

SOCIAL CARE AND ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES IN MIDDLESBROUGH

THE REVIEW

The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to consider how the government's policy of making the shift to preventative services in Social Care was being delivered in Middlesbrough.

The government wants to see social care move towards prevention and early intervention. They go so far as to say that there is an expectation that by 2011 councils will have used the Social Care Reform Grant to have made significant steps towards redesign and reshaping of their adult social care systems.

In Middlesbrough, the panel learnt that significant progress had been made by the Council and its partners to ensure that universal services are able to deliver their primary prevention responsibilities. Improvements that had been identified through groups such as the Senior Citizens Forum and the Physical Disability Forum. The Older People's Strategy set out a 10-year plan for improving universal services relevant to the needs of older people.

The panel learnt that early intervention services were well developed in Middlesbrough and were already showing improved outcomes for people. For example Telecare and the provision of equipment and adaptations had reduced the number of avoidable hospital admissions and the number of people who required residential care.

There were some areas for consideration such as increasing the provision of low-level primary prevention services such as good neighbour schemes, which would need a delivery plan and which could involve the VCS, neighbourhood managers and community development staff as key partners.

CONCLUSION

Based on evidence given throughout the investigation the Panel concluded:

- a) That the definition of preventative services can be difficult to understand however the panel acknowledged that there was a need to ensure that people were able to improve their well being and keep their independence for as long as possible.
- b) Preventative services do play an important part in ensuring that older people can maintain or improve their health and wellbeing and that it was important to continue to seek older people's views on the services that they need.
- c) One of the biggest challenges facing the Social Care Department was in trying to identify those people who may benefit from services. The panel recognised that this could be improved by ensuring that people are able to access readily available information about services and support that they could receive.

- d) Increased demand in future years will mean that the Council and the VCS will have to increase their capacity to provide low level preventative services. The panel acknowledged that significant progress had been made by the Council in order to ensure that universal services had been able to deliver their primary prevention responsibilities and that early intervention services were well developed. Where Middlesbrough would benefit would be from an increase in the number of preventative services. The VCS had a large part to play not only in the provision of services but that they were ideally placed to identify where there was a need and also any gaps in provision.
- e) The panel was interested in the use of the Social Care Reform Grant as a fund for enabling the development of prevention and early intervention services in Middlesbrough. The panel was pleased to find out that the department had scored well in the self-assessment toolkit designed to ensure that councils were prepared for the transition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Social Care and Adult Services Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:

- a) That a joint plan be formulated between the Council's Social Care Department and Middlesbrough Primary Care Trust's Practice Based Commissioning Group to establish appropriate early intervention and preventative services, in consultation with relevant partners.
- b) That an audit should be undertaken of low level preventative services, with assistance from the VCS, in order to clearly identify the gaps in service, including the funding arrangements of existing provision.
- c) That the Social Care Department and the Primary Care Trust should undertake further joint work with the VCS with a view to supporting voluntary and community groups and creating additional opportunities for extending a range of activities centred on low level preventive services.
- d) It was considered important to continue to raise awareness and find ways of identifying a broader range of people with potential needs and pursue current activities such as screening, publicity events and publication of a range of information
- e) That the department provides an update on the expenditure of the Social Care Reform Grant and that this be provided alongside an overall update to the panel in 12 months time.