

Full Council - Wednesday, 27 February 2019

Written question from Cllr Whitehouse to the Leader, Isle of Wight Council

What progress has been made in improving adult social care and children's social services since he became Leader of the Council; and what plans has he for further improvements in these most important areas of engagement?

Response

Since becoming Leader of the Council in 2017, we have made significant progress in improving adult social care and children's social services. In respect of Children's Services this progress has been validated by our recent inspection by Ofsted. Ofsted has rated our Isle of Wight children's social care as good across all aspects of the service. Ofsted said, and I quote: 'Highly skilled, ambitious senior leaders have a clear, shared vision and an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the service. Together with political leaders, they have responded well to growing demands, creating a stable and permanent workforce.'

Ofsted inspectors reported, and again quote; 'Political leaders are engaged with, and visible to, children and staff. They have a good understanding of the service and have secured significant financial investment. This increased understanding has ensured more vigorous scrutiny and challenge and a greater focus across the council on meeting the needs of vulnerable children.'

Ofsted helpfully identified several areas for further improvement – as they always do, and indeed should do. Ofsted recommended that children's services and housing work together to ensure that there is enough suitable housing to meet the needs of all of our care leavers who wish or need to live on the island. We are already out to tender for more supported accommodation creating a 'pathways to independent adulthood' offer locally, that is attracting interest nationally. Our plans for further improvements in children's social care include, incorporating children's mental health specialists into our social care service to work directly with children to make an immediate difference. We are also delivering a new marketing campaign to recruit more local foster carers for Island children.

The outcome of the Ofsted inspection, and these examples of further improvements, underscore my ambition as Leader of the Council, to provide the very best services to vulnerable children and families on the Island.

My ambition is no less for how we ensure that the island's elders, disabled adults and their carers live fulfilling, independent lives and I am pleased to be able to point towards a number of key achievements delivered as a consequence of our Care Close to Home Strategy. I would add that the achievements of our adult social care services are increasingly recognised at the national level.

By way of background, over 3.7% of our residents are aged over 85 (compared with 2.4% nationally) and these numbers will increase by 20.4% between 2017-2020. With 5,300 people employed in social care, the largest single employment sector on the island, only 65% of our care services across the island are rated as good or outstanding (compared with 80% nationally). Added to that, adult social care (prior to

2017/18) had overspent for many years – and I do acknowledge the very significant funding pressures affecting adult social care up and down the country – including here.

Via Care Close to Home we have successfully turned these challenges into opportunities via innovation and radical change, transforming outcomes for those we serve as well as delivering much improved financial sustainability. Specific improvements between the 1 April 2017 and the 31st December 2018 include:

- a 58% reduction in the rate of permanent admissions into residential care amongst elders;
- a 80% reduction in the rate of permanent admissions into residential care amongst working age adults;
- a 55% reduction in delayed transfers of care attributable to social care – and now written up as an exemplar of best practice in partnership working to reduce DTOCs by the Local Government Association;
- 203 Personal Assistants registered with our PA Hub introduced in 2017 enabling people with DPs and PAs to match their needs and preferences, with the commensurate increase in the numbers of people choosing to employ PAs; and
- Over 66% of all people going through our reablement services needing no ongoing care and support

I especially want to point towards the success of the Living Well Service that we have commissioned as part of Care Close to Home. As part of our early help offer, we have funded a consortium of voluntary organisations to come together to provide care and support for people not eligible for adult social care. The scheme has been tremendously successful and I wish to pay tribute to leaders in the voluntary and community sector such as Jo Dare (Age UK IoW) , Lizzie Martin (Carers IoW) and Terri Baker (People Matter). In its first year, over 1700 referrals were made to the Living Well Service – but only 48 people were subsequently re-referred to adult social care. In addition, nearly half of the people who received support from Living Well stated that, without it, they would have gone to their GP or the hospital – so not only is the scheme supporting adult social care, but it is also supporting our local NHS.

In terms of further improvements to our adult social care services, we can expect the island's very first extra care facility to open its doors in early 2020. This will provide 75 units of accommodation for elderly people with onsite care and support. Having worked with the Institute of Public Care for the last 12 months, we will be introducing new commissioning arrangements for domiciliary care. We are also working closely with our IoW NHS Trust colleagues to introduce an Integrated Complex Discharge Team in order to ensure that all patients leave hospital as and when they should and, equally as important, go home whenever and wherever possible. We will be expanding our Shared Lives scheme to see how our shared lives carers might also support people leaving hospital whilst they recuperate and we are introducing "smart kits" for people, using digital technology to support independence, reduce the risk of falls and reduce social isolation.

So as you can see, across children's and adult services – a huge amount has been achieved in transforming the quality of lives of our most vulnerable citizens. But my administration has only just got started.