

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 25 November 2015

### ADULT SOCIAL CARE

#### Staying Put Agency

1. Social Care's Staying Put Agency is an advice and repair service enabling older, vulnerable and disabled people to stay in their own home. The Agency is Middlesbrough's home improvement agency and was established in 1991. The Agency will give advice on repairs, improvements or adaptations to your home and will provide information about financial assistance and can offer practical help to investigate other sources of funding.
2. The Agency commissioned the Middlesbrough Mobile Adapt and Mend Service (MMAMS) handyperson scheme which offers essential minor repairs and minor adaptations which can include minor plumbing and joinery repairs, grab rails, stair rails, half steps and clearing guttering. The Agency also supports vulnerable people by taking the worry of organising house repairs, adaptations or improvements through their Private Works service. Part of the Agency's role is to ensure that vulnerable, disabled and older owner occupiers are not forced in to going to other unqualified "cowboy builders" who will carry out sub-standard and unnecessary work. We work in partnership with Cleveland Police and Trading Standards to try and eliminate this.
3. As well as providing these services the Agency has a solid track record in accessing external grant funding to extend their ability to provide support. The Agency has recently been successful in bids to the following two funds:
  - a. **Warm and Healthy Homes Fund (National Energy Action (NEA) £25,000)** – this funding will enable the Agency to continue to work with those most vulnerable, suffering with ill health due to the lack of affordable warmth in their home. The Agency will focus on working with vulnerable people who are being discharged from hospital or care settings to their own home. Successful applicants to the fund, will benefit from a range of small measures to complement other planned energy efficiency provision, home improvements or adaptations to help them stay warm and safe at home. Funding is available until March 2017.
  - b. **Warm at Home Service Fund (Foundations Independent Living Fund (FILF) £5,000)** – this funding will be used to fund works which make the homes of vulnerable persons more energy efficient and therefore make it easier to keep warm. Eligible applicants will be able to apply for financial assistance to fund draft proofing, insulation work and boiler repairs. Funding is available until March 2016.

## **Better Care Fund/Single Point of Access**

4. Confirmation has now been received from the Department of Health that the Better Care Fund will be continued into the 2016/17 financial year. The notification from the DoH suggests that further detail on changes to the existing framework of the fund will not be forthcoming until after the outcome of the Spending Review in late November. In the mean-time work continues on the projects within the existing scheme, in particular work on the Single Point of Access is picking up pace with much of the mapping work on the services to be included within the SPA now complete or nearing completion.

## **Well-being, Care and Learning Transformation Board**

5. The work of the Transformation Programme, our Care Act 2014 consolidation work and our work on achieving the 2016/17 and 2017/18 cost reduction targets have now coalesced into a single programme that will bring about the positive transformation of our Social Care service and deliver the savings that are required.
6. In responding to the enormous challenge, in particular of the 2017/18 savings targets, this programme will necessarily take us far beyond the relatively small scale efficiency savings that can be found in our existing structure and into a much more fundamental re-engineering of the Social Care offer. We will be required not only to re-structure the department but also to re-frame the relationship between our department, the individuals who are our customers and their communities.
7. Historically, social care legislation has pushed us towards a focus on the things that our vulnerable customers have been unable to do with services being commissioned to fill the “gaps”; in line with our the Care Act 2014 our “new conversation” with our customers will focus much more on how we build on the strengths and resources that individuals have, or have around them in their communities, in order to meet their needs or aspirations. Our work will take us beyond working with individuals to meet needs and once again into the arena of community development and working with the voluntary and independent sector to shape and build local services, to develop resilience and resources within our community. While the present financial imperative would alone make this work necessary, it is also in absolute harmony with our statutory duties under the Care Act 2014.

## **ADULT HEALTH**

### **Food Hygiene Convictions**

8. Environmental Health Officers work with food business in Middlesbrough to ensure they operate clean and hygienic premises. 96% of food businesses in Middlesbrough have gained 3 or more in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. Enforcement action may be taken when the conditions in a premises are found to be a risk to public health. It is rare that enforcement action such as closing a food business is taken, however this is done to ensure that health is protected and to give consumers confidence in the premises where they are buying their food.

9. Two premises in Middlesbrough have recently been prosecuted for food hygiene offences relating to hygiene, pests and the management of their business. Both owners pleaded guilty and ordered to pay fines and costs. Both premises were inspected in March 2015 and were required to close immediately.
10. Food Hygiene Ratings are published on the Food Standard Agency's website and the public are regularly reminded to check out the hygiene ratings for food businesses before they eat.

### **Estates Excellence and Extra Life (EEEL)**

11. The Estates Excellence & Extra Life (EE&EL) programme offers businesses free support and the tools needed to drive up health and safety standards and achieve improvement in employee health and wellbeing. It is being delivered jointly by the Public Protection and Health Improvement Services in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive, Cleveland Fire Authority, Middlesbrough College and other organisations and businesses in Middlesbrough.
12. The EEEL programme is focussing on the businesses on the Riverside Industrial estate and parts of the adjoining Middlehaven area. More than 50 businesses have signed up to take part in the initiative and will be receiving an advice / assessment visit to help them identify where further support is needed to help improve workplace safety and employee wellbeing. A range of workshops and activities are being organised, including first aid awareness, risk management, workplace transport safety, occupational health assessments, fire safety and much more.

### **Local Conman Jailed for Two Years for a Pyramid-Selling Scam**

13. A joint investigation by the National Trading Standards Scambuster Team and Middlesbrough Council Trading Standards Service has resulted in a successful prosecution of a Middlesbrough based internet conman. He was jailed for two years for operating a pyramid selling scheme which tricked and coerced victims out of thousands of pounds over a number of years. The 33-year-old operated schemes which promised significant earnings to customers – who paid a small fee to join – before being pressured to introduce others to the plot. People through the UK and as far afield as Hungary, signed up to the Scheme.
14. He produced training videos, filmed in large affluent properties which he portrayed as his own home. They were designed to mislead people into believing the alleged wealth that could be made by joining his scheme.
15. He was found guilty on eight offences and when sentencing him to a total of two years, Recorder Sarah Dodd said that he had operated a business 'built on nothing but lies and deceit' and had shown little remorse for his victims.

### **Keeping the Public Safe – Ensuring the Safe Sale of Fireworks**

16. Trading Standards Officers are responsible for issuing licences, carrying out inspections and operations to ensure that the firework period passes safely. This year they have issued 21 explosive storage licences to retailers and carried out inspections to ensure that the fireworks are stored safely and that they comply with relevant safety standards. Officers have also carried out test purchasing operations

with young volunteers (under the age of 18) to ensure that underage sales are not being made from retail premises.

17. Every year Trading Standards Officers operate a Firework's Hotline to encourage the public to report illegal sales of fireworks. They have also taken part in the multi-agency Operation Autumnus taskforce to tackle firework and bonfire nuisance in Middlesbrough, and officers have provided briefings to agencies to help with this.

### **Raising Awareness about the safety of Children's Halloween Costumes: Scary but Safe Campaign**

18. Trading Standards have participated in a national publicity campaign called "Scary but Safe" to keep children safe this Halloween. The campaign was promoting 4 key "SAFEty" messages to ensure that children are kept safe:
  - See that the costume fits properly to avoid trips and falls
  - Always check costumes for a CE mark, instructions and safety information
  - Flames should be kept away from the child and costume, or use LED lights
  - Ensure any masks or hoods don't stop the child from seeing, or breathing
19. In particular, Trading Standards Officers promoted the use of LED lights in pumpkins to prevent fire. This national campaign has been published in the press, on websites, on the Middlesbrough Trading Standards Facebook page and through leaflets distributed to the community hubs.

### **Dog Chipping Day**

20. In October the Animal Welfare team hosted a microchipping event in partnership with Dogs Trust at Langridge Initiative Centre in Berwick Hills. At the event dog owners had an opportunity to have their dogs microchipped and get a basic health check for free. Free or low-cost neutering vouchers were also offered to qualifying owners. The day was a great success with around 70 dogs given a health check and microchipped. Two VIP's from Dogs Trust headquarters in London also came to the event, to learn about our work locally.

### **Strengthened Anti-Eviction Powers**

21. New rules have now come into force to protect tenants from retaliatory eviction - when a landlord evicts a tenant because they complain to their local authority about conditions in their premises. The new eviction rule prohibits landlords from evicting tenants after a legal notice has been served on them by their local authority to remedy disrepair. The move follows concerns that some landlords were using the threat of eviction to dissuade tenants from complaining to their local council, or actually evicting them after receiving a notice because it was cheaper than carrying out the repairs. Another new rule prevents the commencement of eviction proceedings within four months of starting a tenancy.

**Councillor Julia Rostron**  
**Executive Member for Adult Health & Social Care**