

21 February 2017

**Overview and Scrutiny Review,
Improved Safety in the Home –
Safe and Wellbeing Visits**

**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and
Partnerships**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Committee's review on Improved Safety in the Home – Safe and Wellbeing Visits attached at Appendix 2.

Background

- 2 The Committee has a role to scrutinise work of the Safe Durham Partnership. Members of the committee agreed to establish a working group to undertake some review activity looking at the new objective of improved safety in the home which is contained within both the Safe Durham Partnership Plan and the Council Plan and in particular, safe and wellbeing visits which is a major programme being undertaken in this area.
- 3 County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service firefighters undertake approximately 18,000 home fire safety visits each year. The introduction of safe and wellbeing visits in February 2016 aims to build upon the previous home fire safety visits to focus on vulnerable people and enhance prevention through broadening the remit of these visits and aim to make every contact count.
- 4 The content of safe and wellbeing visits is for local determination and within the CDDFRS area currently includes fire safety and lifestyle questions on slips, trips and falls, winter warmth, flu vaccination, dementia, smoking, alcohol and loneliness. To deliver this scheme, CDDFRS are working closely with a number of partner agencies including the council who will action referrals in relation to their specific lifestyle area.
- 5 The aim of the review was to gain assurance that processes are in place and being delivered through the safe and wellbeing visits to improve home safety, reduce risk and improve a person's health and quality of life. The review also provided an opportunity to identify any gaps or service improvements within the existing approach and raise awareness with elected members as community champions.

- 6 The review has gathered evidence through desktop research, meetings with officers, service professionals and a resident who has benefited from the initiative. Focus groups were also held with firefighters and partner agencies and some observations of health and wellbeing visits were undertaken.

Conclusions

- 7 From evidence gathered throughout the review, the working group applaud the approach led by CDDFRS with partner agencies to implement safe and wellbeing visits throughout the county. The working group note the significance of organisational change for CDDFRS to lead on the scheme and the response by partner agencies to deliver this initiative in line with national strategies and local fire risk that aims to make every contact count and provide valuable support to vulnerable people.
- 8 Launched in February 2016, safe and wellbeing visits are in their infancy and with effective governance, referral processes and partnership working in place they are making a positive difference. Up to the 31st October 2016, there have been 10,718 safe and wellbeing visits undertaken of which 3,733 people agreed to answer the lifestyle element of the questionnaire. This has generated 1,235 referrals to partner organisations, many of which were the first contact with that service. The difference these visits have made was highlighted through personal case study presentations, written evidence from partner agencies, recognition within the Alzheimer's Society national awards and a presentation to the National Emergency Services Show.
- 9 The working group also notes the positive working relationship between CDDFRS and partner agencies to design and review the safe and wellbeing questionnaire and address any concerns that have been identified to improve delivery of the scheme. The scheme has been embedded within day-to-day activity for CDDFRS and firefighters are to receive further training by partner agencies.
- 10 Field study activity also demonstrated the professionalism of firefighters and members of the Community Fire Safety Team when undertaking safe and wellbeing visits. An area of development is for firefighters to receive feedback on outcomes of safe and wellbeing visits and for consideration for partners to experience safe and wellbeing visits being undertaken by firefighters.
- 11 There has been a significant amount of data collected from safe and wellbeing visits which provides an opportunity for partner agencies to work with CDDFRS to utilise anonymised data for service planning and prevention activity within the boundaries of the Data Protection Act.
- 12 The working group suggest that work is undertaken with CDDFRS and partner agencies to explore quality assurance activity on outcomes of safe and wellbeing referrals.

- 13 Whilst a positive difference is being made by the scheme, members note that the initiative is currently funded from within existing resources for both CDDFRS and partner agencies. Information provided to the working group highlighted decreasing budgets for all partners and agencies and that funding sustainability is a risk to the success of the initiative. In addition partner agencies also identified a risk for the ability to meet any increase in further demand. It is suggested that the Safe Durham Partnership Board and Health and Wellbeing Board receive timely monitoring reports on the delivery of safe and wellbeing visits to highlight successes, challenges and risks to delivery of the initiative.
- 14 Safe and wellbeing visits have been actively promoted at local and national levels and it is suggested an area of potential development could be further promotion of the scheme with elected members, town and parish councils and area action partnerships. However, it is acknowledged that a risk to increased awareness may lead to increased demand and that a balance must be maintained to ensure quality and consistency in operation is not compromised.
- 15 Following consideration by the Committee, the report is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet and the Safe Durham Partnership Board thereafter.

Recommendations

- 16 The Committee are asked to agree the draft report in Appendix 2 and that it be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk – None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder – The report includes information that aims to contribute to the Altogether Safer element of the Council Plan and Safe Durham Partnership Plan.

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – None

Legal Implications – None.