

Adults' Standing Overview Group

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The Adults' Standing Overview Group (ASOG) of the People's Scrutiny Committee meets bi-monthly to review performance/service matters relating to adults' safeguarding and social care services respectively.

At the last session on 7 December 2016, with Councillors Hannaford (Chair), Biederman, Hosking, Randall Johnson and Sanders in attendance, the following issues were raised:

### Promoting Independence Policy

- Devon's short term offer is not good enough, which creates dependence in the system. The County Council needs to be clear that because someone is elderly or has a disability it does not mean that they cannot get well and move back into universal services. Eligible needs will always be met, just in a different way, maximising people's independence.
- The current system in Devon takes people into care more than in other places in the country; part of the reason for this is not having a short term strategy to promote independence. The County Council has a successful reablement service, however it is not broad enough in its scope and it needs to be more joined up with Health.
- The system is being re-engineered to try to remove passive and none re-enabling care.
- The need to review the performance measures in term of the Promoting Independence policy.
- Concern that the County Council is still not doing enough in terms of the preparation for adulthood.
- The need for a more robust communication plan in terms of the Promoting Independence policy working with Health partners, other agencies and the wider public.
- The Promoting Independence policy should be a priority for the Council as a whole rather than being confined largely to social care. The policy needs to be translated into key action points.
- The community directory has been relaunched as [Pinpoint](#), providing a plethora of information on the County Council's website. Members expressed some disappointment that corporately there had been little to promote this resource.

### Promoting Independence in Devon Case Studies

- The case studies provide an opportunity to consider people's wider circumstances and learn about their pathway. The case studies are about recognising that there has been a tendency to look too quickly at what people cannot do and instead focussing on what people can do and their strengths.
- The need for psychological support to older people with life limiting conditions.
- More needs to be done for young adults with a learning disability. Members felt it essential that the County Council takes the lead in offering trainee schemes and work placements.

## **2015/16 Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework Indicator Benchmarking**

- Officers advised that the County Council performs averagely in terms of the benchmarking data. Devon's performance has fallen in 15 of the 23 indicators where information is provided year on year. Officers reported that this was due to a combination of other LA's improving and the County Council's performance falling, in part due to the tidying up of some of the data to ensure compliance.
- It is a concern that carers are not happy with processes since the Care Act 2014 and the changes that were made as a consequence. The carers contract, currently provided by Westbank, is being re-procured in 2017. Devon invests substantially more in its offer to carers than in other parts of the country even if the indicators are currently not showing the best performance.
- Performance has fallen across all measures in terms of delayed transfers of care. It is an increasingly challenging position, mostly it is less to do with ASC, rather the delays are attributable to assessment delays or difficulties in finding an appropriate care package. There have been particular problems putting in personal care packages in East Devon.
- Need to extrapolate why people in Devon continue to feel less safe than elsewhere.
- Reablement services in Devon are effective but the reach of these is limited.
- Officers advised that they need to continue to promote independence and better community working. In doing so the County Council will look to shift the emphasis from the previous level of dependency.
- Devon continues to have more people in the system than it should have in regard to its statistical comparators.

## **Residential Care Homes Site Visits**

The Chair highlighted the site visits undertaken on 29 November 2016 by ASOG members to the County Council's Mapleton Community Care Home in Newton Abbot, and two private residential care homes. Reference was made to the following:

- Issues with the physical environment of the private care homes. Officers advised that the care market in Devon is different to many other parts of the country where there are lots of small enterprises operating 2/3 care homes compared to in other areas much bigger corporations running a large number of homes. If Devon wants to establish a more vibrant market in the County then it will probably require paying more, something which is difficult to do given the limited resources available.
- Officers will be undertaking some events about letting a tender to encourage national care homes to come to Devon, as well as drafting a specification. This is a vital strategic conversation.
- Concern about the timeliness of re-assessments and the impact of significant delays on the liquidity of a small care home's cash flow.
- The need for People's Scrutiny to continue a series of visits to ASC settings.

**Cllr Rob Hannaford**  
**Chair**