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DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND ADULTS SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 31ST JANUARY, 2022

A MEETING of the HEALTH AND ADULTS SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the Council Chamber, DONCASTER on MONDAY, 31ST JANUARY, 2022 at 1.30 PM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Sarah Smith

Councillors Martin Greenhalgh, Laura Bluff, Linda Curran, Jake Kearsley and Sue Knowles

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- Phil Holmes, Director of Adults Health and Wellbeing
- Rupert Suckling, Director of Public Health

		<u>ACTION</u>
15	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sean Gibbons and Tracey Moran.	
16	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY</u>	
	There were no declarations of interest made.	
17	<u>MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2021</u>	
	RESOLVED: The minutes of the meetings held on the held on the 22nd November 2021 were agreed as a true record.	
18	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
19	<u>THE ALL AGE CARER'S STRATEGY FOR DONCASTER (2022 - 2025)</u>	
	The Panel received a report setting out the draft priorities of the All Age Carers' Strategy for Doncaster 2022-25 and planned activity to finalise the strategy to be launched in April 2022.	

There was a discussion held and the following areas were highlighted;

Priorities and Challenges - Members heard that the early identification, recognition and support to carers were areas of challenge whilst the numbers of carers had progressively increased over time. It was recognised that people might struggle for a long time without realising that they were a carer and therefore the continuity of carers support was very important. It was acknowledged that carers should be everyone's business and that it was important that those people had sufficient information and support so they did not feel alone.

Support, Information and Advice - A Member spoke about their own experiences of caring for their parent and how they felt isolated at times. It was continued that during that period they needed support and advice, which hadn't always been easy to access. Members were made aware of Making Space, a carers support organisation in Doncaster, which provided an initial point of contact and was often staffed by carers themselves. It was commented that the strategy should itself provide a role in improving communication across carers within the Borough and raise the profile of what was available. It was felt that carers were often provided with information too late and that everything felt more like a challenge. The importance of good support, availability of advice and knowledge at an early stage was recognised and it was acknowledged that DMBC and its partners needed to work collectively pulling together all the different sources of information in order for it to be quickly accessed. Finally, the value of partnership working and greater involvement of GP practices was also viewed as important.

Eligibility Criteria - Clarification was sought on what the eligibility criteria included (as referred to in Paragraph 62 Legal Implications). Members were advised that this related to specific arrangements within Adult Social Care for carers services but that there was a lot the Council could do to support carers before reaching this point.

The Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing explained how through a new contract commencing April 2022, carers who required support would be able to approach a single carers organisation about their situation and for that organisation to then connect them with the support and services that they required.

Invisible Carers – A Member who was not able to attend the meeting provided a statement which was read out by the Chair around identifying invisible carers and ensuring the system could coordinate the right support for them.

It was acknowledged that there were many carers who had not been identified in parts of the system and this was potentially an area that

could be picked up by the strategy. It was also recognised how restrictions around information sharing also created barriers for carers.

Members were pleased to hear that carers were working more with primary care services.

Other Health Related Issues – A Member asked about the impact of other related health issues such as mental health and long Covid on the carer and the person being cared for. Members were informed that there was no definite list of health conditions that was listed advising who could be supported or not. It was explained that any debilitating condition that required other people to care for that person would be factored in and the carers own health would be weighted into the support that was being provided. It was commented that understanding long covid and the specific problems that it causes was only in its early stages. It was suggested that during 2022/2023, scrutiny could consider long covid from a health perspective.

Financial Support for Carers – Concern was raised regarding the lack of clarity around the financial support and awareness of what carers were entitled to that included benefits and expenses for those involved in the development of Council strategies. Regarding the latter, it was noted that that this was not just about covering, for example, travel expenses, but also about an appropriate financial contribution for work undertaken on the Council's behalf.

In terms of financial support for carers, it was commented that welfare and benefit advice was available. It was also viewed that individuals needed to think wider in identifying themselves as a carer, as they may then be eligible for certain benefits.

Relocation Across Different NHS Areas/Boundaries – A Member raised concern about the impact on a carer and their child, following their own experiences when they relocated to a different NHS area and had to begin their child's assessment again.

The Director of Health and Wellbeing acknowledged that this was a significant issue that unfortunately many families had experienced. It was felt that organisations should ideally be working across boundaries but that there were no answers at present to address that. Members were informed of the joint work being undertaken with the Autism and Learning Disabilities Strategy and that a prompt timely diagnosis was featured high on the list of priorities.

Sharing and Understanding of Information – A Member shared their own experiences of caring for her mother who had dementia and then had also been diagnosed with cancer. It was relayed how information about the cancer diagnosis was not being shared and had therefore created an even more challenging situation to provide the right care.

It was noted that there could be an issue around capacity in a person who had dementia being interpreted correctly or incorrectly regarding what they might need. It was recognised that continuity around care and support for family and carers were an essential part of this.

Next Steps and Timeframe – Members were informed how the feedback from the Panel’s consideration of the strategy would be used as part of the process. Members were informed that there would be three further workshops undertaken with carers followed by work undertaken with officers and partners producing a set of actions and list of aspirations and challenges.

It was recognised that the strategy itself was key but that the action plan was even more important and this could be held to account by scrutiny.

Achievements Since Carers Strategy 2015 – Members heard about what changes had been made and what achievements had taken place since the previous Carers Strategy was launched in 2015. It was highlighted that the number of carers identified had increased since this time and further work had taken place with inclusive groups in creating a clearer profile. Members were also told how further work had been undertaken with the carers service and one stop shop to ensure they had better information and advice available so that carers felt better prepared. It was also noted that effective working was taking place with carers around establishing next steps.

It was added that during the pandemic there had been advances made in primary care where GPs had been required to identify carers for vaccinations.

It was acknowledged that the previous strategy had provided some helpful steps but that more that could be done.

What Success Will Look Like In The New Strategy - It was considered that the most direct way to judge success was by identifying a greater number of carers who would express a higher level of satisfaction. It was commented how at the sharper end perspective of carer breakdown could often be more avoidable when they enter a crisis.

It had been highlighted from carers that the new strategy should be meaningful (and progress measured effectively). It was considered that it was very important that the Panel itself holds the strategy and its action plan to account. Members were informed that there was a bi-annual Department of Health and Adult Social Care survey that used a structured set of questions to help track progress of the strategy.

Members were informed that partners of the Health and Wellbeing Board had signed up to the Carers Charter which would act as another

mechanism linking Health and Social Care and other services. It was noted that the board would want to hear those stories and take challenges to other health partners.

Person Centred Approach – It was acknowledged that carers should be at the centre of the strategy and that the priorities described by carers as being the most important formed part of it. It was recognised that there was still a great deal of work to be undertaken, particularly around the person being at the centre of the actions and that work being undertaken focused on people’s own lived experiences.

Delivery of the Strategy – There was a brief discussion in terms of whether the strategy could be adequately resourced and supported in its delivery. It was explained that it was about listening to people in the right way and changing what was done from a professional perspective so it became more about the person at the centre. It was stated that the authority would need to see what funds became available to see what difference could be made. It was clarified that the Carers Strategic Lead was a permanent post.

Information For Carers and Understanding Carers Rights - it was explained that a key part of the strategy was about raising awareness, making sure information was available in the right places as well as helping carers be identified and be heard. It was acknowledged that there was an emotional context to carer’s rights and that a great deal of work had been undertaken across organisations within the Borough to make them feel more valued.

Members also heard about national organisations such as Carers UK and recognition of National Carers Rights Day. Reference was made to how we work with national organisations so their approaches were as visible in Doncaster as they may be in other places.

Monitoring the Strategy and Action Plan – Members were informed that the strategy and action plan would be held to account through the partnership with the involvement of carers and the lead Cabinet Members. It was explained how there would be sight on the action plan through the Carers Group (Co-Chaired by the Cabinet Member of Adult Social Care and a carer) and this would connect with other areas of governance and with relevant partners. It was reported that the Health and Wellbeing Board would also receive updates as part of its own workplan.

The Panel was pleased to hear about the planned activities taking place to finalise the strategy prior to its launch in April 2022. In particular, it was recognised that the action plan would be essential in bringing the strategy to life and provide tangible benefits to carers.

Young Carers – It was acknowledged that there were already well-established actions around young carers. This was identified as an

	<p>area that required further work including the development of a profile and it was recognised that there were likely to be other groups of carers as well.</p> <p>Financial Support – The Chair provided feedback from the Panels meeting with carers, which included comments around there being a lack of financial support in place. In particular, it was felt that more clarity was needed on what financial support was available to those who have contributed to policy development such as claiming expenses.</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for the hard work that had been undertaken to reach the point they were at now. It was noted that a briefing be held in a couple of months to talk about different parts of strategy. It was also offered that the Panel have sight of the final strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Resolved: That the Panel supported the draft priorities of the All Age Carers Strategy and asked that the following recommendations be considered;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Panel has sight of the final strategy and accompanying action plan opportunity before its launch in April 2022. 2. That the strategy and action plan returns to the Panel in 12 months, as part of its 2022/23 workplan, with an update on progress made against priorities. 3. That carers are provided with clearer information around the financial support available to them, particularly, when involved in policy development with the Council. 	
20	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Senior Governance Officer presented the latest Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan for the 2021/2022 municipal year and forward plan.</p> <p>Resolved: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the updated Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan for 2021/2022 be noted; and 2. That the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted. 3. The Panel be provided with a briefing on the decision of 'Refresh of the Get Doncaster Moving physical activity and Sport Strategy'. 	