

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

24 July 2019

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

1. I am pleased to submit my first statement as Chairman of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Firstly, I want to repeat my thanks to my predecessor, John Ennis, for everything the committee accomplished on his watch, for handing over the committee's business in such good health, and for his guidance in helping me to step into the big shoes he leaves behind.

Learning Disabilities and All Age Autism Strategy

2. About 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability, according to the charity Mencap. People with learning disabilities are among the major client groups to receive adult social care. In North Yorkshire it is estimated that there are 11,338 people with a learning disability aged 18-85. This is predicted to rise to 11,870 by 2030.
3. Launched in June 2017, the Health and Well Being Boards "Live Well, Live Longer" strategy for people with Learning Disabilities was created in consultation with people who have a Learning Disability in North Yorkshire. It is grounded in a partnership approach between NYCC & NHS partners. We wanted to understand the contribution that the HAS directorate makes to the strategy by asking ourselves: "Are we where we want to be?" I will highlight some of our impressions.

Overall we found governance arrangements to be sound.

4. The Learning Disability Partnership Board is an effective user-led body. We know this by members' previous work which highlighted the value and strength of our approach to user engagement and empowerment. John reported last time how pleased committee members were that the numbers of people with a learning disability who can self-advocate is growing.

The service is looking at people's strengths and skills to help them live in the community. Support is focussed on the person

5. We liked that since April 2017 assessment staff throughout the whole of Adult social care pathway work with and support adults with Learning Disability.

We have a good organisational culture and are determined to build on that and move forward.

6. Practice advisors for learning disabilities are based in locality teams to support staff to achieve best outcomes for people

Services are being planned around people's skills and interests. We are supporting the person to have an ordinary and meaningful life

7. Across the County there are around 200 Supported Living properties, housing over 500 people, so it is essential that we ensure services and properties are good quality and provide value for money. It is reassuring that a programme of work was started in September 2018 to provide a strength based assessment for all adults with Learning Disability, residing in supported living accommodation. The aim is to focus on individuals strengths and promote maximum independence.
8. On the basis of what we heard, we believe that the directorate's actions are consistent with the aims of the strategy that people with a learning disability should have the opportunity to live long and healthy lives.
9. The total number of young people with a learning disability aged 14-18 in North Yorkshire is approximately 500. On average just over 100 young people will "move" from Children's Services to Adult Social Care, of whom a third will have an array of complex needs. I know Janet Jefferson, Chair of Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee, is keen to do some exploratory joint scrutiny work on the new pathway that has been agreed between the HAS and CYPS directorates for young people transitioning from children's social care to adult social care. As scrutiny members it is important we can assess how well we are supporting and responding to need during this very important stage in a young person's life.

Direct Payments

10. A direct payment is the amount of money that the local council pays to an individual who has been assessed as needing help from social services, and who would like to arrange and pay for their own care and support services instead of receiving them directly from the local authority.
11. There is considerable evidence that many of those who have opted for Direct Payments have found it a positive change. The advantages include:
 - They offer (and can increase) choice, control and flexibility.
 - They can build confidence and gives power.
 - It can cost the authority less.
12. However, 23 years after the introduction of direct payments – and despite successive governments' attempts to promote them – few people eligible to use them do so. Furthermore, there is great variation in the take-up in local authorities and between service user groups.
13. Statistically speaking, NYCC's comparative performance appears disappointing. We found good reasons for this, most notably connected with social care market conditions - for example the majority of direct payments money is, in practice, used to pay for personal assistants where the lack of provider availability is a significant

problem. Some people eligible for support are simply uncomfortable about being an employer and the responsibilities that come with that. Some may lack confidence about keeping careful records and safely filing important documents such as receipts, although help to make these arrangements is available.

14. It may be the case that rurality and the demographic profile of the people we support makes it a challenge for the directorate to significantly increase take-up. Yet we saw:

- no lack of enthusiasm on the directorate's part for promoting direct payments to staff working with specific care groups;
- indications that direct payments are routinely offered as an option to people eligible to use them;
- efforts to make staff more aware about what direct payments can be used for, who is eligible to use them, and how they can be accessed; and
- resources are well-placed to support people to help them manage their direct payments.

15. Whilst the figures around take-up may not be where we would like them to be, there is convincing evidence that there is a supporting infrastructure within the directorate combined with a good understanding of the principles behind direct payments.

16. We will look again at our performance in a years' time.

Looking ahead

17. At the next meeting the committee will review:

- The support provided to adult carers of adults in North Yorkshire - specifically to provide an objective view of these services and whether they provide value for money.
- How NYCC uses Assistive Technology to enable people to live more independent lives for longer.
- Budget position - an update on the operational actions undertaken to address the overspend.
- Mental Health – implementation and pathway.
- Living Well - evaluation of progress.

KARIN SEDGWICK

Chairman, Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

County Hall,
NORTHALLERTON

10 July 2018

Background Documents - Nil