from the Clinical Commissioning Groups and one of the county's Mental Health Trusts.

A key part of the day was meeting with people who use services and frontline staff. After touring the Extra Care facility at Greyfriars Court, Richmond and chatting with residents, Jon and his colleagues met with Council staff to talk about the practicalities of providing services in Swaledale and Wensleydale. Later on, they met with a group of people with learning disabilities who are self-advocates.

The feedback from the visit was very positive and it was a great opportunity to showcase what North Yorkshire does well and to talk about some of the issues for delivering public services in a complex, rural environment.

Recent BBC TV Panorama Documentary on Quality in Care Homes

Members who watched or heard about the recent Panorama programme on care homes will have been as appalled as I was by the incidents that were highlighted. It is dreadful that such abuse can and does take place in settings where vulnerable people receive care.

North Yorkshire County Council has contracts with around 200 care homes, 100 domiciliary care providers and, of course, has a number of its own establishments. We continue to strive to improve both the way care is provided but also the monitoring processes that are used. In 2013/14 the contracting team undertook 206 visits with these being 70% care homes and 30% domiciliary care.

The monitoring approach is always to work with providers to improve services but we do not shy away from taking further action where needed. To this effect 7 care homes and 1 domiciliary organisation are currently suspended from our provider list. We also set out clear standards in our contracts and service specifications.

Although it may never be totally possible to ensure that individuals do not abuse people in care settings we remain vigilant to improve all areas of our monitoring and our expectations of care providers.

Care Bill

The Council is awaiting the completion of the Care Bill on its journey through Parliament. Following Royal Assent which is expected later this month, the Government will consult on draft regulations and that will give us the opportunity to

look at how these changes can be implemented. A Members' Seminar will be held when the final Regulations are published later on this year.

However, we do know that the provision of information and practical assistance to people funding their own care will be central to its proposals. We are therefore taking steps to put some arrangements in place immediately. I am pleased to inform Members that alongside the publication of the third Care Services Directory, we have launched an advice and financial guidance service. This is being provided by Paying for Care, which is a not for profit organisation who work with the Department of Health and a number of other Local Authorities. The service will be available to any member of the public and will include advice on service options, legal matters such as wills and power of attorney and options for meeting the costs of care fees, including independent financial advice.

Health Integration

The final version of our Better Care Fund plan, entitled 'A New Era for Health and Social Care in North Yorkshire', was submitted to NHS England on 4th April 2014. I am pleased to be able to inform Members that the feedback we have received from our peer and NHS England reviews resulted in 10 Green ratings, 6 Amber ratings and 0 Red ratings, which is excellent, given the very tight timescales for preparation and submission of the document and the complexities of the North Yorkshire Health economy.

Our plan, along with that of every other Council, now awaits ministerial sign-off.

Dementia Friends

On 8 May, I was delighted, with County Councillors Chris Metcalfe and Tony Hall to launch Dementia Friends in North Yorkshire, as part of a national campaign, spearheaded by the Prime Minister. The launch took place at Northallerton Library which has taken a lead in providing a dementia friendly environment. A briefing about Dementia Friends is being sent to all Members and I would strongly encourage you to sign up to this very worthwhile campaign.

Investment in New Services

We opened our new respite unit and day care facility for people with learning difficulties and complex needs in Selby on the 23 April 2014. This was attended by a significant number of people who use the services and their families. Also in attendance were Nigel Adams MP, County Councillor Chris Pearson and District Councillors Mary Fagan and Andy Williams. The afternoon was a great success and the service will go from strength to strength.

There was also a 'topping off' ceremony at our new extra care site in Settle on the 21 March 2014. Limestone View, which will open later this year, will add huge value to people living in Craven.

CLARE WOOD