

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

18 July 2018

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

1. In June the Chairman and Vice Chairman of both Care and Independence and Scrutiny of Health met with a peer review team comprising members and officers from other local authorities; the team, at the invitation of Health and Adult Services, were reviewing HAS as a 'critical friend'. It was an interesting process and discussion – the report from the team is still awaited at the time of writing, but initial feedback was that they valued the scrutiny perspective and input.
2. A joint scrutiny (with Scrutiny of Health) of health and social care integration in the County is now underway, with the next meeting scheduled for 30th July. The potential link of this work with the long-awaited Green Paper on social care, now due in 'the autumn', is obvious. This will feature in future Chairman's statements.
3. I would like to thank my Vice Chairman, Helen Grant, for chairing the June meeting of the committee for me in my unexpected absence. Earlier in the year we decided to focus at this meeting on a selection of current HAS strategic and service issues. Two of the items concerned new commissioning arrangements for providing support to vulnerable people across the county: Wellbeing and Prevention Services; and Community Support for Mental Health. Existing contracts for these have been in place for many years. New support arrangements need to be in place by October 2018, when the current ones end.

Wellbeing and Prevention Services

4. HAS commissions a range of community-based prevention services from eleven different local voluntary sector and community organisations.
5. Support is primarily provided to older people. The types of intervention include: day services/lunch clubs, befriending schemes (both face-to-face and telephone), help with transport and low level practical support in people's homes. The committee supported the rationale that these form part of the Council's overall investment in 'targeted' prevention, which supports people at risk to avoid developing problems needing long-term support from statutory care services.
6. The focus in new contracts will be on three core functions: information, advice and signposting; social inclusion/social activities; and low level practical support, integrated with the work of Stronger Communities and Living Well (particularly

the approach of utilising community assets as part of early intervention and prevention), and with Public Health services and programmes.

Community Support for Mental Health

7. These contracts provide a range of different types of support, including:
 - Mental health resource centres/hubs
 - Social inclusion support/social activities
 - Peer support
 - A mental health sheltered workshop
8. We heard how service provision has developed in a piecemeal way across the County over the years, with a higher proportion of the current investment being concentrated in the Harrogate District – 60% of the total investment. None of the current contracts provide any support in Selby or Craven.
9. Members commented that there was a need for mental health prevention across North Yorkshire, to help people avoid developing mental health issues and prevent the escalation of need in those who have existing mental health issues.
10. Future investment in third sector mental health will play a role in delivery of support across the County, based upon local mental health ‘hubs’ or ‘centres’ - points of contact for local people to access information and advice on mental health issues, receive brief interventions on practical support (e.g. around benefits, and training and employment). The hubs will also support social inclusion and provide peer support for service users.

Conclusions on HAS re-tendering

11. We found both these commissioning exercises demonstrated that HAS was taking the opportunity presented by the expiry of contracts to improve and develop services that promote independent living. The underlying rationale behind both commissioning approaches was consistent with the stated commitment to wellbeing, prevention and targeting of support.
12. As is often the case, a fairer, more targeted distribution of resources like this, although more reflective of countywide need, can result in some areas receiving relatively less. This is the case here, particularly with regard to Harrogate. However, the committee was satisfied that this was being handled appropriately, with arrangements being put in place to manage the change.

Older People's Champion Report

13. Cllr Karin Sedgwick reported for the first time on her role as Older People's Champion. Karin showed, in a detailed account of what she had done over the last year, that often the best way of getting to grips with a very complex subject like social care is to understand it through local activity.
14. Being on both Care and Independence and Scrutiny of Health Committees has obviously helped Karin, but recognising that the role should not be limited to social care and health needs, she is also focussing on the broad range of needs that an older person may have, such as access to transport, housing and adult education and learning. We believe her intention to link closely with the new Area Constituency Committees should help her in this.

Supported Housing

15. We reviewed a recent consultation on the complex funding for supported housing which helps thousands of vulnerable people in the County – from the elderly, homeless and victims of domestic violence, to those living with disabilities, mental ill-health or addiction. It is that key link for those who need it between hospital and independence, helping them get back on their feet. It is also an important investment which brings savings to other parts of the public sector, such as health and social care.
16. It is pleasing that NYCC submitted such a detailed and well-thought through joint response with District Councils. We thought the key points were:
 - Government must ensure sufficient funding is provided to meet current needs, guarantee the ring fence in the long term, and should consider five year settlements
 - Local authorities must have sufficient flexibility to develop the commissioning and oversight arrangements to meet their local needs, and increasingly bring housing and the commissioning of supported housing into tandem with arrangements for health and social care.
17. The committee has decided to look more closely at strategic arrangements in relation to housing for people who need support, and the work being done by Public Health on the role that housing plays in sustaining good health, helping people to live independently, and keeping them out of hospital.

JOHN ENNIS

Chairman, Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee
County Hall,

NORTHALLERTON

29 June 2018

Background Documents - Nil