

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE COUNCILLOR MUSTAFA DESAI

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTORS:
KATHERINE WHITE (ADULT SOCIAL CARE & PREVENTION)**

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Funding to support local people improve their employability

Since July 2020, the Neighbourhoods, Wellbeing and Prevention Service has delivered the More Positive Together (MPT) project for Blackburn with Darwen as part of a Lancashire-wide project in partnership with Active Lancashire. The MPT project provides local people with one-to-one support to help boost their confidence, improve their skills and wellbeing and to help them to move closer to employment. Residents from some of the most deprived areas and with challenging life circumstances have been supported to access training, work placements and employment opportunities, with some excellent outcomes. Listen to Raheem tell his story via video: <https://theshuttle.org.uk/more-funding-to-support-unemployed-people-back-into-work/>

The MPT project, funded by the European Social Fund, has secured a further two years of funding along with additional funding for the MPT Steps project which aims to support people who have become unemployed during to the pandemic.

The Adult Learning Service remains 'Good' - as judged by Ofsted

The Adult Learning team was inspected by Ofsted in November 2021 and retained its 'Good' rating for the fourth time. The Inspectors highlighted the great work carried out since the last inspection, including addressing all actions taken to resolve the previous areas for improvement. The service was also commended for its Long Covid peer support course, set up in response to local need.

Throughout the pandemic the service has continued to adapt and flex, incorporating a new remote offer to ensure learners were supported both online and in person. Maintaining a 'Good' Ofsted rating can be difficult as the framework and standards evolve, but to do it after such a period of uncertainty was particularly pleasing.

The service offers a range of accredited and non-accredited short courses, funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Each year, the service helps around 2,700 people complete courses and benefit from the holistic approach to developing the skills and behaviours needed to increase their employability, improve family life, and improve health and wellbeing.

Courses focus on employability, health and wellbeing, ICT and digital, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and family learning.

The inspection report included: 'Learners are motivated to achieve their goals and improve their lives. They enjoy their programmes and are proud of the progress they make.'

The service will use the findings outlined in the Ofsted report to identify further opportunities to build on the 'Good' rating and continue to develop the offer to ensure residents are given the support they need.

Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care, including Specialist Services (Learning Disability & Autism, Mental Health, Emergency Duty Team and Safeguarding) have seen an increased demand in terms of referrals into services. Safeguarding Adults, Applications to the Court of Protection, Corporate Appointee and requests for statutory Social Care assessments have all seen increases in activity. Where possible, the teams connect residents to local neighbourhood and prevention services alongside commissioning formal packages of care.

Our recently submitted Annual Safeguarding Adults Board report highlights that compared to last year, there has been a significant increase in safeguarding adult concerns received by the duty team. It is felt that this is in some part as a result of the impact of the Pandemic both in terms of population health and wellbeing and also increased awareness and reporting as restrictions are eased. The response to this increase has included additional activity, oversight and monitoring by social workers, professionals and wider carers. Adult Safeguarding is the responsibility of us all and the increased demand has required a collaborative response from across the adult social care teams who have ensured that our statutory responsibilities are met and vulnerable adults are protected from harm.

Social workers continue to be key members of the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INT) and support the development and maintenance of positive working relationships with practitioners from across the whole of the Health, Care and the Community sector. The INTs ensure the provision and coordination of health, social care and community support to individuals. Increasing numbers of referrals into the INTs demonstrate the confidence that people have in this being a pathway to achieving positive outcomes for individuals and their families. People's needs are addressed through strength and asset based approaches to social care assessment. Collaborative working between Community Connectors and the Adult Social Care teams has seen better outcomes for individual service users and increased signposting to community assets. In terms of statutory care and support, increased review activity has positively contributed to both promoting independence and resource management, ensuring the right support at the right time for our most vulnerable residents.

Our new Intermediate Care facility at Albion Mill opened its doors to residents during January this year. This followed on from the opening of the Extra Care part of the scheme on 29th November 2021. We have seen a good take up of the Extra Care apartments with new people moving in on an ongoing basis. Although opening with a phased approach, our Intermediate Care service has already successfully supported a number of residents through their rehab programme and seen them return home with greater independence. Additionally, the Community Hub within the scheme is already busy and hosting a variety of activities both for residents of the scheme and the wider neighbourhood. There are several organisations providing services from within Albion Mill and all are working collaboratively to

address any difficulties associated with the opening of such a big scheme and to provide the best possible care and support to residents.

Strategic Commissioning & Finance

Significant demands on the Care Sector continued throughout the winter months, in part due to rising Covid cases associated with the omicron variant. The number of large outbreaks in care homes and across our care providers increased significantly during December and January with almost all our homes facing an outbreak of scale during this time. Our Care Providers have consistently adhered to infection, prevention and control measures to manage outbreaks of Covid whilst the Care Sector Response Group continues to provide support, advice and daily reports. The Covid situation is now consistently improving across the sector as we see more of our providers move out of outbreak status. That said, the market remains fragile as some providers are struggling to return to previous occupancy levels and some are struggling to recruit a full care workforce. The Commissioning and Finance team are working closely with all providers across the sector to finalise the provider fee levels for 2022/23.

A new Market Sustainability and Fair Funding Grant has been allocated to Councils for 2022/23 which is intended to fund activity to:

- conduct a fair cost of care exercise to determine the sustainable rates for care and identify how close the Council are to these sustainable rates;
- engage with our providers to improve data on operational costs and the number of self-funders to better understand the impact of social care reform on the local market.

Changing Future Programme

The Changing Futures programme, led by Blackburn with Darwen Council on behalf of the county region has started in earnest. Pennine is the first sub region of Lancashire to begin working with clients, with 50 referrals received in the first 4 weeks from people suffering multiple disadvantage i.e. homelessness, substance misuse, poor mental health, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system. Once a referral is received it will be discussed by the team who meet daily to review new referrals. Where a referral is accepted the case is allocated to a Lived Experience worker. Where a referral is not accepted the case will be signposted to an appropriate service to meet the identified needs. The Lived Experience worker supports the individual through their support journey, navigating them through the array of services we have available. With a single plan built with the individual and bespoke to their needs, we can already see the positive effect on some of our most vulnerable resident's lives. The programme is proving particularly effective alongside our homelessness provision as we maintain our offer of accommodation to all, to include the council run homelessness prevention pods.

