

9 January 2017

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, ADULT SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH - OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS

Purpose of the Report

1. The report updates the Committee on a number of developments and activities that have been, and are, taking place in relation to adult social care and health.

Information and Advice

2. The report provides updates on: the visit to the Council by the Chief Social Worker and the outcomes of this visit; the Social Work Health Check and progress with the action plan that arose from it; a review of fees for older adults' care homes (Bands 4 and 5) and an update on the national consultation in relation to Supported Housing.

Visit by the Chief Social Worker September 2016

3. On 8th September 2016, the Chief Social Worker, Lyn Romeo, visited the Council and spent the morning with Social Workers and managers from across the department. The Chief Social Worker is based in the Department of Health, and she works closely with the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families. The role involves supporting and challenging the profession to ensure that adults get the best possible help from social workers, and providing independent expert advice to ministers on social work reform, and the contribution of social work and social workers to policy implementation more generally. The Chief Social Worker provides leadership to the network of principal social workers.
4. 25 Social Workers working across different service user groups and with different levels of experience – from newly qualified to experienced – attended the session. In addition to this there were managers and members of the Senior Leadership Team, as well as the Principal Social Worker.
5. The session involved a presentation by the Service Director for Mid-Nottinghamshire which provided an overview of the current structure, developments and challenges in relation to social work practice in the county. Following this there were four round table discussions which the Chief Social Worker moved between to hear the issues and contribute to. The four groups were: integrated working with health; specialist teams; newly qualified social workers and the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and safeguarding practice.

6. Each group was asked to consider what is working well in this area, what the challenges are and what could be improved. Following brief feedback from the groups in response to these three questions, Lyn shared her thoughts and reflections on what she had heard in the group session. She was very positive and complimentary about what she heard from staff and about how the Adult Social Care Strategy is providing an appropriate framework for promoting independence in a personalised approach. She also tweeted a photograph of the Adult Social Care Strategy 'word cloud' sticker with the comment 'impressive work on changing practice culture to promote wellbeing and independence'.
7. Lyn then gave a brief presentation on her role and priorities, explained why social work is important and then responded to questions from attendees. Feedback from staff who attended the session was very positive. Lyn also asked for case studies of good social work practice from the Council, which will be considered for inclusion in the Chief Social Worker's Annual Report published in early 2017.
8. Further to the visit the contributions of staff in the group sessions were written up and have been grouped under a number of key themes that emerged. These included: workforce planning and rotation of posts, learning and development, communication and engagement, mobile working, preventative services, safeguarding practice issues, working with health and other partners, issues around Newly Qualified Social Workers and the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment and practice educators, who supervise social work students.
9. Staff who attended the session have been contacted to share with them the activity and developments in the department that are already underway in response to the issues that they raised, and to acknowledge the areas raised where there is still work to be done. The Committee will note that an update on the development of a workforce strategy for the Council's adult social care and health workforce is scheduled for February's meeting.

Progress on the Adult Social Care Social Work Health check

10. The Adult Social Care Social Work health check was completed in November 2015, and covered all teams where Social Workers are located. Standard 1 of the Standards for Employers of Social Workers in England, May 2014, sets out the requirement for employers to have a clear accountability framework, and reinforces the requirement for employers to "complete, review and publish an annual 'health check' or audit to assess whether the practice conditions and working environment of the organisation's social work workforce are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led."
11. The department's health check included qualified Social Workers and Occupational Therapists up to Group Manager level, Community Care Officers and other non-registered roles in assessment teams (district and countywide specialist teams). A report was presented to Committee in March 2016 with a summary and an action plan. This is a further update providing an overview of progress to date.
12. A health check working group continues to track the agreed actions with ongoing representation from the Trades Unions, Human Resources, Workforce Development, Smarter Working Project Lead, Health and Safety, Public Health and adult social care practitioners. The working group is chaired by the Principal Social Worker for adult social care. The actions cover four areas.

Time and workload management

13. Progress on a workload management tool is ongoing and a model is being tested at present. More analysis is required to confirm its effectiveness and whether the framework can ensure an equitable calculation of an individual worker's workload.
14. A number of initiatives are being implemented across the department to support sustainable workloads across teams including:
 - additional resources deployed to support the management of waiting lists
 - scheduling of appointments, mobilisation of staff through use of ThinkPads and laptops and availability of touchdown areas, and the use of clinics
 - development of new support plan documentation to reduce time required for completion.

Learning and development

15. The Workforce Delivery Group is now established and has oversight of workforce planning and learning and development activity in adult social care. The concept of and an outline for core modular based training is being developed. This will cover all staff in adult social care up to Team Manager level. The department is planning the allocation of resources to deliver this programme. A departmental induction package has also been developed and launched.

Wellbeing at work and the working environment

16. A Stress survey is available which identifies issues around workload demand, change and staff wellbeing. An Employee Health and Wellbeing action plan has been developed and Group Managers are progressing this in their service areas. A hate crime policy and procedure has been approved that covers the issue of abuse towards staff and how to deal with this.
17. A Health and Safety bulletin to staff continues to support wellbeing and recently contained an update on lone working, which contained specific guidance on social care workers going into people's homes. There is ongoing work with the Smarter Working Project to ensure corporate touchdown areas are suitable and adaptable to the needs of staff.

Communicating change

18. Relevant information is shared regularly through Team Talk and a weekly email update called 'What's changing in adult social care', which is targeted at frontline adult social care practitioners with a view to supporting them to implement the Adult Social Care Strategy in a practical way. Service Directors and Group Managers have recently been involved in the team managers' training programme.
19. An update for staff will be circulated in February 2017 with the support of Human Resources and the Unions. The Working Group will plan for another health check in the summer of 2017. Questions will be revised to gain further information on any outstanding issues from the original health check which will clarify where further action might be

required. Further plans will be made to consider how the health check can be broadened out to cover other operational areas of the department including staff in direct service provision.

20. The Committee will receive an update further to completion of the health check in 2017.

Review of fees for Older Adults Care Homes - Bands 4 and 5

21. In preparation for the introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW) from April 2016, the Council completed some detailed analysis of the financial implications of this new cost pressure on providers of adult social care services in Nottinghamshire. This financial analysis and the assumptions relating to future National Living Wage cost pressures were validated by an independent consultancy, PwC, before being built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The proposed fee increases were approved at Full Council in February 2016 and subsequently applied to adult social care providers from April 2016.
22. For older adults care homes, different fee increases were allocated based on the banding of the care homes, as below:
- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Bands 1, 2 and 3 | - 6% increase |
| Band 4 | - 3% increase |
| Band 5 | - 1% increase |
23. The rationale for applying a lower rate increase for care homes in Bands 4 and 5 was the assumption that the fee levels already paid to these homes would allow for the providers to absorb some of the cost pressures attributed to the NLW. This assumption was based on the outcome of the previous Fair Price for Care review undertaken in 2012.
24. The Nottinghamshire Care Association (NCA) and a number of providers of Band 4 and 5 homes have asked that the Council reviews its decision.
25. In response to the care home providers' concerns, the Council agreed to commission an independent review of costs associated with running Band 4 and 5 older adults care homes.
26. The review is being undertaken on the same basis as the full Fair Price for Care review undertaken in 2012, using an updated version of the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire has been sent to each of the Band 4 and 5 care homes for completion, seeking a breakdown of costs. Following return of the questionnaires, the review will aggregate the information and complete an analysis of the costs of these services.
27. Once the Council receives the report on the findings of the review, a full report will be brought to Adult Social Care and Health Committee for consideration of the options in relation to the fee increases applied in 2016/17 to Band 4 and 5 care homes.

Consultation on Funding for Supported Housing

28. In the 2015 Autumn Statement and Spending Review the Chancellor announced proposals which would mean major changes affecting social rented tenancies. These

were the introduction of a cap on Local Housing Allowance (LHA), and a rent reduction on social rented properties.

29. Currently people living in supported housing provided by registered social landlords can get higher levels of housing benefit than people living in standard housing. The proposed changes would mean that supported housing would have a housing benefit cap applied to it in the same way that all other housing does. This would have a direct impact on people living in supported living services with learning disabilities, mental health issues, autism and physical disabilities, who would no longer get a higher level of housing benefit and could have significant rent shortfalls of anything from between £30-£180 a week.
30. The availability of suitable social housing is critical in ensuring that people with support needs are able to remain living independently in their own home. Therefore local authorities with social care responsibilities have a key role to play in ensuring there is enough supported housing within the local area.
31. In Nottinghamshire, there are over 650 adults living in supported accommodation of which approximately 80 individuals are in Supported Living Plus services. These services were created for people leaving long stay hospital or NHS campus or at risk of admission to long stay hospital. Many of the individuals have complex needs and at times display challenging behaviour.
32. The Council has been working with a range of housing providers over the last few years to develop supported living with 50 new tenancies being provided during 2015/16 and with plans in place for the development of a further 155 new supported living tenancies during 2016 to 2018. However, the plans for the new developments have stalled as a result of the proposed changes and the cap on the LHA as housing providers have expressed concern that they will not be able cover their investment and housing management charges because housing benefit levels will not cover the full cost of the rent.
33. Following lobbying from various organisations and cross party concern from many MPs, there have been a number of parliamentary debates on the proposed changes to the benefit, with members from all parties raising concern about the impact of the housing benefit cap on people who live in supported housing. The debates recognise that the provision of such housing is intrinsically linked to the support the individuals receive to enable them to remain living in the community.
34. The lobbying resulted in two further announcements, the first was early in 2016 when the Government indicated that there would be a year's exemption from the policy with the capping of housing benefit applying to supported living tenancies taken up from April 2017 rather than from April 2016 as originally intended. The second announcement was made on 15 September 2016 with the Government confirming that the implementation of the housing benefit cap on supported housing would be delayed until 2019/20 to allow time to undertake full public consultation on the future funding model for supported housing.
35. On 21 November 2016, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) launched the consultation on the future funding arrangements for supported housing. The Government is proposing to

implement a new funding model from 2019/20. This would entail devolving a ring fenced fund to local authorities in England to enable them to provide additional 'top-up' funding to local supported housing providers. It is proposed that the devolved fund will be set on current projections of future need.

36. The consultation is open for a period of 12 weeks, until 13 February 2017, and raises 12 questions for which the Government is seeking a response.
37. It is proposed that the Council completes and submits a response to the consultation document, and that a short task and finish group is set up with Members, consisting of one or two meetings, to be scheduled during late January, to provide Members with the opportunity to consider and agree the Council's response to the proposals.

Other Options Considered

38. With the exception of the consultation on the funding for supported housing, the report is for noting so there were no other options considered.
39. The Council is not required to submit a response to the consultation on funding for supported housing but given the Council's plans to develop new supported housing and the delay in some current developments due to concerns about funding, it is in the interests of the Council to contribute to the consultation.

Statutory and Policy Implications

40. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

41. There are no financial implications relating to the updates on the Chief Social Worker's visit and the work in response to the social work health check. The outcome of the review of costs associated with running care homes for older adults (Band 4 and 5 homes) will be reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Implications for Service Users

42. The outcome of the consultation on the funding of supported housing has significant implications for service users who require this type of support.

Ways of Working Implications

43. The outcomes of the Chief Social Worker's visit and the action plan which resulted from the social work health check both involve developments and improvements in relation to new ways of working for staff.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) notes the visit from the Chief Social Worker and follow up work undertaken as a result of her visit
- 2) notes progress made with the Social Work Health Check action plan and agrees to receive a report on the outcomes of the next health check in 2017
- 3) notes the work taking place in relation to the fees paid to care homes for older adults (Bands 4 and 5) and agrees to receive a report at a future meeting of the Committee
- 4) delegates to the Corporate Director, Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection, completion of a response to the consultation document on funding for Supported Housing, with a task and finish group including Members to help develop the submission.

David Pearson CBE

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Constitutional Comments (SLB 01/12/16)

44. Adult Social Care and Health Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (MM 16/12/16)

45. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 41 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Outcome of the Adult Social Care Health Check 2015 – report to Adult Social Care and Health Committee on 7 March 2016

Annual Budget 2016-17 – report to Full Council on 25 February 2016

[Announcement on Housing Benefit](#), Department for Work and Pensions, 15th September 2016

[Consultation on Funding for Supported Housing](#), launched 21st November 2016, Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Work and Pensions

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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