

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee (JHOSC)

2 April 2007

Proposal to establish a Health Scrutiny working group looking into the future of residential care in County Durham



Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny

Purpose

1. To seek nominations from the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to participate in a working group looking into the future of residential care in County Durham.

Background/Information

2. Durham County Council's Cabinet (Oct. 2006) agreed not to close a number of residential homes following extensive consultation.
3. It (Cabinet) subsequently commissioned a member-working group chaired by Councillor C. Robson, Cabinet portfolio holder for Adult and Community services, to develop a strategy for the Council's homes. This group comprised of all members having a home in their constituency together with the Chair of Health Scrutiny, and appropriate legal support.
4. The group met on four occasions between December 2006 and March 2007. Additionally, the Leader of the Council, Chair of the Working Group and Lead Officer visited Gateshead Social Services department early in January 2007 to determine how they had tackled similar issues now being faced in Durham.
5. Arrangements were made for all members of the council to visit four establishments within County Durham to aid understanding on issues and options relevant to this work. The homes visited included a traditional LA residential care facility, an adapted home specialising in intermediate care, an extra care scheme developed in partnership with Hanover Housing Association and a private sector home. A debriefing session was held with those members undertaking the visits.
6. Finally an open seminar was held for all members of the council on the 7th March 2007 to share preliminary findings as part of an open process designed to engage members in formulating an effective vision and strategy.

7. Cabinet has confirmed that the work of this group be picked up by Overview and Scrutiny as part of its policy development and policy review function.
8. The Chair of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny committee will lead this OS working group drawing its membership from the committee itself.
9. The first meeting of the overview and scrutiny working group on the future of residential care will meet on Friday 27 April at 9.30 when further information would be made available to members so that they are able to be better understand the issues and draft the Terms of Reference for the working group.

Recommendation

10. That nomination's are sought for one District Council representative serving on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit on the proposed OS working group looking into the future of residential care.
11. That an invitation to County Council members serving on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be issued, but excluding those members who have a residential home in their area. (These members will be invited to give evidence to the OS working group.)

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