

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

9 November 2016

### CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

#### CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

##### Introduction

1. We held the third of our planned conversations with providers and organisations that provide social care services in partnership and/or via the council's commissioning arrangements. This time it was the turn of the Dementia Support Workers service. This linked well with other topics we reviewed - an update of the North Yorkshire Dementia Strategy, Living Well and Stronger Communities, and the Annual Report of the North Yorkshire Adults Safeguarding Board.
2. Changes to social care are being driven by reductions in local government budgets; an increase in demand for care services brought about by demographic growth of the older people and learning disability populations; and an increased need for organisations to work together. What we heard in the meeting gives grounds for being confident that these challenges are being responded to by new ways of delivering services, joined up working and effective collaboration.

##### Dementia Support Workers

3. At a time when an increasing number of people have to deal with the impact of dementia, North Yorkshire County Council and the NHS jointly commissioned a new service which supports people in their own homes. One year into this contract, representatives from the two successful providers - Dementia Forward and Making Space - came to talk to us about their experiences.
4. We heard how dementia support workers are working effectively on a one-to-one basis with people diagnosed with dementia to help them to continue to enjoy an active and independent life for as long as possible. They are improving people's quality of life, promoting their independence and helping them to plan and to maintain or widen their social networks.
5. Both organisations are raising awareness through learning programmes, so that people can understand the condition better and develop coping strategies to live as well as possible with dementia. They are successfully providing telephone support, peer support groups, assistance with benefits and services for carers. Support and advice ranges across the whole of the dementia journey from helping people cope with

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diagnosis, helping them access community support, through to working with people to help them plan in advance for end of life.

6. The relationship between the two providers and the directorate, as commissioner, was clearly positive and constructive. From my perspective, some initial reactions from this meeting and from the series of conversations so far with providers include:
  - Effective action is best delivered in partnership;
  - There is good understanding the needs of users and other communities by engaging with the third sector organisations to access their specialist knowledge;
  - It is important to consult potential providers well in advance of commissioning new services, working with them to set priority outcomes;
  - Contracting processes and subsequent communication with providers is transparent and fair;
  - Contracts facilitate risk sharing, wherever appropriate, as a way of achieving efficiency and effectiveness;
  - There is regular review of the impact that the service is having;
  - There is a determination to seek and use feedback from service users, communities and providers so that commissioning is in tune with local needs;
  - Contract monitoring is good, but because there is good information sharing, terms can be flexible, allowing appropriate changes to be made.
  - The success of these contractual relationships stems in part from people's willingness to use resources imaginatively rather than protectively.
7. In what will be the fourth of our series of conversations with providers, we turn next to Supported Employment - an in-house service for supporting people with significant disabilities to secure and retain paid employment.

## **Stronger Communities and Living Well**

8. After their initial briefing to us last year, the Stronger Communities and Living Well teams returned to update on progress. This time we focussed more on the Living Well Team. Rather than just learning about the rationale behind the setting up of the service, we were able to review the effect this team's activity one year on from it being established.
9. 1400 people countywide have been seen by the Living Well Team between since October 2015 with 34% referrals through Customer Service Centre. People are receiving an average of 7 weeks support but, pleasingly, and in line with original aspirations, 90% of people have not had any further NYCC involvement.
10. Loneliness and isolation remains a key feature of referrals - 39% people supported present being lonely and/or isolated as the primary reason for seeking support.

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Interventions have resulted in people developing social connections, attending community groups, technology, buying simple equipment. Particularly heartening is 53 people having been supported to become volunteers.

11. We know that what is available in the community and the environment is a significant factor in people's lives; therefore, the links to the Stronger Communities team are clear. The team has continued to build upon its work with local organisations, community groups and other partners from the public and private sectors across North Yorkshire, identifying opportunities to co-produce a range of local support and services aimed at improving the well-being of people of all ages.
12. We could see that, just as was originally envisaged when the council committed to this investment, in practice the two teams are complementing each other well.

## **Safeguarding**

13. All Councillors share responsibility for Safeguarding, and Scrutiny Members in particular must ensure that arrangements for safeguarding of communities, particularly for vulnerable adults, are effective. We do this by reviewing the Annual Report of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Board. There are many encouraging initiatives underway - too numerous to mention here, but because it demonstrates how simple things can often make a big difference, I will single out the Registered Safe Places scheme. The 'Safe Place' symbol is displayed on their window or door so that people who are out and about and begin to feel anxious or at risk – be it because they have learning difficulties, disabilities, frailty, dementia or mental health problems – can look out for the symbol and enter the Safe Place to get help. Up to 120 public sector organisations across the county – libraries, leisure centres, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Northern Rail stations, community and children's centres – have registered in this first phase and are displaying the Safe Places sticker.
14. The evidence in its report for 2015/16 suggests the Board is in a healthy state - governance arrangements are sound; partnership commitment - especially to training – is good; work on community prevention and awareness is robust, and strategic links with other partnerships in localities is good.

## **PATRICK MULLIGAN**

Chairman, Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
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28 October 2016

Background Documents - Nil.