

Health and Wellbeing Board

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Dementia and Planning



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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with a progress update on working taking place with the Alzheimer's Society and the Durham County Council planning and assets service to support the implementation of the County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy 2014-17, by creating better environments for people living with dementia throughout the county.

Background

2. There are currently 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK. This is set to increase to 1 million by 2021 and to 2 million by 2051. There are over 4,800 people registered with dementia in County Durham (2014/15). Typical of the situation across the country, the observed prevalence in GP surgeries (the number of people registered with dementia), is around two-thirds of the expected prevalence. This has implications in terms of lack of treatment, care and unmet need. County Durham's population is ageing as a result of people living longer. The number of older people is increasing nationally and locally due to improvements in health and social care. Office for National Statistics (ONS) projections 2014 suggest that the proportion of County Durham's population aged over 65 years will rise from 18.8% to 26.1% by 2035.
3. The Alzheimer's Society in their Dementia UK 2014 update report estimated dementia prevalence by type of dementia within UK population. This suggests that over 6,600 people in County Durham have some form of dementia. The majority of estimated sufferers have Alzheimer's disease (62%). Alzheimer's and vascular dementia (or a combination of both) makes up an estimated 89% of dementia.

4. Dementia refers to a set of symptoms that may include memory loss, confusion and difficulties with thinking, problem solving or language. However a person living with dementia may also experience changes in their mood or behaviour. Dementia can also exacerbate the effects of physical impairments and give rise to sensory challenges. Dementia is an umbrella term and is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's or a series of strokes. All types of dementia are progressive and each person will experience dementia in their own way. Whilst dementia is most common in older people, some people experience young-onset dementia. A mental health condition is considered a disability if it has a long-term effect on your normal day-to-day activity. This is defined under the Equality Act 2010.

Ongoing Activity

5. Mid Durham Area Action Partnership (AAP), similar to most AAP's across our County, had also been supporting a number of environment and building based improvements to local villages and towns. This coupled with the AAP's Older People's Task Group work with the Alzheimer's Society prompted the group to examine how they could influence new design and development so that the needs of residents effected by dementia could be taken into consideration. This was then raised by the AAP as an area that could be examined from a county perspective and asked the Council's Planning and Assets Service and the Alzheimer's Society to explore this further.
6. The County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy 2014-2017 was launched in August 2014. Since its inception and with wide representation across partners, the group has been able to maximise the opportunities to help meet National Dementia Strategy objectives. Engagement of key stakeholders has enabled the County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy Implementation Group (DSIG) to ensure that relevant organisations work in partnership for the mutual benefit of people with dementia and the people who support and care for them. Furthermore exchanges of information have enabled group members to contribute to other areas of improvement.
7. The Health and Wellbeing Board received a progress report on the implementation of the County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy 2014 – 2017 at their meeting on the 16th March 2017 which highlighted the achievements and progress. The County Durham and Darlington Dementia Strategy has been reviewed and a 2017 – 2020 Dementia Plan on a Page has been developed by the DSIG.
8. There are a number of county wide and localised dementia support organisations and services operating around our county. The County Durham Dementia Action Alliance was set up 3 years ago bringing together a variety of partners to raise awareness, develop support and coordinate a partnership approach to dementia. The Alliance is chaired by the County Durham Fire and Rescue Service with the support of the regional Alzheimer's Society and they are aware of and have endorsed the work identified in this report.

9. Linked in with the Alliance is the county wide Dementia Advisor Service commissioned by Durham County Council alongside a variety of local Dementia Friendly Communities such as Barnard Castle, Spennymoor and Beamish. Several of the Area Action Partnership's (AAP's) have, or are in the process of, setting up Dementia Friendly Communities projects which would see support officers from the Alzheimer's Society working with local towns and villages to increase the number of Dementia Friendly Communities within those AAP areas. Mid Durham AAP area working with the Alzheimer's Society in the development of a proposal for a Dementia Friendly Communities Co-ordinator. The full time post would be for 2 years and could potentially be shared between the AAPs and the Housing Forum (county wide).
10. Two free informal information sessions have been held on Friday 28 July 2017 at County Hall to provide more information about dementia and how simple actions can make life easier for people living with dementia and their carers.

Spatial Policy Workshop

11. On the 12 July 2017, the Alzheimer's Society held a workshop with officers from the Council's Spatial Policy and Asset Management teams. The workshop provided a means to consider the effectiveness of emerging planning policies through the County Durham Plan. The strengthening of emerging planning policies will ensure that the needs of people living with dementia are considered through the determination of planning applications and will help to ensure that our neighbourhoods are for life and extend the active participation of older people with dementia in their local communities. The discussion was positive and wide ranging.
12. The workshop recognised that good quality housing and well planned environments, can have a substantial impact on the quality of life of someone living with dementia. The importance of the public realm and neighbourhoods was a particular focus of discussion. There was agreement that the way public areas are planned can help those with dementia live a full and active life. It was also recognised that getting detailed implementation right can be complex and is likely to have resource implications. However, it was also recognised that appropriate improvements were likely to benefit all residents over their lifetime – people with dementia, older people in general, and families with small children. The following emerging policy areas were discussed:
 - General development principles;
 - Older persons housing;
 - Type and mix of housing;
 - Sustainable design;
 - Retail and town centres; and
 - Green infrastructure.
13. The Alzheimer's Society has since followed up this workshop with detailed written comments on the emerging policy areas. They have made a range of

helpful comments on how policies and text can be developed to better support the interests of those with dementia. These comments will be positively considered in the course of progressing the plan. The workshop and subsequent written comments will help to ensure that the needs of people living with dementia are included in the County Durham Plan and are taken into account in determining planning applications.

14. Once adopted, the County Durham Plan will ensure that the needs of people living with dementia will be part of the decision making process on planning applications. The needs of people with dementia will be an integral part of new development to ensure social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities is facilitated in planning decisions. We will also plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community including meeting the need to provide housing for older people given the projected increase in the households aged 65 and over.
15. Age presents the greatest dementia risk factor. As the population ages and the proportion of those aged 65+ increases then so will the number of people with dementia. Between 2014 and 2030 estimated dementia prevalence is projected to increase by:
 - 22% for those aged 65-74.
 - 53% for those aged 75-84.
 - 92% for those aged 85+.
16. The workshop also discussed ways in which services across the Council could consider adapting their processes to achieve improvements to the built environment for those suffering from dementia. Potential issues identified for consideration include:
 - a. Around 14 Neighbourhood Development Plans are being prepared in County Durham by Parish Councils and other designated bodies in the context of the Localism Act 2011. Officers from the Spatial Policy Team already work with these community groups in developing policies. This process provides an opportunity to raise the profile of dementia in this work, seeking to ensure that Neighbourhood Plans also reflect issues related to dementia in their approach to the built environment in their communities.
 - b. The Council's Planning Development Management Officers have continuous involvement with organisations, individuals, and developers progressing planning applications for new development. Further training for these officers on issues related to disability and dementia could help them ensure that these matters are better considered when determining applications. A review of the effectiveness of consultation processes on planning applications with specialist disability groups may also be worthwhile.
 - c. In the field of transport, officers across the Council are responsible for: preparing transport and access strategies; implementing transport

schemes; making improvements to the public realm such as resurfacing footpaths, providing new seating and signage; implementing parking strategies, and assessing proposed access arrangements in planning applications. Again further training on disability and dementia could be beneficial, along with consideration of consultation arrangements. Public parking was a particular issue of concern in the workshop as it affected people with dementia, and may warrant further discussions.

- d. The Council's Building Control Team implement a range of legislation relating to the Building Act 1984, to ensure that all buildings are built to standards set down in legislation. Whilst these national standards are statutory, officers could benefit from further awareness of how buildings can benefit or prejudice those with disabilities, including dementia. This could, perhaps, include visits to the Building Research Establishment dementia demonstrator home in Watford.
- e. The workshop identified that architects and developers often make decisions at a formative stage which dictate the layout and form of new development, along with the way that public buildings are built and refurbished. The Council have contacts with the Homes and Communities Agency, Universities, and professional bodies and could potentially help to ensure that appropriate training is made available to these professionals before planning applications are submitted.
- f. Housing support and other and housing-related services can play an important role in ensuring that people living with dementia and their families and carers, live happier, healthier and more independent lives.

Next Steps

17. To ensure that the emerging County Durham Plan is able to embed issues of health and wellbeing throughout decision making, a health impact assessment and an equalities impact assessment will be undertaken with the Health and Well Being Board. This will ensure that issues relating to dementia, deprivation, and quality of life for all those who live, work and visit County Durham are considered. Once a timetable for the County Durham Plan is agreed, a development session will be arranged enabling health to be considered throughout.

Recommendations and Reasons

18. It is recommended that:
 - a) The Health and Wellbeing Board note the content of the report; and
 - b) Agree that that a health impact assessment is undertaken with the Health and Wellbeing Board once a timetable for the County Durham Plan has been agreed.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance –

None identified.

Staffing –

None identified.

Risk –

None identified.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty –

A mental health condition is considered a disability if it has a long-term effect on your normal day-to-day activity. This is defined under the Equality Act 2010.

Anyone can develop dementia, but some people are more at risk than others.

Dementia prevalence is associated with a number of factors, such including age; gender; social class and educational achievement; unhealthy lifestyles; learning disabilities; and BME groups.

Accommodation –

None identified.

Crime and Disorder –

None identified.

Human Rights –

None identified.

Consultation –

The policies within the emerging County Durham Plan will be subject to a statutory consultation process and specific engagement with groups with protected characteristics would be undertaken.

Procurement –

None identified.

Disability Issues –

Positive changes for people with dementia, will likely to be positive for people with other disabilities.

Legal Implications –

None identified.