

REPORT OF THE Executive Member for Adults Social Care & Health

COUNCILLOR Jackie Floyd

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director
of Adults and Health
Thursday 14th March 2024**

Build happier, healthier and safer communities

Jobs & Skills Fair 2024

In 2023, the Adult Learning and Employment Support services planned and delivered two successful recruitment events. They continue to work with DWP, local employers and other education and skills providers following the success of the Jobs & Skills Fair last year.

This year's Jobs & Skills Fair took place on Wednesday 28th February at King George's Hall with over 800 local residents attending. A wide range of employers were present throughout the day, showcasing current vacancies alongside a series of workshops designed to help people understand how to apply for jobs, create a good quality CV, acquire interview skills, and access a range of other employability and employment-related topics. In addition, a business networking session was held to connect local businesses, share valuable insights and receive updates on industry developments.

Dementia Friends and Adult Learning

Over the past few years, our Adult Learning team has been working hard to help create a dementia-friendly Borough by delivering 'Dementia Friends' training – which aims to change people's perception of dementia and transform the way we think, act, and talk about the condition. Training has been delivered to staff, members of the public, the fire service, The Mall staff, and elected members. The team have recently hit the milestone of training over 1,000 'Dementia Friends' for Blackburn with Darwen.

A new Dementia Strategy, developed in partnership across Lancashire and South Cumbria, has been supported by the BwD Place Based Board and is due for sign off by mid March. Once agreed, the BwD Age Well Partnership, supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board, will lead on the development of a local implementation plan which will assure the practical application of the strategy and subsequent improvements in the experience of our residents and carers.

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and Specialist Services

Collaborative working and joined up recruitment has helped enable our Social Care teams to provide a more integrated and holistic offer to our residents who experience care and support needs. This is aligned to our overarching Target Operating Model and includes:

- The Mental Health Team continue to influence and support the Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust (LSCFT) Mental Health transformation programme.
- An Advanced Practitioner for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has been appointed to support the transitions pathway from Childrens Services to Adult Services.
- Briefing sessions on the emerging themes from the Neighbourhood Review are ongoing, designed to help us to Refocus, Refresh, Reconnect and Re-energise our neighbourhoods.

- The Independent Living Service are leading the upgrade of all telecare equipment from analogue to digital. This infrastructure upgrade is an opportunity to improve technology enabled care within Blackburn with Darwen (BwD).

To facilitate 'growing our own' Social Work workforce, events such as the Apprentice Evening, 22nd February 2024, and internal Apprentice information session, 29th February 2024 have allowed for information to be shared directly with potential candidates considering beginning their social work career in Blackburn with Darwen Council. These events have been well attended and applications are now being received for the corporate social work apprenticeship. The social work degree apprenticeship offers an excellent opportunity to those wishing to enter the profession and forms part of our departmental workforce planning.

Our Learning Disability teams have also been involved in awareness raising events and training sessions to support their work. This includes:

- The Learning Disability Team supported the Disability Day event at King George's Hall on 27th February with the aim of showcasing the teams activities and support available to individuals with a Learning Disability in the borough. This annual event hosted by 'Parents in Partnership' in conjunction with the council included information, advice and a marketplace for individuals, their families and carers. Similarly, the Learning Disability Team continue to attend events at schools to promote understanding of the support available for young people after the age of 18 and in their preparation for adulthood and transition to adults services.
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Safeguarding

Partner agencies are fully engaged in our BwD place based Safeguarding Adults Board, alongside the 4 sub-groups ('Lead'; 'Promote'; 'Workforce; and 'Strategic Safeguarding Adult Review') developed to assure and continuously improve our Safeguarding offer. In addition to the Local Authority, our Partners include the Police, the Community and Acute Hospital Health Trusts, the Mental Health Trust, VCFSE agencies and the Integrated Care Board. The Safeguarding Accountability Panel was held on 1st February 2024 and discussed safeguarding activity, the work undertaken by the sub-groups to date and the action plan for the upcoming year.

Adult Care Provider Fees

A full review of all adult care provider fees is undertaken annually to ensure we set sustainable rates for the care we commission. The department has engaged and consulted with providers in respect of the fee setting process. The proposed fees have considered and recognised the cost of inflation on food & utilities, National Living Wage and the Real Living Wage, as well as the wider challenges within our local care market and requirement to move towards a Fair Cost of Care following the completion of Market Sustainability plans. These factors have been considered alongside the issue of affordability and the 2024/25 provider uplifts have been recommended in line with the current Medium Term Financial Plan detailed at Finance Council in Feb 2024.

Client charges have also been reviewed and recommended for the financial year 2024/25.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance Preparations and Business Planning

The Performance Team continue to lead on our preparations for CQC inspection. This work is currently focused on collating the evidence required for CQC's Information Return which will be requested on notification of their inspection visit. An externally facilitated engagement session was held in January 2024, for both staff and Partners. This generated positive feedback, areas for improvement and several case studies examples showcasing good practice. Additionally, we have reviewed our peer challenge action plan and undertaken a self-assessment evaluation in order to incorporate the above feedback and embed learning within our preparedness activity.

Commissioning Plans and Care Sector Quality

Work has been completed with the support and oversight of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide assurance in relation to quality monitoring across the care sector. This work has included site visits by Councillors and officers to care homes across the Borough. Feedback and learning from these visits has been incorporated into the work of the team.

Work to further develop our strategic commissioning plans is well underway and aligned to our Target Operating Model, will ensure that we're able to provide services that help keep people well, provide short term services to aid recovery and provide longer term support for those assessed as having formal care needs. Whilst initial work is focused on Council commissions, inter-dependencies with health commissioned services has been recognised and our plans will be extended to become integrated Health and Social Care commissioning plans as the Integrated Care Board continues to develop. A significant part of this work will enable the Council to commission services which deliver the right outcomes for our population whilst also delivering value for money and efficiencies where possible.