

ADULT AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

30 January 2012

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Gerard Hall, Adult and Public Health Services Portfolio Holder

Officers: Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care
Sylvia Pinkney, Public Protection Manager
Neil Harrison, Head of Service, Adult Social Care
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

20. Food Standards Agency Audit (*Assistant Director, Regeneration and Planning*)

Type of decision

Non key – for information.

Purpose of report

To inform the Portfolio Holder of the Food Standard Agency's visit to audit the Authority's Enforcement Monitoring Return (LAEMS data) made in respect of the Food Law Enforcement Service.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Public Protection Manager presented the report which outlined the findings of a focussed audit carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) of the Authority's Enforcement Monitoring System Returns. The detailed report of the audit was attached at Appendix 1 and the Portfolio Holder was informed that the following additional comments had been made by the auditor:

- The auditor indicated that the record keeping was accurate and up to date and that the arrangements to protect the data base and authorisation process for access to the data base were appropriate. In addition to this it was noted that the arrangements for profiling and cross checking premises had been highlighted as good practice.

- The auditor had verified the accuracy of the manual returns and had suggested that subsequent returns should be automated. The Public Protection Manager indicated that the automation of returns would be implemented at the commencement of the new year.
- Whilst checking the files, the auditor had highlighted the high standards of record keeping and aide memoires used including the full and comprehensive file notes used to identify the history of each case. The audit noted that the electronic filing system used was impressive and enabled the easy retrieval of records. The auditor was happy with the internal monitoring including the checking of letters and the consistency of the risk scoring mechanism used to predict when to revisit premises.

The Public Protection Manager commented that it was regrettable that the findings from the audit were anonymised and not individually published as the good practices the audit highlighted would not be accredited to the individual local authority.

The Portfolio Holder commented on the important issues that were behind the food safety scheme and sought clarification on the question in the audit letter that questioned the approach to recording and reporting previously unrated premises following an initial inspection. The Public Protection Manager confirmed that due to the complex nature of the return, it had been unclear where to include previously unrated premises. Further clarification was awaited from the auditor on this issue.

The Portfolio Holder questioned the clarity of the new food hygiene standards ratings and whether the information would be as accessible to the public as the current system. The Public Protection Manager confirmed that a lot of work was progressing in relation to the implementation of the new system and associated website and a full update would be provided to a future Portfolio Holder meeting. It was noted that the new system could be linked to other schemes including health eating awards. The Portfolio Holder highlighted that this may be something that could be raised at the Health and Well Being Board in relation to health eating awards.

The Officers involved in the Food Law Enforcement Standards were congratulated on the positive outcomes of the audit by the Portfolio Holder.

Decision

The report was noted.

21. Learning Disability Performance and Health Assessment Framework *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non key – for information.

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on the results of the fourth annual Learning Disability Performance and Health Assessment Framework.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Service, Adult Social Care presented a report which provided an update on the annual self assessment undertaken with the support of the Hartlepool Learning Disability Partnership Board. A summary of the findings were included within the report with just one area highlighted as being less effective than in previous years, which was access to health screening for people with learning disabilities. The Head of Service confirmed that it was difficult to secure evidence to determine whether people were accessing NHS health screening programmes as the read codes currently used did not identify people with a learning disability. However, officers were currently working with the Primary Care Trust and Foundation Trust to develop and implement read codes which would identify people with learning disabilities.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised the importance of ensuring the involvement of all people when changes to service provision were proposed and in particular, people with learning disabilities. The Head of Service confirmed that a steering group had been set up within the acute trust for people with learning disabilities and until a new electronic system could be implemented, a temporary system using the gold card scheme was being used. The Assistant Director highlighted that a recent DEMOS report had identified that Hartlepool was in the top ten authorities who had managed to protect services and minimise the impact of budget cuts for people with disabilities. It was confirmed that officers worked closely with users and carers when changes to any services were proposed. The Portfolio Holder was informed that an update report would be submitted to a future meeting detailing the outcome of the recent Working Together for Change review and any proposed changes to services, which may include a rationalisation of where services were provided from.

The vital role that unpaid carers played was reiterated. It was noted that carers were very welcome to attend the Learning Disability Partnership Board themed meetings along with people with learning disabilities to

discuss issues that were often unique to them. The Assistant Director confirmed that a Carer's Strategy Group also existed which included carers from all client groups and this group had recently updated the Carer's Strategy and Action Plan identifying carers' priorities. Work was currently being undertaken to develop a Resource Allocation System to provide personal budgets for carers, which would enable them to continue with and be supported in their caring role.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the two accessible changing places which had been introduced within the Central Library and Mill House Leisure Centre with a further two to be developed within the town. It was noted that credit should be paid to the continuing effort of people who had campaigned in relation to the introduction of the changing places.

Decision

The progress was noted and the action plan updates approved.

22. Commissioned Services Update (*Director of Child and Adult Services*)

Type of decision

Non key.

Purpose of report

To update the Portfolio Holder on current issues within adult social care commissioned services and future priorities.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director presented a report which provided a quarterly update to the Portfolio Holder on the following issues:

- Care home status, occupancy levels and work being undertaken during 2011-2012
- Social care reviews
- Domiciliary care services
- Project work which was currently being undertaken as part of the work plan for Commissioned Services

The Assistant Director outlined current care home provision and occupancy levels and highlighted that there had been recent unannounced visits to care homes, with feedback being collated.

An update was provided on the introduction of the Quality Standards framework (which was reported to Cabinet in December 2011). It was noted that whilst previous ratings linked to fee levels had been based on the physical environment of a home, the new system was much more about the outcomes, quality of care, personalised care plans, safeguarding and staff training. Care homes in the town were currently undertaking a self assessment with accreditations to be completed before ratings were finalised and made public.

The Portfolio Holder questioned the timescales in place to deliver new services for stroke support and domestic violence. The Assistant Director confirmed that timescales would allow for new contracts to be in place by 1 April 2012.

In relation to the differing occupancy rates of care homes, the Portfolio Holder sought clarification on whether this was the result of people voting with their feet and favouring the higher rated homes. The Assistant Director indicated that there was an element of people favouring higher rated homes as this information had previously been published by the Care Quality Commission rating. However, it was noted that some people choose a care home based on locality or proximity to family and friends and that people are free to make their own choices based on the information available to them.

In addition to the above, the Assistant Director confirmed that there were alternatives to residential care being developed, including extra care facilities and people being supported within their own homes to maintain their independence. It was noted that the demographic pressures of people living longer with more complex health issues including a prevalence of dementia inevitably resulted in a high demand of care provision. The standard of care provided within care homes was monitored regularly and the Portfolio Holder was informed that fee levels will be linked to the standards of care provided to ensure the highest level of care provision.

The Portfolio Holder sought clarification on the cost associated with supporting people to maintain their independence and remain within their own homes. The Assistant Director confirmed that there had been an investment nationally in Disabled Facilities Grants, which fund major adaptations enabling people to remain in their own homes, as well as significant investment in reablement services which aim to provide low level support and prevent people requiring more intensive and costly interventions. There is also evidence that people are increasingly using their personalised budgets to access services in a creative way to maintain their independence.

It was noted that the demographic pressures faced would be a massive issue for local authorities in the future as once a self funder's assets were depleted; they would become reliant on local authority funded support. The Assistant Director confirmed that this was difficult to predict, despite Hartlepool having a relatively low proportion of self funders, as people's

needs and financial circumstances can change from one day to the next. Officers work with people to assess their finances and provide advice about options available such as extra care, residential care and support at home.

Decision

The report was noted with further updates to be provided on a quarterly basis.

23. Hartlepool Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board – Statistics & Safeguarding Progress Report *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To present the Hartlepool Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board (HSVAB) statistics covering the period from April – December 2011 and to report on the progress of the HSVAB Safeguarding Action Plan.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director presented a report which provided information concerning Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults statistics for the first nine months of the 2011/12 reporting period. It also outlined information relating to progress with the HSVAB Safeguarding Action Plan covering the same period.

It was noted that there had been an increase in safeguarding alerts but no change in the number of safeguarding investigations. It was highlighted that the increase in alerts was positive as it reflected an increasing awareness of safeguarding issues and meant that people were reporting concerns. This potentially links to high profile national cases.

The Portfolio Holder noted that the HSVAB had agreed to seek to appoint an independent chair for the Board and sought clarification on whether other Safeguarding Boards had independent chairs. The Assistant Director confirmed that over half of Safeguarding Boards have independent chairs with the remaining authorities looking to move that way.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the appointment of a Safeguarding Specialist Nurse role within the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and questioned whether this role covered the whole of the North Tees

and Hartlepool catchment area. The Assistant Director confirmed that this role along with a number of other safeguarding staff did cover the North Tees and Hartlepool area. However, the additional capacity that this role created had enabled closer working between the local authority and the Foundation Trust and had enabled the Trust to do some work with Accident and Emergency staff in relation to identifying and recording safeguarding issues as this area as well as looking at incident reporting and the interface with adult safeguarding.

It was noted that the report referred to 'Experts by Experience' and the Portfolio Holder sought clarification on whether any 'experts' had volunteered yet. The Assistant Director confirmed that this was a relatively new pilot so numbers involved were small. There were a number of people currently involved in safeguarding issues who were interested in being involved and feeding back their views once their individual cases had been dealt with. Further information on the pilot will be provided in future reports.

Decision

The report was noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.08 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 3 February 2012