

Briefing Paper for Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Outreach Workers for Older People

1. In January 2009 Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered whether to commission a scrutiny report on the funding of community outreach workers for older people.
2. It was agreed that the topic would not be pursued at that stage, but that the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services (HASS) would provide a report to the committee later in the year detailing the outcome of discussions with stakeholders, representative agencies and providers about the commissioning of services that would support the broad outcomes of ensuring effective community support.
3. Between 2008 and 2009 Housing and Adult Social Services led a joint commissioning project with the Primary Care Trust, to develop services to help support older people to live healthier and more independent lives for longer within the City.
4. The project was undertaken jointly, between the PCT the Council and the local practice based commissioning consortium, York Health Group, with input from local voluntary organisations and from representatives of older people from the York Older People's Assembly.
5. In May 2008 a consultation exercise, supported by voluntary organisations, produced over 700 replies to a questionnaire, which included questions, about what services should be more widely available for older people to be helped to live more independently.
6. Over three quarters of respondents thought that handyperson services (72%), one point of contact to get information about what help / advice / activities are available (68%), a footcare / toenail cutting service (67%) are the most important to make more widely available.
7. Practical help with shopping and gardening and support for those living with dementia were the next most popular responses, with 60% of respondents identifying each of these areas.
8. 49% wanted to see more schemes to visit people in their own home or to help them to be more involved in activities outside the home. 39% wanted to see more local programmes of social activities for older people and 31% wanted to see more sport and physical activities for older people.
9. As a result of the survey it was agreed that the joint commissioning project would focus initially on the top three priorities, and during 2009 the project team developed specifications and plans to deliver these priorities.

10. Two have already been addressed, with the commissioning of a handypersons scheme, provided by Yorkshire Housing, through the Supporting People programme, and the commissioning of an advice and signposting service for older people and their families, provided by Age Concern.
11. Both services started operating in March/April 2009. Both are city wide services, rather than locality focused, to ensure that access is available wherever someone lives. Both services have now been operating for about 6 months and contract monitoring reports indicate that they are delivering well on the objectives and outcomes set within the contracts.
12. The advice and signposting service (First Call Fifty+) has received 220 enquiries in the first 6 months, resulting in nearly 500 referrals on for support and advice. Early indications from customer satisfaction surveys indicate that 92% of people using the service were satisfied and felt they had benefited from the service, 1% were not satisfied and 6 % did not say.
13. In this first six months there were eight enquiries, which resulted in referrals on for either emotional support/mental health issues and 37 to voluntary or community groups, and there were no unmet needs identified in respect of these issues. This would suggest that there is not currently a gap in support available in these areas.
14. It needs to be noted that Age Concern report that they were successful in securing a one year grant from HBOS which has enabled them to provide a 'Befriending Plus' service. This has provided support to 27 people since April 2009, to help people increase their level of social contact, on a more intensive basis than their usual befriending service.
15. The highest demand to the new signposting service is for help with repairs and home maintenance (76 enquiries). The new handypersons scheme has been in high demand, with referrals both from the signposting service and from other sources. There have been some delays in responding to do the work as a result of this. 185 people used the service in the first quarter and 186 in the second quarter. No customer satisfaction surveys have yet been undertaken.
16. A third new service should be operating by the end of this year, offering an affordable toenail cutting and footcare service as a social enterprise.
17. Alongside the commissioning of new services a new role of Community Facilitator has been developed within HASS. Three posts have been funded through the transforming social care grant to work with community groups and with service users to enable better access to community activities for vulnerable people.

18. The work of these posts has included supporting the development of older people's groups, including helping groups access exercise sessions and danceability classes
19. They have also worked with individuals, signposting and linking them to support, and intend to be developing this further to reach more people in the future.

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