

COUNTY COUNCIL

7 DECEMBER 2016

QUESTIONS FROM AREA ACTION PARTNERSHIPS

QUESTIONS FROM DERWENT VALLEY AAP

Question 1

A continuing area of discussion within the Derwent Valley AAP Task and Finish Groups has been the increase in mental health issues faced by society, particularly in relation to our younger residents, but also now increasing numbers of more elderly residents. The AAP has supported a wide scale project aimed at tackling these issues especially in relation to younger residents in partnership with youth service providers and local schools. What plans does Durham County Council have to support younger and more elderly residents in terms of addressing their mental health related issues and improving their quality of life?

RESPONSE

In relation to the younger population, there is a comprehensive and structured programme of pathways and interventions for young people. Many parts of the council and wider partners are working collaboratively to make sure mental health and wellbeing is prioritised.

There is a strong focus on resilience building to stop young people from developing mental health problems in the first place. Universal services, such as midwives and health visitors, as well as specific interventions such as the community parenting programme, focus on the early years in life. Supporting parents to develop a strong attachment with their child is a key protective factor for a child's mental wellbeing.

Moving into primary and secondary ages, there is an offer for schools to participate in the Durham resilience in schools programme. This is a whole school approach to mental wellbeing which enables schools to improve the wellbeing of their pupils alongside academic attainment. Within this whole school programme there are specific interventions available such as mindfulness and the new youth aware mental health programme for year nine pupils.

The school nursing service has a real focus on mental wellbeing and has appointed five emotional wellbeing nurses to be part of the school nursing team. The school nurses and emotional wellbeing nurses are offering community drop in clinics as well as school based clinics.

For more targeted support to reduce self-harm and suicides amongst young people there is a training programme available for professionals who work with young people and support available for appropriate referrals into specialist services. A bereavement support programme is currently in operation for young people and their families who have been affected by suicide.

There is much ongoing work on mental health to reduce the stigma associated. Durham County council will soon be signed up to the Time for Change national programme to stamp out stigma.

In relation to the adult age population there are a number of preventative services which provide support to adults suffering mental health issues including Derwentside MIND and Stonham and from Support and Recovery within the council's in-house services. Some of these services can be accessed directly by the individual, these include the jointly commissioned services with public health, including the targeted wellbeing services and Wellbeing for Life. Others are subject to an assessment under the Care Act. These assessments are holistic and take into consideration not just the social care and health needs of the individual, but their financial and home circumstances and are accessed through integrated Mental Health Teams. These teams provide therapeutic interventions and/or commission services from the independent and voluntary sector on behalf of individuals.

These services are outcome focussed and meet the needs of the person. Traditional Services for this service user group are becoming less common and more flexible and innovative services are being encouraged. An example of this is there is a move away from residential care services to floating support and supported living and/or direct payments which is much more tailored to a person's individual needs. Services are focussed around recovery and rehabilitation of the person and encouraging independence and wellbeing. Together with Health partners the local authority is working on a local action plan in relation to "No Health without Mental Health", which is the national framework for mental health for all ages/lifespans.

Furthermore there is considerable work being undertaken to improve services and outcomes for those living with dementia and their carers. The council is working with local organisations to progress dementia friendly community work and the commissioning of the countywide dementia care advisor service will underpin these improvements.

Question 2

Following the EU referendum decision, do you think it will be possible to mitigate the impact or replace any reduced funding to existing European grants and those still in the pipeline so the enormous social and environment benefits they bring to communities, including economic growth and regeneration, and most importantly to those in receipt of welfare benefits will continue to be maintained at the same levels after BREXIT?

RESPONSE

Firstly, I would like to thank Derwent Valley AAP for their question. Whilst we will continue to make the best use of existing allocated funding to ensure communities see the benefits of European funding for many years to come, it is important to recognise that this funding will diminish over the next 2-3 years. To mitigate this, Durham County Council will be lobbying government to help to ensure that Durham receives a fair amount of funding going forward to assist with welfare reform changes and economic projects. We will also explore other funding opportunities where it is possible to do so.

QUESTION FROM WEARDALE AAP

Weardale sits within the International global geo park, it's also part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty the greatest assets being its picturesque natural environment and its unique cultural heritage.

A major asset to Weardale is Killhope Lead Mining Museum, due to its unique features of harnessing the natural environment, for the preservation and conservation of cultural heritage.

Integral to rural economic sustainability is rural tourism development.

The Weardale Area Action Partnership would like to know:-

1. What is the long term development and investment strategy for sustaining Killhope?
2. What measures are in place to ensure Killhope is promoted as a Tourism offer both regionally and internationally?

RESPONSE

I would like to thank Weardale AAP for their question.

Whilst it is difficult to commit to the long term future of any non-statutory service it has been, and will continue to be, a priority of the service to work to make the museum more sustainable. It is valued, and the recent investment is testimony to its value to both the local community and indeed the region.

Killhope has recently benefitted from a significant investment totalling £750,000. This was a jointly funded project involving, Durham County Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and the Weardale Area Action Partnership.

The Rediscover Killhope project has delivered an improved customer experience with the development of the Buddle House and the installation of a new exhibition, an interactive model which will open for the first time next season. Staffing structures have been realigned to make the museum more efficient and to include an education officer with a view to attracting more visitors.

Killhope has its own Facebook page which is used to drive traffic to both the website and Trip Advisor, where it has outstanding reviews. It has its own standalone destination website. It is widely promoted online during opening season by Visit County Durham and recently featured as a 'must see place to visit' in the Guardian and Times. Adverts are placed in regional media and family listings sites and a guide to Killhope is produced and distributed annually. It is also included in a Visit County Durham e-letter which is distributed to 40,000 tourism operators.