

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

19 February 2020

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Support for Carers

1. *“Caring will touch all of our lives at some point, yet society and public services still haven’t grasped the extent to which our economy relies on the unpaid care provided by family and friends. If even a small percentage of people were unable to continue caring, the economic impact would be catastrophic”* Heléna Herklots, Chief Executive of Carers UK)
2. Carers themselves can live long and healthy lives and be able to continue to care as long as possible and as long as they would want to. We want to encourage more carer friendly communities, and promote carer issues across wider society.
3. There are around 65,000 people in North Yorkshire across all age groups who identified themselves as providing unpaid care in the 2011 census, which is more than one in ten people. This is higher than the average both nationally and through the Yorkshire and Humber region. In reality, there are likely to be many more people providing unpaid care, who either do not recognise themselves as a carer or do not wish to be recognised as a carer.
4. We reviewed how far we have progressed since the launch of the Caring for Carers’ Strategy 2017-2022 in 2017. Our current offer is geared up to meet the strategy’s objectives, but we were pleased to hear that work is planned upon some areas we believe to be key:
 - Improving information and advice.
 - Enabling carers to take a break.
 - Improving carers health and wellbeing.
 - Enhancing financial wellbeing.
 - Involving carers as experts.
 - Improving identification of carers.
5. We liked the process for reviewing the strategy, the coverage of the planned consultation events and the project’s robust governance arrangements. The committee will look to play its part. We will be particularly interested to hear about how support is provided through respite and short breaks provision.

Annual Safeguarding Board Report

6. We met with Dr Sue Proctor, Independent Chair of the North Yorkshire Adults Safeguarding Board. All councillors share a responsibility in relation to safeguarding. Reviewing the Board’s Annual Report is one way we meet our specific scrutiny responsibilities to ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded.

7. The main themes discussed the meeting were:

- The evidence of strong commitment from parties within the Board to the Safeguarding Agenda is welcome. There is a high level of leadership attendance at Board meetings.
- Building relationships with military and farming communities is still a Board aim.
- Understanding the relationship between mental health, isolation and safeguarding is continuous.
- Joint working with the NY Safeguarding Children's Board continues to improve.

8. We were struck by Dr Proctor's comment that one of the most significant areas of interest for the Board, in terms of volume of incidents and scale of potential risk, was the challenges of recruitment, retention and quality of the social care workforce.

9. Our overriding conclusion was that that the council and its partners are discharging their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding effectively.

10. Members reflected upon how much they understand their responsibilities as councillors when it comes to safeguarding. Many had concerns about the level of awareness at a local elected member level. It is important for member training on safeguarding – for new councillors especially – to focus not just on strategic and organisational aspects, but on practical, ground level community leadership expectations.

Annual Report of the Older Peoples Champion

11. Andy Paraskos presented his first Annual report as Older Peoples Champion. The report illustrates how the role can celebrate the ways we support and encourage active, independent and healthy lives for older people.

Looking Ahead

12. At our next meeting we will major on Social Prescribing. This is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. Social prescribing schemes can involve a variety of activities which are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. Examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, befriending, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports

COUNTY COUNCILLOR KARIN SEDGWICK

County Hall,
NORTHALLERTON
5 February 2020

Background Documents - Nil