

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17 FEBRUARY 2012

Statement from: Councillor G A Marsh, Executive Councillor for Adult Social Care

LGA Efficiency Programme

The LGA launched a national Adult Social Care Efficiency programme on 19 January in London. There are 50 councils signed up to sharing good practice with regard to efficiency improvement and Lincolnshire County Council is one of these.

It has become apparent that Lincolnshire efficiencies in Adult Social Care is the biggest and most effective programme nationally both for this year and next year's planned programme. It is also clear our programme covers all the most up to date research and evidence of what works in terms of improved efficiencies. Our approach to developing re-ablement, prevention and reducing residential care costs are in line with national best practice and some ways exceed national benchmarks. For instance we have achieved a 30% reduction in residential care placements compared with a research from the Department of Health that reductions of 20% are possible.

Shaping Care

Following on from the decision made by the Executive in July 2011 to close the LCC provided residential units, and following the successful closure programme of five homes in September 2011, the decision that suitable alternative provision is available within the external market was made on 11 January 2012. This decision means that we will now be able to move towards closure of the remaining three units in Nettleham, Sleaford and Grantham by the end of May 2012. As a result, we will be able to provide all current individuals who utilise the units with Personal Budgets allowing choice over the service and opportunities they receive. This means we will have sold or decommissioned sixteen residential care homes in twelve months.

DPS Consultation

The ongoing consultation around Directly Provided Services closed to the public on 9 January. We are pleased to announce that we had over 550 direct responses to the consultation. We are now in the process of reviewing feedback which we will use to support recommendations taken to LCC Executive in March 2012. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their input and feedback.

The 90 day consultation with staff on the future of in-house community supported living and day opportunities was extended to 9 February following feedback received, and a proposal which responds to issues raised by staff has been submitted as part of recommendations to LCC Executive. The extension to the consultation process allowed LCC to share with staff some proposals for a modernised service.

Re-ablement

Integrated working between Health and Social Care is increasing as a direct result of the ASC Re-ablement Programme and partnerships with Clinical Care Groups and the NHS. Re-ablement funding is being used to resource and implement integrated teams to deliver improved outcomes for people across Lincolnshire. Developments will continue throughout 2012 and into 2013.

Workforce Quality and Development - Medication Standards

Following lessons learned from a Serious Case Review, Medication Standards for Care Homes were incorporated into new framework Contracts. Supporting guidance developed in partnership with an NHS Pharmacist, Operational and Independent Sector representatives, and Mouchel Health and Safety, has been disseminated to all commissioned services and is available on the LCC website. This work supports the DoH requirement to reduce medication errors in Care Homes and NHS colleagues are working to embed awareness of the Standards amongst GPs and Pharmacists.

A National Care Forum case study, featuring Lincolnshire's partnership working as good leadership and management practice in Medicines Management, has been published and is to be placed on the DoH website in the spring. Work is underway to improve guidance for Community Based Services.

Eligibility Criteria Change

Re-assessment work is continuing to implement the eligibility criteria change. It was projected that approximately half of the people concerned would be re-assessed to substantial/critical and so far this is proving the case. Many people assessed with moderate needs are being supported to purchase alternative support privately, with help to ensure benefits are maximised. Fewer people than expected are choosing to have their support package transferred to Public Health for them to continue funding support for a transitional period.

The decision to make a significant policy change has successfully been made without legal challenge, in times when a number of authorities are being challenged. This reflects the thorough process undertaken in consultation with Lincolnshire residents to make this change.

Re-assessment Project

In addition to eligibility re-assessments, the project is continuing to re-assess the needs of people affected by the Charging and Transport projects to move people on to personal budgets and charge people in line with the current charging policy. Additional resources have been assigned to the project to help increase the pace of the re-assessment work, and meet the challenge of completing the re-assessments of around 2,600 people by the end of March 2012.

In my last statement I mentioned that the team were conducting reviews of care packages due to changes in our eligibility threshold and the need to ensure that people are being charged correctly for services. Since that time over 500 individuals have been reviewed and have had their care provision amended appropriately.

Performance

The Adult Social Care Performance Framework is now embedded and reflects the strategic direction of prevention, re-ablement, maintenance and safeguarding. The Performance Board is now meeting fortnightly and is monitoring and challenging areas of under-performance. The Performance Team has responded to 146 requests for management information since April 2011 to support Operations and Commissioning, including in support of core offer and priority areas. The weekly monitoring of admissions to residential and nursing care is ensuring that more people are enabled to remain living in their own homes independently but with appropriate support. We are projecting significantly reduced numbers of placements compared to previous years, leading to significant reduction in placement costs. We also continue to make progress with rolling out personal budgets, which has improved from 30% in April 2011 to 41% in December 2011 of people receiving adult social care services now in receipt of a personal budget. The number of people who are successfully re-abled by our in-house service continues to improve, as does the percentage of people we are signposting to universal and preventative services.

Quality of Regulated Provision in Lincolnshire

The quality and development team has reviewed and improved the information on the quality regulated provision across Lincolnshire and for out-of-county placements, so that there is targeted support to providers using a single approach to quality and safeguarding. The information also provides a source of intelligence to inform commissioning.

Winter Pressures

There is joint working by ASC to support United Lincolnshire Trust Hospitals to manage winter pressures, and facilitate safe discharges for vulnerable people from hospital. Assessment and Care Management staff are trialling weekend working at the Pilgrim Hospital from 14 January 2012 to see if this increases a smoother, efficient transition.

Supported Housing Older Person's Service

At the meeting of the Lincolnshire County Council Executive on 10 January 2012, the cabinet approved a two year extension to the Supported Housing Older Person's service contracts. The extension will allow Public Health Commissioners to develop, consult and procure, in partnership with supported housing providers, a 'WellNet' service that will enable individuals that are not eligible for social care to access universal preventative services to support them maintain a continued independence.

Lincolnshire Carers Partnership

Lincoln Business Club has nominated the Lincolnshire Carers Partnership as their charity of the year.