

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE**

**8 May 2019**

**Report of the Strategic Director for Adult Care**

**Review of the impact of changes to Management and Staffing Arrangements in Derbyshire County Council Homes for Older People and Community Care Centres**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

To inform Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People of the findings and planned actions following a review of the changes to management and staffing arrangements in Derbyshire County Council Homes for Older People and Community Care Centres.

**2. Information and Analysis**

**Background**

On 16 June 2015 the Council's Cabinet approved changes to Management and Staffing arrangements in Homes for Older People and Community Care Centres. The intention of these changes was to enhance the quality of the care and support for older people within residential establishments by:

- Increasing the number of staff working directly with residents in all establishments.
- Improving the quality and consistency of the care provided by all staff throughout the 24 hour period.
- Enabling staff to better understand the needs of residents throughout the day and night.
- Increasing the opportunities for mentoring and support for care staff.
- Freeing up management time to manage and lead the service and its staff to develop a culture of continuous improvement.
- Developing a clear career structure with achievable steps to enable progression and development for staff.
- Creating opportunities for establishments to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in order to be a more viable competitor in the residential market in the future.

Since the Cabinet report was approved the following changes have been introduced in the Council's Direct Care establishments for older people:

- Introduction of a new role of Senior Care Worker, recruitment to this role in all establishments and a reduction in the number of Deputy Unit Managers.
- Increase in Business Services provision within establishments which did not already have a full time Business Service Assistant.
- Introduction of a 3 shift system for Care Workers and the ending of the specific Night Care Worker and Activity Co-ordinator roles.
- Introduction of standardised rotas for Care Staff and "flexible pot" of additional hours for Unit Managers to utilise according to service need.
- The introduction of an on call out of hour's rota for Unit Managers.
- Unit Manager training workshop sessions were held for new roles and management arrangements.

The purpose of the review was to ascertain the effectiveness of the changes in delivering the intended outcomes.

## **Methodology**

Questionnaires were sent to every residents and member of staff at all the establishments during October and November 2018. In addition focus groups were held with a range of staff to determine what impact the new management and staffing arrangements are having on the efficient running of the home and the care offered to residents. The reviewing team also utilised relevant background information relating to the provision of the service in order to provide further evidence in judging the overall effectiveness of the changes.

## **Findings**

In total 266 resident and relative questionnaires were completed and returned which is approximately 30% of the total resident population, 33 of these were from relatives who completed them on the resident's behalf. 530 questionnaires were completed and returned by staff which represents approximately 40% of the total number of staff. In addition 28 focus groups were held across the County with staff employed in different job roles. A desktop review was undertaken of financial information, complaints and compliments, Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports and other background information.

It is reassuring to note that, whilst any dissatisfaction is a cause for concern, the vast majority of residents and relatives who responded were happy with the care and support being received, also feeling that the staff treated them with dignity and respect and that the staff seemed competent and capable to undertake their duties. Some concern was raised about activity arrangements

in some establishments (although not all) and some residents wanted to have more regular meetings with the home manager.

Generally staff felt the principles behind the introduction of the changes were positive and worthwhile. Staff concerns, particularly care staff, were around a perception of the negative impact of the three shift system has had on recruitment and sickness levels. Whilst there is evidence to support the view that recruitment has become more difficult in some establishments, the level of sickness since the new system was introduced has not deteriorated. The overall number of care worker vacancies has increased but this needs to be set against a national trend of difficulty in recruiting and retaining care workers. In addition there has been an overall increase in the number of Care Worker posts in many homes due to the introduction of increased staff on duty at night in most establishments and additional staffing to deliver Community Support Beds (commissioned and funded by the NHS) in a number of homes across the County. Two other areas of concern which require action in some establishments are: the increased use of agency staff to cover for vacancies and the consistent effectiveness of the keyworker system since the three shift system has been introduced.

In respect of the introduction of the Senior Care Worker role again generally staff agreed with the principles behind the introduction of the change although in some establishments felt that it was not working as effectively as it could. In particular a number of staff felt that Senior Care Workers were not able to work directly with residents alongside Care Workers on a regular basis as was intended. This appears to be due to the responsibilities associated with administering medication and some administrative tasks.

It is apparent from the review that some establishments have adapted to the introduction of the changes better than others. Where homes have struggled this appears to be linked to particular difficulties in recruiting care staff and where the Unit Manager has been absent for prolonged periods. This is also reflected in terms of the fact that CQC inspection ratings have generally not improved as was anticipated. The introduction of Community Support Beds in a number of establishments has also brought an increased workload, although it should also be noted that they have contributed significantly to the Council's current excellent performance in terms of minimising delayed transfers of care.

## **Conclusions and Action Planning**

It is apparent that not all of the anticipated outcomes which were envisaged have been achieved in all of the establishments. The objectives remain valid but more work is required to ensure that the changes can take full effect and become properly embedded. Specifically the following actions will be undertaken over the next 6 months:

- Further work to improve recruitment and retention of care staff, including consideration of more flexibility in the application of the three shift system
- Unit Manager working group to be established to share good practice and to support those establishments which are struggling to adapt to new ways of working, including keyworker arrangements
- Good practice to be shared for arranging resident activities within establishments
- Revisiting the role and responsibilities of the Senior Care Worker in relation to other staff working in establishments
- Reviewing the amount of administrative tasks being undertaken within establishments with a view to reducing these where possible

### **3. Financial Considerations**

It is not envisaged at this stage that there will be any additional expenditure as a result of this review.

### **4. Social Value Considerations**

The Council's care homes for older people are an important part of the service which is provided to some of the most vulnerable people in the community. It is important that the highest standards of care are maintained and this report seeks to reassure members of the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee – People that issues of concern are being addressed appropriately.

### **5. Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: Human Rights, equality of opportunity, legal, human resources, health, environmental, transport, property and crime and disorder considerations.

### **6. Officer's Recommendation**

That the Improvement and Scrutiny Committee - People note the findings and planned actions as a result of the review, and also note that further reports will be made on progress to the Cabinet Member for Adult Care in due course.

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