

Sunderland Care and Support Ltd - Update

Report of Chief Operating Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sunderland Care and Support Ltd. was formed on the 1st of December 2013, as a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) which is 100% owned by Sunderland City Council.
- 1.2 Sunderland Care and Support is made up of two companies, a holding company and a subsidiary company (together referred to as the LATC). The purpose of the corporate group structure is:
- To ensure the arrangements are tax efficient from a VAT perspective
 - To enable the structure to be compliant with the Teckal tests for the procurement by the Council of care and support services from the LATC.
- 1.3 The reasons for choosing a LATC for care and support are:-
- Meet the Councils' strategic direction and objectives- Community Leadership Council
 - Financial Issues and efficiency saving
 - Sustainability of future arrangements
 - Increasing commercialisation of the Adult Social Care market presents a challenge to the financial viability of any in-house social provider services where they do not have the legal freedom to trade in services to individuals.
- 1.4 The objective of Sunderland Care and Support is
- 'To be a trusted provider of social and health care services that improve people's lives by delivering outstanding person centred services, contributing to the wider well-being of the communities in which we serve and by being excellent in safety and compliance'.*
- 1.5 Everything the company does is driven by the need to provide high quality services to people. The company seeks to provide benefit to communities it operates within and strives to listen to the people in those communities to understand better how we can support them. The strength and quality of the

services we provide are directly related to the strength and quality of our front-line colleagues and managers.

1.6 The company's aims are:-

- **Ensuring future sustainability of services** – Sunderland Care and Support will offer a flexible and adaptable approach which enables these important services to become more sustainable. The company will expand and sell provision to people with personal budgets and direct payments and generate income from other sources not accessible to the Council.
- **Promoting greater choice for customers** – Sunderland Care and Support will trade commercially with customers in a way which will enable customer led transformation and service re-design to facilitate greater customer choice and control through the use of personal budgets and direct payments and in line with market forces.
- **Improving performance and productivity** - Sunderland Care and Support will achieve improved performance in service delivery by providing the current services in a more flexible and commercial manner with reduced overheads and more efficient service delivery.
- **Involving the workforce** - Sunderland Care and Support will ensure its workforce is engaged in the work of the company in order to develop an entrepreneurial and customer focused culture, that rewards improved performance, drives productivity and job satisfaction.
- **Supporting the Council's vision to become a Community Leadership Council** - by developing an alternative model of providing Adult social care services within the resources available, ensuring the right outcomes are delivered for the city and its people.

2. Services Provided by Sunderland Care and Supported

Equipment and Prevention Service	Recovery at Home Service	Supported Living Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Improvement Agency • Community Equipment Service • Sunderland Telecare Technical Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmborough Court • Reablement and Telecare Response service • Intermediate Care Hub • Vilette Lodge Assessment Unit • Hillcrest Assessment Unit • Support Time and Recovery Workers • LD Outreach Team • Short Term Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MH Supported Living • LD Supported Living • Residential Care (LD) • Fulwell Community Wellbeing and Resource Centre • Washington Community Wellbeing Resource Centre • Grindon Mews Community Wellbeing Resource

	Team	Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Close Short Break Service • Grindon Lane Short Break Service • Doric View Short Break Service • Shared Lives Scheme
--	------	---

3. Achievements

- 3.1 Since the 1st of December 2013, Sunderland Care and Support has worked hard at establishing itself both corporately and financially so that, as a new organisation, the company is able to operate in an open and transparent way whilst providing high quality local services for local people.
- 3.2 Since its establishment, Sunderland Care and Support has continued to develop and seek ways to improve to ensure that all the services it provides are of an excellent quality.
- 3.3 Some key developments and success have included:-
- Delivered £ 4.5 million efficiency savings
 - Recruitment of over 160 new Care and Support staff
 - The development of a 64 place Apprenticeship scheme offering both Care and Business Administration placements
 - The winning of new business which has included:-
 - Grace House, Children's Short Break Service
 - Signing of a strategic partnership between Sunderland College and the company. This partnership has enabled the company to deliver a wide range of training and learning opportunities for all colleagues within the company.
 - All company policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated
 - The company each year supports local charities. Colleagues and customers throughout the year fundraise for these charities.
 - Won the Sunderland Echo Business Award 2014 for being 'The Employer of the Year', following nominations by the workforce
 - Seen a reduction in the number of days lost due to illness by 5 days on average per each employee

- High levels of customer satisfaction with services
- Becoming a key partner in the City of Sunderland Vanguard site. In 2014 the NHS invited individual organisations and partnerships to apply to become 'vanguard' sites for the new care models programme, one of the first steps towards delivering the NHS Five Year Forward View and supporting improvement and integration of services. Sunderland was chosen as a Vanguard site and Sunderland Care and Support is a key partner. Sunderland Care and Support helps to deliver Recovery at Home Services.

4. Governance Arrangements

4.1 Sunderland Care and Support has the following governance arrangements in place:-

- Board Structure- The Company has a board which is responsible for all aspects of the company's business- currently the Board Members are Cllr Anne Lawson (Chair) Cllr Jill Fletcher, Cllr Amy Wilson, Philip Foster(COO) and Daren Lough Chief Finance Officer of the company
- Contract meetings- Each quarter the company is monitored and performance reviewed by the Council against its contracts.
- CQC inspections- All of the company's registered services are inspected by the Care Quality Commission
- Audits; The Council carry out audits of services
- Joint Consultative Forum (JCF). The company has established a JCF which meets on a monthly basis with Unions to discuss any work related issues. The Unions recognised by the company include, UNITE, Unison and GMB
- Carers Boards: The Company has a range of independent Carers Boards which monitors activity and service delivery within the company and is regularly consulted upon on changes to company's policies and procedures.

5. Principal risks and the future

5.1 Sunderland Care and Support recognises the challenge it faces having to respond to the efficiency savings required by the Council due to the Government reduction of local authority funding, whilst at the same time having to respond to the changes and increasing demands in Health and Social care.

5.2 Sunderland Care and Support has been asked to find £7 million of efficiency savings over the next two financial years.

5.3 To enable the Company to achieve these challenging efficiency savings and to support the Council with its budget reductions, the following measures are currently being implemented:

- **Closure of Hillcrest Mental Health Assessment Unit** - This 6 bedded unit is in Ashbrooke, which operates out of an old property owned by the Council. The building is not disability friendly and would need significant capital investment to maintain the standard of the building and to put in a lift to support people with a disability to use the service. We are proposing to close the building and re-provide the function in St Clements Court. Meetings have been held with staff, unions, customers and families.
- **Closure of Aston Square Learning Disability Supported Living Service** - This 6 bedded unit is in Farrington and operates out of two ex-council houses knocked into one. This property is owned by the Council. The building is not disability friendly and would need significant capital investment to maintain the standard of the building. Also the stairs are extremely steep. All of the customers living in Aston Square will be supported to move into existing voids in other SCAS supported living services. Meetings have been held with staff, unions, customers and families.
- **Re-provision of Grindon Mews** - Due to the reduction in the number of people using our Day Services, we intend to move all of those people receiving a service at Grindon Mews into Fulwell or Washington Community Resource Service. We will then redesign the layout of Grindon Mews and reopen the building as a specialist short break unit for people with a learning disability with complex needs and for people who challenge. Meetings have been held with staff, union's, customers and family's
- **Closure of The Close Short Break Unit** - This is a 10 bedded service located at Seaburn. Due to the age and layout of the property the service is unable to cater for people with a physical disability. There are only two bedrooms which can be accessed by customers in wheelchairs or who have mobility problems. We intend to offer places for people who use The Close in our other two Short Break Units. We also intend to re-open Grindon Mews as a specialist service for people with a learning disability with complex needs and for people who have challenging behaviour. Meetings have been held with staff, unions, customers and families.

- **Setting up of Customer and Carers Boards-** Sunderland Care and Support working with the Carers Centre is establishing two Customer and Carer Boards. These boards will monitor service delivery in the short break services and day services. The boards will also allow for customers and carers to be involved in the shaping of services.
- **Aquatic Centre-** for the past five years Sunderland Care and Support has provided a non-statutory free service to support people to access mainstream leisure services at the Aquatic Centre. This non-statutory service cannot be maintained in its current format; therefore, we are offering customers the opportunity to transfer to Fulwell Community Resource Centre. Customers can access and use the wellness gym and the supported hydrotherapy pool in the service.
- **Redesigning the Workforce** -To achieve efficiency savings and to ensure our unit costs are competitive with the rest of the market we will need to reconfigure the profile of our workforce as follows:
 - **Redesign Company's workforce** – The aim of this work is to reconfigure the balance between the different employee positions in each service. Weekly meetings are taking place with the unions to manage this process and Vision sessions are being held with employees to appraise them of the position. We are seeking to make these changes via a voluntary severance approach
 - **Attendance Target** – The Company will need to set a target of an average of 6 days lost per employee for sickness. If we don't achieve this target then we need to consider introducing a new Attendance Management Policy.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 Sunderland Care and Support is committed to achieving the required efficiency's targets, whilst at the same time continuing to provide the highest quality of service.
- 6.2 The company is trying to do this through a balanced business plan and by avoiding any large scale closure of services. The plan set out in this paper contains an approach which has targeted buildings which no longer meet the needs of providing a service to people with a physical or learning disability. All customers receiving support in these services are being offered alternative arrangements in similar services.
- 6.3 Our aims for the forthcoming year are to continue to play key role in the delivery of health and social care across the City of Sunderland, working with

our partners to ensure that services are personal to all individuals, meeting their specific requirements.

- 6.4 The company working closely with the Council intends to move to the next stage of the journey that was set out for Sunderland Care and Support when it transformed into a LATC , which is to move to becoming a mutual organisation , with all employees having a stake in the running of the company.
- 6.5 Over the next few years there will many challenges to face, but Sunderland Care and Support is ideally placed to continue to grow, offer employment opportunities to people and to be a provider which delivers high standards of care and support.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That the Scrutiny Committee notes the report and the updated information on Sunderland Care and Support Ltd.

Philip Foster

Chief Operating Officer