

Report



meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 29th March 2007

agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES AND HEALTH

KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH

1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 I am pleased to present the key issues and activities as Portfolio Holder for Adult Services and Health.

2. **Key Issues and Activities**

2.1 **Praise for 'Workstep' Employment Scheme**

Nottinghamshire County Council's Ready4Work team, which runs the 'Workstep' programme, has been praised by the Adult Learning Inspectorate and rated as being in the top 10 of services in the country for providing opportunities for people with disabilities to get meaningful long-term employment. The inspection report is attached.

The Department is delighted that the Workstep programme has been praised by inspectors. This pays tribute to the hard work the department's staff undertake to build up relationships with local employers, find the right kind of job for people with disabilities, and to ensure that they get ongoing support. By helping disabled people to get work placements, their skills, confidence and sense of worth can really be boosted.

The inspectors praised the County Council for the following:

- "The service has made good use of a wide range of external relationships and local partnerships. The team has established particularly good working relationships with staff and managers of the local Jobcentre Plus service."
- "NCC takes good action to promote the inclusion of disabled people in the local economy."
- "The Ready4Work team has developed a strong culture of support and care for participants and has a strong focus on their well-being."

- “NCC continues to provide a good range of relevant and appropriate employment opportunities. Participants are recruited to real jobs that develop from genuine vacancies.”
- “Participants receive very good personal, practical and specialist support.”

In a recent case study, one man was unable to take on a full-time job for a number of years due to ill health. His self esteem and his confidence were at an all time low. Now he is doing a full-time job as a mental health worker at the Boundary Resource Centre in Worksop, which he passionately enjoys.

2.2 Consultation on Commissioning Strategies

The Adult Social Care and Health department have launched a consultation process with regard to a draft commissioning strategy. The strategy document consists of seven chapters reflecting the main areas of service delivery and sets out the department’s commissioning strategy intentions for the next two years.

The consultation commenced at the beginning of March with a Member briefing and will conclude at the end of the month. A number of consultation events have been held across the county to seek the views of service users, carers and key partner agencies, in addition the documents are available on the county council internet website.

Following consultation the strategy will be amended before being reported to the County Council’s Cabinet for approval in May 2007.

2.3 Official Opening of Leawood Manor

As reported in my last report to Council, Leawood Manor opened on the 7th December 2006. This beautiful home is part of a wonderful development for older people in the county. The home reflects the development of the strategy for care services and Leawood Manor is part of what is called ‘mixed care’. This brings together a range of ‘state of the art’ services for older people as part of the wider community.

The ‘official’ opening of Leawood Manor is to take place on Friday 30th March 2007. The Chief Executive from Metropolitan Housing Partnership and Sherrie Hewson, a celebrated local actress, have been invited to attend.

2.4 Golden Gardening Launch

The launch of the Golden Gardening project took place at Mansfield CVS on Friday 23rd February. Golden gardening was started to support people, over the age of fifty, in caring for their gardens. This was to stop bogus callers asking if older people wanted their lawns or borders weeding for extortionate prices. This is a professional service and is subsidised by Link Age Plus.

Since Golden Gardening started eighty customers have received this service and the use of the service is on the increase.

2.5 Ministerial Visits

Anne McGuire, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions, visited Sherwood Industries on 19th February 2007 for a factory tour and to talk to senior managers. This visit was the culmination of a number of invitations – including one from a sales assistant, union officials and local MP Alan Meale. The visit was part of an awareness raising exercise for Sherwood Industries and it was clear that many people feel passionately about the role it plays in employing people with a disability.

Anne McGuire enjoyed chatting to employees and said it was an excellent opportunity to see the valuable work undertaken by employees at Sherwood Industries and to meet the senior managers and local authority representatives to talk about the challenges that lie ahead.

Pat McFadden, Junior Minister for Social Exclusion visited Nottinghamshire on the 5th March 2007 to hear about Nottinghamshire's Link Age Plus initiative and to gain a greater insight into how this initiative is joining up services for older people and tackling social exclusion. The minister has since acknowledged the visit and said it had provided him with a valuable opportunity to visit local projects, meet local stakeholders and discuss key issues. He was impressed with the progress Nottinghamshire has made on improving practical, joined up services that make a real difference to older people's lives.

COUNCILLOR ALAN RHODES
Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Health