

LINCOLNSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Open Report on behalf of Councillor Wendy Bowkett, Chairman of the Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group

Report to	Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	24 September 2019
Subject:	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Housing and Health priority

Summary:

This report highlights progress made against the objectives in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy Housing and Health delivery plan. Good progress has been made, setting the foundations for concerted, joint action by a range of partners who will meet this autumn to develop and extend the delivery plan, with a focus on accelerating progress.

Actions Required:

Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is asked to:

- Note the report and progress made to date.
- Support the direction of travel to further develop the Housing and Health priority delivery plan.

1. Background

One of the functions of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is to prepare and publish a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) to inform and influence organisations, so that decisions are focused on people's needs and tackle the factors that affect health and wellbeing. Housing and Health was deemed to be one of the most important factors and prioritised in 2018. The Housing, Health and Care Delivery Group (HHCDG) was established to oversee the priority delivery plan, with senior representatives from a wide range of relevant organisations. This report looks at each objective in turn.

1.1 Shared commitment to joint action

One of the principles of the JHWS is collaborative working and as such the priority delivery plan does not focus on actions that are the responsibility of any one particular organisation but on those requiring joint action. In order to underpin a shared commitment to joint action across local government, health, social care and housing sectors, a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) mirroring the national MoU was developed, agreed by HWB at its meeting on 11 December 2018. This is currently being reviewed.

1.1.1 Review the effectiveness of HHCDG

HHCDG meetings have good attendance levels and are considered to be of great benefit by attendees. Several delegates have attended a national housing and health conference together to learn and gather ideas for areas of work the group could promote. It has been stated that frank, open and honest conversations are now going on that have not in the past. Delegates have requested and committed to attend a workshop in the autumn to:

- Review, recognise and celebrate the effectiveness of and positive impact the HHCDG has made;
- Capture areas of improved practice due to the involvement of HHCDG;
- Evaluate core areas of work which require housing, health and care colleagues to work together differently;
- Sign off completed work, accelerate existing work and include new work.

It was recognised that there is a wide-range of groups and meetings linked to the housing agenda. The HHCDG has reviewed and agreed a need for each, with distinct but inter-related remits, standing down those which have no further role. The structure of meetings and links between them was agreed. There is still some work to do to join up the high-level groups. The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership is in the process of creating a Health and Care Board to emphasise the links between housing, health and care and the economy and to embed these in the Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan.

The HHCDG has had a role in the joint agreement of the Better Care Fund (BCF) plan but this could be strengthened for future iterations. There is potential for BCF/ DFG funding to be used on a wide range of housing and health projects should the fund continue in future years.

One recommendation in the national review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is for each area to have a board responsible for strategic oversight of DFG funding. HHCDG is the forum where this can be considered by a range of partners.

From a health perspective there is a commitment to ensure that housing is addressed in the local NHS long-term plan. A recurring theme at meetings is the need for previously disparate services (e.g. DFG or housing related support for homelessness) to be part of a system-wide approach to providing homes for independence, with better coordination with care and mental health services. Housing is being linked with the development of a new mental health hub through Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust (LPFT). Mental health services have been recognised as crucial to the housing related support service to enable service users to secure and maintain tenancies.

One outcome that needs further development is to adopt a positive culture regarding funding and budget savings, recognising that "we are in it together". Some progress has been made. District councils have recently pooled some DFG funding in to Lincolnshire County Council's (LCC) children's equipment service for the purchase of stair climbers to support families waiting for major home alterations or house moves, enabling parents to move older children safely and without injury. To demonstrate the impact of poor housing in Lincolnshire the BRE (Building Research Establishment) is to be commissioned to undertake a health impact assessment, estimating the potential care costs and wider societal costs associated with hazards in homes.

1.2 Adopt a whole family approach to tackling housing needs

To help ensure a whole-house and whole-family approach is taken so that residents are able to live independently, including care requirements, a housing issues referral template is being created for use across a wide range of organisations with the intention of there being a single point of contact. There is at present an emerging 'team around the adult' approach being developed with a network of vulnerable adult panels (VAP) to confirm and agree appropriate interventions for people with complex needs.

The stair climber example above demonstrates this whole family approach, as does a new joint protocol for housing agencies to identify and refer potential hazards in the home to Children's Services so that families receive support to mitigate risks, with the aim of reducing hospital admissions which are high for child accidents. More work is still needed on the deliverables in this objective including strengthening the role of the Wellbeing Service, linking with neighbourhood teams, recognising the needs of carers (including young carers) and developing a Housing and Health awareness training package for non-housing staff.

1.3 Concerted action across partners to tackling homelessness

There has been a strong and effective homelessness strategy partnership across Lincolnshire for some years gaining national recognition for its collaborative approach, enabling district councils to secure external funds and developing and delivering the ACTION Lincs programme. Linking the partnership to the HHCDG has enabled wider dialogue to enlist direct action from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), mental health and hospital services.

The homelessness partnership has agreed to act as the expert panel to develop the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) topic on Insecure Housing and Homelessness. The partnership refreshed its Homelessness Strategy in 2018. New Government guidance means this is to be refreshed again to meet the national requirement to include a focus on rough sleeping. The HHCDG's membership will have a role in developing and implementing the revised countywide Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The HHCDG received feedback from the NESTA 100-day challenge conducted by the Lincoln neighbourhood team looking at frailty in the homeless population. Learning from this will be incorporated into the new JSNA topic. The ACTION Lincs project using social impact bond funding is proving successful and sustaining it in some form should be explored.

LCC intends to re-commission a housing related support service to help support the most vulnerable people (i.e. those with complex needs) to sustain a tenancy. This is being re-

scoped in conjunction with district councils to take account of the new prevention duty placed on district councils through the Homelessness Reduction Act. There are a number of partners working with LCC to develop the service specification so that it has maximum effect for service users. Discussions are underway on the need for a range of agencies to adapt their policies and working practices, and potentially to fast track service users into their own services to maximise effectiveness.

1.4 Ensure people have the knowledge and capability to access and maintain appropriate housing

The DWP is an active member of HHCDG and has made a strong commitment to support vulnerable people through the implementation of Universal Credit. In particular it is looking at how housing related support service users can be prioritised and supported to maintain a tenancy.

Further connections between the Financial Inclusion Partnership (FIP) and the HHCDG for joint actions are still needed.

1.5 Review supported housing arrangements for older people across partners

To ensure new housing provision meets the changing needs of the Lincolnshire population joint work is on-going to determine what is required, for whom and where. This includes an assessment of housing needs of an ageing population through Housing LIN (Learning and Improvement Network), commissioned jointly by the seven district councils, LCC and North and North East Lincolnshire councils for Phase 1, and the eight Lincolnshire local authorities for phase 2. Consideration of a range of provision, including extra care housing is part of this with joint programmes underway to develop new extra care units across the county. This also includes agreeing design principles for new accommodation for older people, including support to help those living with dementia to remain at home. This is an area of work which requires accelerating.

1.5.1 Disabled Facilities Grants

There has been significant reform of DFG processes through the Moving Forward with DFGs Group. The commissioning of a single schedule of rates and approved list of contractors across Lincolnshire has resulted in standardising adaptation costs between districts and ensuring there is contractor capacity to deliver works in a timely manner. District councils are using the county council's children's and adult care web-based case management system (Mosaic) to record DFGs and this will be enhanced this year to reflect the outcomes achieved from the adaptation. In future we aim to evidence reductions in waiting times and the cost of adaptations as well as actual or potential care cost savings. DFG allocations come through the Better Care Fund (BCF) and have been passed in full to district councils. There is national guidance advocating pooled funds as we move towards closer integration between housing, health and care services, and an in-principle agreement to discuss what a countywide pooled budget could achieve for residents.

Following a meeting of senior DFG leads, HHCDG and the Moving Forward with DFGs Group has agreed the outline of a new work plan to further develop the service and embed DFGs in the wider system to maintain independent living. Next steps include:

- Improve relationships and communication routes between district councils and LCC-based Occupational Therapists. The current re-structure of LCC's Occupational Therapist teams to align with district council boundaries, the increase in staff numbers and new workflows being developed in Mosaic will all support this. HHCDG discussed the OT staff being co-located and all district councils were supportive of this.
- Explore potential for a single point of access to the DFG system as part of a wider consideration of needs and for an 'integrated service'.
- Work better with those Occupational Therapists who work in hospitals and the community.

1.5.2 Housing Assistance Policy

Whilst district councils are directed about their role in relation to mandatory DFGs, there is scope for discretionary support. Most district councils have put in place a policy for discretionary DFG and other assistance under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002. Work is now underway to adopt a common Housing Assistance Policy covering mandatory DFG. The aim is to ensure greater consistency in the offer for residents across the county, but also to use the appropriate discretion to prioritise works which will prevent harm and complement the wider system. This could include:

- Works not eligible for mandatory DFG but that would nevertheless support a disabled person to live or work at home
- Cost of works in excess of the maximum mandatory DFG of £30,000
- Support to help applicants meet their assessed contribution towards the cost of adaptations
- Simplified application processes for straightforward adaptations
- Fast tracked grants to enable hospital discharge
- Other works (e.g. repairs or heating) in conjunction with adaptations or for the benefit of people at risk from living in a poor condition or cold home.

Better integrating DFG and OT services with others such as the Wellbeing Service (delivering minor aids and equipment), hospital in-reach services and the Integrated Community Equipment Service will ensure that different agendas (e.g. digital health care) are closely aligned. It will also tie in to a joint approach to ensure people living in cold homes, who are in fuel poverty or on a low income and vulnerable to the cold, can improve their home through Energy Company Obligation (ECO) schemes.

1.6 Understand and address housing related delayed transfers of care

More still needs to be done to ensure Housing makes a full contribution to reducing delayed transfers of care (DTOC) and in turn meet the BCF outcomes. There are now Hospital Housing Link Workers for both County Hospital in Lincoln and the Pilgrim Hospital in Boston. Early cases highlighted the prevalence of homelessness, and an increasing number of hoarding cases. A new Hoarding Protocol has been developed and trialled with partners and is about to be fully adopted. There is still a need to ensure that housing issues are identified as early as possible after the patient's hospital attendance and that appropriate advice and support are in place to prevent re-admission.

1.7 Addressing poor standards of housing and the level of appropriate housing required

The Lincolnshire Housing Standards Group and the Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network (GLEEN) continue to work together to tackle poor housing and improve the energy efficiency of homes. Examples include:

- Use of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) controlling migration fund to develop joint agency approaches in Boston and Lincoln to target private sector landlords that neglect their duties and take robust enforcement action to ensure vulnerable tenants are not exploited.
- Review and refresh the protocol between Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and local housing authorities to complement and extend statutory duties on each organisation. This needs to be linked to the hoarding protocol and Fire and Rescue safe and well checks.
- On-going work with LCC Trading Standards to make sure best use is made of legislative powers across organisations with a particular focus on criminal activities and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations.
- Including hazards in homes in the housing-issues referral template referred to above so that partner agencies can spot potential for harm (performing a simple housing 'MOT') and refer to the district councils.

Procurement of a framework of installers of energy efficiency measures and a shared-service across Greater Lincolnshire is due to commence for winter 2019, and aims to attract more ECO funds in to Lincolnshire. GLEEN has for several years promoted a collective energy switch to make it easier for groups of residents to reduce their gas and/or electricity tariff(s), saving households in excess of £1 million per annum.

The focus of this objective has been on the standard of existing housing. However, much focus is being given to the delivery of new-build homes through the Housing Infrastructure Group (HIG) and the District Housing Network (DHN). There is a separate Housing for Growth delivery plan 'owned' by DHN and appropriate objectives need to be embedded within the Housing and Health priority delivery plan. Greater Lincolnshire Leaders and Chief Executives have adopted a vision for 2050 that includes creating a healthy and civil society. The new Planning Healthier Environments Group will oversee objectives relating to this in the Growth Plan and Let's Move Lincolnshire, the blueprint to increase physical activity levels. NHS Healthy New Towns guidance will be embedded in planning policies and development management processes and the One Public Estate programme maximises the contribution public assets make.

DHN is leading work on developing a joint Greater Lincolnshire Housing Strategy with all district councils, LCC, housing providers and wider HHCDG partners; with the aim of agreeing a joined up approach to all aspects of housing. North Kesteven District Council is convening this work which will draw on the Housing LIN work referenced at 1.5 above.

The recent Government prevention green paper recognises that most people will continue to live in a home that already exists. Funding for housing renewal, particularly for low-income owner occupiers needs to be available to ensure that homes can be improved, particularly as many Lincolnshire residents are asset rich but cash poor. Opportunities such as a public sector endorsed equity release scheme are being explored.

2. Conclusion

There has been good progress against the priority delivery plan to date and HHCDG has developed as a robust partnership with excellent attendance and a shared vision, which increasingly focuses on whole-system approaches, integration and personalisation. Whilst there is much more to be done, there is also an appetite to go further, faster.

The HHCDG is to review the MoU and delivery plan by the end of December 2019, removing actions achieved and adding new actions to existing objectives and new objectives with actions.

It is hoped this report provides HWB with assurance of the progress being made. Partners remain committed to addressing the objectives under the Housing priority theme, to include using new and innovative methods to do so.

3. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy

The Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

This report is to summarise progress with the JHWS Housing and Health priority.

One outcome from HHCDG which 'owns' the JSNA Housing and Health topic is to further strengthen the evidence base through dividing the current JSNA topic into two separate themes, to reflect the wide scope to the topic, creating a new chapter on insecure housing and homelessness.

4. Consultation

None

5. Appendices

No appendices.

6. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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