

Sunderland North Area Committee – 5th June 2008

HEALTH, HOUSING & ADULT SERVICES

RESIDENTS SURVEY - FUTURE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE 2007

Report by Performance & Information Manager (Health, Housing & Adult Services)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the results of a Residents Survey about the future of adult social care for 2007 which was undertaken as part of the Council's planning in responding to the Government White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say", specifically the development of the Council's 15 Year Commissioning Framework for adult social care and its 3 Year Delivery Plan.
- 1.2 This report also explains how the Council will use this information, and what will be its follow-on actions to provide a more localised engagement with residents about their needs and preferences – to inform planning for adult social care at a local level.

2. Background

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, the Council has published a draft 15-Year Commissioning Framework for adult social care, based on the White Paper's principles, which includes 5 aims to improve not just "traditional" social care, but to develop citywide solutions tailored around the needs and preferences in terms of outcomes for individuals, including exercising their rights as citizens. These aims are: Independent Living; Choice & Control; Improving Health & Well-Being; Equal Access for All; Better Commissioning. There is a direct link between the Framework and the priorities identified in the Local Area Agreement and Sunderland Strategy.
- 2.2 Adult Services works with customers and carers to assess needs and risks to individuals, and has a strong engagement with customers/carers and representative groups to inform strategic planning to build around individuals' needs. Examples include the development of the Member-led multi-agency Adult Social Care Partnership Board which advises on social care policy and the multi-agency Learning Disabilities Partnership Board, which includes membership of those with disabilities, to advise more specifically on policies affecting their lives. The Council also has specific groups engaged to improve individual services, e.g. the Intermediate Care Customer Group, Tele-care Services etc.
- 2.3 However, the plans of the Council are ambitious and long-term, and, as such, it will be important to consider the needs of people that are not yet customers of the Directorate, but either might have some difficulties currently (e.g. relating to poor health) or might need some help in the future. This includes

individuals that have a caring role for a friend/relative or might have such a role in the future.

- 2.4 Such individuals' voices are not often heard – simply because individuals historically only become engaged with “traditional” adult social care when the need arises – often at a time of crisis.
- 2.5 This survey is the first step towards ensuring that not only does the Council listen and respond to the views of its current customers, but that it understands, plans and delivers on the needs of potential future customers and all residents of Sunderland about their emerging needs and aspirations. This will allow the Council to plan for the future over the medium- and long-term.

3. The Survey

- 3.1 The survey consisted of 57 questions and was sent out in 2007 to a statistically significant, random sample of 2,800 people taken from the Electoral Roll.
- 3.2 The questions were split into 4 distinct sections:
 - “About Your Life”, relating to the individuals current lifestyle and needs;
 - “Choices about Service”, related to people’s preferences about needs and services now and in the future;
 - “About You”, to gather varied demographic information such as the person’s age, ethnicity, financial background, etc. ;
 - An optional section for the person’s contact details, should they choose to provide it, if they were interested in further dialogue about their perception of current & future needs.
- 3.3 Other than the optional section, the Survey was completely anonymous, which meant that there is no breakdown by area available currently.

4. Responding to the Survey

- 4.1 The response rate to the Survey was relatively low, but this was anticipated to be the case, which is why the original sample size was so large. On the one hand, adult social care is often an area that most people do not consider until they need to – see above – so one might expect a low return rate. On the other hand, the Council clearly needs to do more to explain the need to plan for adult social care – what it might mean for individuals now and in the future. As Members will be aware, this is a national debate at the moment.
- 4.2 The majority of respondents were aged 16-64 (64%) however 55-64 was the most commonly identified age band, followed by 65-74, indicating a general higher concentration of middle and older aged people. The gender split was 65% female, 35% male, whilst the respondents were broadly representative of the black & ethnic minority community in the city.

- 4.3 Some 41% of respondents identified themselves and/or another in the household as having a life-limiting long term illness, health problem or disability, whilst around one-third of respondents said they provided some form of informal care to another person such as a relative, spouse, friend or other. Both these proportions are higher than their corresponding questions in the 2001 Census figures amongst the general population in the city.
- 4.4 Only 16% of respondents stated that they were already receiving adult social care, and this figure is somewhat higher than the number of people supported in the general population, but not significantly higher amongst those aged 55 and over.
- 4.5 All the above suggests that the Survey may not be fully representative of the entire population at the moment, but nonetheless stimulated the interest of a wider range of individuals, but particularly those that might become the “next generation” of people accessing adult social care, but that have some form of difficulties/caring role currently, but are not as yet engaged with the Directorate. This is a key group, alongside existing customers, to better understand their needs and preferences to plan for the future.

5. Summary of Findings

- 5.1 Detailed results for each question can be found in the Appendices. The following is a brief summary of the main findings of the survey, focussing on the questions about peoples views on adult social care.
- 5.2 Several questions in the survey related to receiving information, help and advice about adult social care (Part 2, questions 1-6, 10 & 14). Respondents said that they would prefer to find out information for themselves before involving the Council (Q1) but that they would be happy to receive the Council’s help if needed (Q’s 4-6). Generally speaking, people indicated that they view the Council as being a much-needed source of advice, help and support but that ultimately the choices and decisions should be made by themselves. These findings reflect peoples desire to have greater independence, more choice and increased control over their lives.
- 5.3 The following statement was posed – *“I would be more likely to remain in my own home for as long as possible if it were adapted to meet my needs or it had electronic devices installed to help with my day-to-day problems”* with 93% of respondents stating they were in overall agreement it. Questions 16, 25 and 26 posed similar statements relating to getting help in order to stay at home, and received similarly strong rates of agreement (all above 90%). This suggests that Council services such as providing household equipment, home adaptations and Telecare will be crucial in providing the means for people to maintain their independence.
- 5.4 When asked for a response to the following statement *“I would prefer the Council to give me the money to arrange my own care services, rather than the Council arrange them for me”*, 56% of respondents agreed, 34% neither agreed nor disagreed and the remaining 10% disagreed. This question is related to the national drive to increase the level of personalisation of care

solutions, including expanding the use of Individualised Budgets/Direct Payments schemes and shows that many people would prefer the greater freedom and independence they provide. However these solutions may not be for everyone, with other people still needing the Council's more direct support and care services.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The Survey is a starting point, but a number of the results, alongside the views of existing customers and representative groups, will be used to help shape delivery of the projects to transform adult social care over the next 3 years. For example, preferences about access to information/advice will influence development of the project delivering better access to adult social care for all residents and customers, e.g. issues about delivery of self-/supported- assessment.
- 6.2 The Council intends to work with both Community Spirit and respondents to the Survey that stated they would be interested in discussing the transformation of adult social care further at a more local level to determine more local preferences and requirements. For example, access issues might mean something different to individuals in Sunderland South than it does in the Sunderland North area.
- 6.3 All this information will form part of the Council and city's approach to better needs assessment of its population aimed at providing better planning around outcomes and reducing inequalities amongst the population, as well as to inform commissioning. This will also need to inform development and delivery of the Local Area Agreement.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.