

PEOPLE PORTFOLIOS

The 'People' portfolio consists of:

- Councillor Gillian Campbell - Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth, Schools and Transience
- Councillor Jo Farrell - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health and Wellbeing
- Councillor Jim Hobson - Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Strategic Issues

SEND Conference

As part of our partnership response to the areas of improvement identified across Education, Health and Social Care in the Ofsted inspection last year, the SEND partnership held its first conference on 07 December 2022 at the Village Hotel in Blackpool. Around 250 representatives from schools, health providers, health commissioners, local authority and parents attended and were welcomed by a speech from Neil Jack, Chief Executive and a range of expert speakers. Outcomes from the conference will help to shape the delivery of improvements throughout the year and inform priorities for attention and investment. Feedback from participants was excellent and a longer conference is already being planned for 2023.

Minimising the impact of hospital strikes

The industrial action across the NHS in December and January had the potential for significant impact locally in Blackpool. To address this, we increased Social Worker capacity in targeted areas including the Transfer of Care Hub and Accident and Emergency. This helped with supporting discharges from hospital prior to the actual day of industrial action, on the day and then the recovery period following. The Council's Vitaline Service also worked in partnership with the North West Ambulance Service, agreeing additional Divert Criteria so that the Vitaline Service could respond to the increased demand by providing additional Initial Responders. This included staffing that could be available to remain with an individual in cases where an ambulance was required.

This close partnership working ensured that despite increases in demand at certain moments during the industrial action, we were able to manage the impacts within the community, with those that needed hospital care still able to access it.

Corporate Issues

Children's Services Update

Our Ofsted Children's Social Care inspection concluded on 16 December 2022 after a three-week period. Whilst the outcome of the inspection is embargoed until it is published on 01 February, initial feedback confirmed the areas of challenge we had identified through our Self-Assessment and Social Care Improvement Plan. It also identified areas of real positives for us as a Children's Service, including the visible impact of our focus on recruitment and retention to stabilise the workforce. Inspectors told us that they met staff who said they feel safe and well supported and this is contributing to a significant reduction in our dependency on agency Social Workers. We know that this is important because a stable workforce means children and families are able to build strong relationships with a Social Worker who can stick with them. The inspectors recognised a positive shift in our culture in relation to how we work with families, which lays solid foundations for the next steps for Children's Social Care. I am pleased to report that the number of children we look after continues to reduce and is currently at 559. We remain focused upon ensuring that we continue to see fewer children and families exposed to the most acute interventions of Social Care, ensuring that we do this in a safe way, offering support at the right time, for the right amount of time to deliver better outcomes.

The inspection has also given us an opportunity to consider how we further develop and embed the strategic town-wide approach to supporting children and families. We have a partnership development day being planned to promote, develop and deepen partnership buy-in to achieving positive outcomes for children and families. The outcome will be a Blackpool Children's Plan with an agreed outcomes framework to be owned by the Children and Families Partnership Board. In addition to this, we are reviewing the strategic governance arrangements that will drive the further improvements we want to achieve for children and families in Blackpool. The recruitment of a Head of Transformation post to develop our Social Work practice approach will provide further capacity to drive improvements across services and thus the outcomes we achieve for and with children and families in Blackpool.

CQC Assurance and Preparation Progress

In 2023 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will start making assurance visits to Local Authorities to explore the delivery of their statutory duties in relation to Adult Social Care. A small internal team has started preparations for the assurance process, working in partnership with ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) and the Local Government Association Care and Health Improvement Programme.

We have collated evidence to support our internal self-assessment, which we will review and expand to include partners' views of us and their contribution to outcomes. A workshop led by ADASS will explore performance benchmarking and once the self-assessment phase is complete, we will begin to develop narrative and actions relating to ourselves and our internal and external partners. In addition to this a peer review session with an external DASS and Leader is due to be scheduled in May to enable check and balance.

Annual Rough Sleeper Snapshot takes place

The Council and partners undertook the annual Rough Sleeper Snapshot (count) in November 2022. Under the methodology prescribed by government, seven rough sleepers were identified and verified on the single night count, which is reduction from ten in 2021. Whilst this methodology cannot provide a full picture of homelessness in the town, it does provide a consistent measure nationally, which can be used to analyse trends over time and provide comparisons to other places.

Despite positive progress in supporting rough sleepers, the homeless service remains under increasing pressure due to a continued increase in demand. Some of this is an ongoing consequence of the impact of the pandemic, most notably the end of the eviction ban, but also a general increase in house prices/rents, which has caused a significant increase in homelessness, especially for families. We are also starting to see impacts from the cost of living crisis both in people being unable to afford rent and also in landlords needing to sell or move back into their rental properties.

Transforming Services

Moving with Dignity (Single Handed Care)

Over recent years there have been significant improvements and development in equipment used to support care provision, to support the delivery of 'single handed care', safely reducing the number of carers needed for particular tasks. Since 2022 the Council's Care and Support Division has worked with different partners to take the model forward, learning from best practice including via NHS England, who are working with Hospital Trusts to support the adoption of this approach.

Blackpool's focus is about empowering individuals who require support with their care to have control and ownership about how the care is delivered. This approach ensures that the individual and their loved ones are not passive recipients of care services but active participants. It is person-centered and often less intrusive than alternative approaches.

Partners have worked over several months to understand the transformation that is required across health and social care, with council investment in the Health and Social Care Career Academy run in partnership with Blackpool and Fylde College and the NHS to develop and provide a dedicated training facility available to all health and care providers in Blackpool. The

approach is now built into college courses, ensuring that those aspiring to health and social care roles and/or further education know the value of this approach and changing perceptions about how care can be provided.

Work to embed the transformational change is underway. This includes holding engagement events for partners, “train the trainer” sessions, the establishment of ‘Moving with Dignity Champions’, transforming care approaches for hospital inpatients and at the point of discharge, and starting to develop an Investment Plan for consideration by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for additional investment.

Whilst truly transformational change will take time, benefits seen in other areas include quicker hospital discharges, lower demand on staff resources, a reduction in cost, a more skilled workforce and patient empowerment. By leading the change across Health and Social Care, the council is driving improvements in outcomes for some of our most vulnerable residents.

Warm Space @Nibbles Café

The Nibbles Café Team supports adults with learning disabilities to undertake training as part of their journey towards further education or employment in catering and hospitality and has grown from its initial base at the Blackpool Centre for Independent Living to establish further venues at Anchorsholme Library and Carleton Crematorium. In response to the financial need of people in the community the Team has instituted ‘Pots of Kindness’ where customers can make a donation which can then pay for a hot drink or meal for those customers who may need it. With the cost of living crisis having intensified in recent months, the locations can also act as a warm space where local residents can simply visit to get warm.

The team is now working with the Food Bank Partnership to provide discrete ‘food parcels’ for customers and they plan to make this offer a permanent feature going forwards as the team continues to support the local community.

Working with Partners

Delivering Services

Blackpool Council’s Homecare and Reablement Service is the only social care provider in Blackpool that delivers a dedicated overnight care team, typically consisting of short visits to assist with personal care, medication and other care related tasks. The complexity of needs and demand for the service has increased over the past 12 months, which provides an essential alternative to hospital admission.

I am pleased to report that to meet this demand the council has invested in an additional team of practitioners so that the team will be better able to respond to urgent requests for support, as well as planned care for those who need regular care throughout the night. With this

expansion of the team, they will also be making available longer care visits including 'waking watch' where one of the team will remain with the individual throughout the night. This may be to support a family member who is the primary carer or to support an individual with palliative care needs and who is nearing the end of their life. During December 2022, the Primary Night Care Team supported a total of 54 individuals and provided 758 individual care visits throughout the night, both planned and unplanned in response to a crisis. Providing this service means that individuals can remain at home in their preferred place of care with wrap around care and support, no matter what time of day or night this is required.

Assessment and Support

Across our Assessment and Support Services, our transfer of care hub at the hospital, our Older Adult and Adult Services, Mental Health, Learning Disability and our Autism teams we continue to see a rise in referrals and also in the complexity of work. Many of our teams are multi agency, with health and social care working together.

There is currently work being undertaken in relation to our Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoL'S). There are currently some outstanding applications, these are now being prioritised in preparation for when Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) comes into force and we are working alongside our colleagues in Legal Services to achieve this work.

The Autism team has a member of staff with lived experience of Autism, this is of great benefit for the team and ensures that every approach from this team is "Autism friendly". The team works alongside the Autism Diagnostic Team run by Blackpool Teaching Hospitals with weekly meetings taking place to expedite more urgent referrals and to ensure that our clients who are without an Autistic diagnosis are able to be fast tracked for diagnostic and/or medication purposes.

The Adult Social Care Community Mental Health team is currently working closely with Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust (LSCFT) in relation to the Mental Health Service redesign. Blackpool Council Mental Health Services has been granted monies for five full time permanent Mental Health Social Work posts, each to be based within the Primary Care Hubs. Adverts have gone out and recruitment to these key posts is ongoing.

Our Hospital based Social Work team is a small team consisting of three Social Workers. Two work from The Harbour, one for Adults and one for Older Adults, with the third Social Worker covering all hospitals outside of Blackpool. This team receives regular positive feedback due to its proactive approach to its work. The team seeks out all new admissions of Blackpool residents and carry out assessments as appropriate, by working in this manner any issues around accommodation for example are dealt with at the earliest opportunity rather than trying to deal with issues when the person is ready for discharge.