

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Joint Meeting of **Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 21 April 2015 at 11.00 am**

Present:

Councillor R Todd (Chairman)

Members of the Committees:

Councillors J Armstrong, P Brookes, J Chaplow, P Crathorne, M Davinson, S Forster, K Hopper, P Lawton, J Blakey, K Corrigan, C Hampson, D Hicks, C Potts and H Smith

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Hassoon and Mr D Kinch

Also Present:

Councillor L Hovvells

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, A Bonner, J Charlton, K Dearden, J Hart, E Huntington, H Liddle, J Measor, O Milburn, S Morrison, T Pemberton, L Pounder, A Savory, M Stanton, W Stelling and P Stradling, and co-opted members B Carr, K Gilfillan, G Harrison, G Moran, R Patel and P Taylor.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman welcomed the Director of Public Health to the meeting to present her Annual Report. He highlighted the importance of the issues raised in the Report in terms of Children and Young People and Adults, Wellbeing and Health. He referred to the reviews carried out and the key reports and presentations considered by the Scrutiny Committees.

4 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Director of Public Health County Durham which presented the 2014 annual report (for copy see file of Minutes). The Director of Public Health informed the Committee that a full copy of the report was available.

Members were informed that most of the data and information on the health status of communities in County Durham was detailed in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and that information on public health programmes could be found within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It was a statutory requirement to produce the report and a duty to publish the report under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

The Director of Public Health County Durham stated that the annual report focused on tackling social isolation and the actions that needed taking by a range of organisations to reduce the impact on the health and wellbeing of communities. The key messages in the report were highlighted together with the recommendations.

The Chairman said that there were huge challenges across communities within the County.

Councillor Brookes referred to social media, and said that although it can have a negative impact in terms of cyber bullying, it could be used as a force for good. He said that mainstream media often advertise local clubs that could help to encourage people to become part of a local group. He then went on to ask how social media was being used. The Director of Public Health said that we could use it more to our advantage, and that there could be an opportunity to explore this issue fully. She agreed that in some circumstances social media could be used to help with social isolation. Councillor Brookes informed the Committee about a new service for families and friends to communicate with each other, called WhatsApp. The Director of Public Health said that there could be the potential for applying for European funding for health related issues and IT solutions. She said that the Council promotes and advertises a lot of information on their website but recognised that not all people have access. She also said that if people don't leave their homes they are not likely to see anything advertised in their local communities.

Mrs R Hassoon said that the waiting time to access treatment for depression within the Community Home Treatment Team was three to four months, and that she had asked for the pathway to be reviewed. She asked if it was possible for the Community Home Team workers to advise clients as to what voluntary groups were available in an area that may alleviate some immediate problems. The Director of Public Health said that this should be being carried out by the team. She could not comment on the waiting times as this was CCG led. She did refer to a recommendation in her report about professionals being aware and considering social isolation. She informed the Committee that the report was circulated to a wide audience to ensure that messages were received.

Mr Paul Newton, Director of Operations, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust, informed Members that the number of referrals in adult mental health had increased from 500 to 1000 over the last four years. He advised that the target for a first appointment was four weeks but at present was taking seven weeks. He said that there was an issue around capacity and demand. On a wider point, he said that all professionals should be aware of what services were available. He agreed that social media was a good way to communicate but that as the changes in the health and wellbeing service were so rapid, it was hard to keep knowledge up-to-date. He said that it would be beneficial to find a way to make technology help us to communicate.

The Director of Public Health agreed that it was difficult to keep up-to-date and her service had a dedicated resource to keep online information current.

In terms of what Scrutiny could do in relation to policies that come forward from Cabinet, Councillor J Armstrong confirmed that the Equal Impact Assessment would be used as a standard item when considering social isolation. He suggested that a joint AAP conference to consider developing a joined up strategy would be beneficial for the whole County. He said that the Housing Associations could help to identify early signs of social isolation and that the AAPs were good drivers for change. He confirmed that the Equal Impact Assessment would be included in the work of Scrutiny going forward.

The Director of Public Health advised that an all day event was taking place today involving all 31 housing providers to talk about social isolation. She referred to the Community Wellbeing Partnership that involved a whole range of organisations, including the County Council, voluntary sector, housing sector, CCGs, Fire & Rescue and said that they were pulling together an action plan. She went on to advise that from 1 October 2015 the responsibility for commissioning public health services for children aged 0-5 will transfer from NHS England to local authorities. She added that although there were national specifications we could add to them to best meet the needs of families in County Durham. She said that services were being pulled together and was positive in the outcomes moving forward.

Referring to consultation, Mr D Kinch advised that the Town and Parish Councils should also be used as a method of communication as played an important role, especially in rural areas.

Councillor S Forster informed the Committee that she had set up a group for older people twenty years ago, called Friends that was still going and helped people to feel part of something. She suggested introducing a scheme along the lines of adopt a 'Granny' to help people with problems of belonging. The Director of Public Health said that this could be an interesting approach and something that AAPs could apply for funding for.

With regards to communication and sharing information, Councillor Crathorne suggested that information from Care Link be shared with appropriate organisations when isolation was identified. This was an area that she had shared with the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner. The Director of Public Health said that she would take this back and make enquiries.

Councillor J Blakey referred to social media in terms of children and young people as it had been found to be difficult to control at times. She highlighted the importance that the youth workers had in terms of communication, as they were, at times, the main contact with children and young people. The Director of Public Health agreed that youth workers were key in supporting young people together with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) service.

Mr Newton informed the Committee that the waiting times for CAMHS were larger than for adults requiring mental health provision, and that this service was also under considerable pressure. He said that the Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme (CYP IAPT) was an integral part of working in the

community and making sure people were equipped with the necessary skills for everyday life.

Mrs Hassoon expressed concerns about the lack of duty and care from private landlords and the unsafe discharge for homeless people from institutions. She believed that this situation would improve if private landlords were registered.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Public Health County Durham for her presentation which had highlighted the social isolation issues within County Durham. He added that the responsibility and how to tackle this issue in the future lay with many organisations and within the community itself.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the report be received, and key messages and recommendations be noted.
- (ii) That the report be used to inform commissioning plans, service developments and assessment of need to support a range of funding bids, particularly by third sector organisations, be noted.