

Community Services Spokespersons Report – Social Services

1. Into the Spotlight – Housing, Homecare and Community Health Services Event

On 2nd December 2008 I attended the above event with the Head of Adult Care, which was held in the Crieff Hydro Hotel, Perthshire. This COSLA ran conference was set up to address the ways in which housing, care and health services can work in partnership to enable people to remain in their own home. The drive for more flexible services and increasing quality will impact on future service delivery across each of the sectors, which when coupled with the ageing population provides and even greater challenge.

A number of key speakers from each of the sectors were in attendance to discuss and explore any future developments and how a more integrated approach can be taken to deliver sustainable outcomes. Speakers included;

- Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, who spoke about the importance of care at home and the delivery of “Better Health, Better Care”
- Councillor Ronnie McColl, COSLA Spokesperson for Health and Wellbeing, who delivered a presentation entitled “Excellence in care at home requires excellence in partnership working”.
- Peter Gabbitas, Director of Health and Community Services, Lothian CHP, spoke in regard to the delivery of joined up care and how a more innovative and integrated approach can be taken.
- Colin Mair, Chief Executive, Improvement Service, and Mike Foulis, Director of Housing and Regeneration, Scottish Government, jointly delivered a discussion on “What makes a good health, housing and social care partnership.

In addition to the above speakers, there was a huge array of workshops arranged throughout the day, covering all aspects of care and housing. This was a very well organised event which I was pleased to attend as I found it very informative and was impressed by the diverse range of speakers who presented on the day.

2. Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drugs Action Team Lead Officers Group (ABADATLOG)

I attended a meeting of ABADATLOG which was held at Dunoon Police Station on 12th December 2008. One of the items on the agenda was an update on the coordinator post which has now been advertised and which is likely to be based in either Lochgilphead or Helensburgh. There was also a lengthy discussion in regard to funding and how this was being spent. Arising from this a meeting was arranged with Shona Robison to discuss this issue further – see item 6 below.

3. Argyll and Bute Health and Care Strategic Partnership Committee

I attended a meeting of the Strategic Partnership on 19th December 2008. At this meeting the role of Chairman was transferred from Bill Brackenridge over to myself, unopposed. Other items of the agenda included;

- Re-design of older peoples services – it was advised that the Council have been leading on this project and a short list of options have now been completed and scored, which will be presented to the Project Board at end February 2009, coming to the Partnership thereafter.
- Delayed Discharge – the figures for the November census were discussed and it was noted that there are 71(x) issues particularly in Oban and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay, where there are bed capacity issues.
- Integrated Occupational Therapy Service – discussion took place around the care management role of OT's and what measures can be taken to reduce the waiting list. It was noted that a training and implementation plan would be used to address waiting list issues. This has been piloted in Bute and Cowal with positive results.
- Jeannie Deans Unit – it was reported that work commences in January 2009 and should be ready for completion in June 2009, with an audiology and dental facility completed by end July 2009.

4. SWIA Interview

As part of the follow up inspection program I was interviewed on 6th January 2009, where a number of issues were discussed, including the re-design of older people's services, mental health, learning disability and the communication of changes to staff and partners.

5. COSLA Executive Group – Health and Wellbeing

I attended a meeting of the COSLA Health and Wellbeing Executive Group on 26th January 2009. A number of policy development issues were discussed at the meeting, including;

- Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland – a report was put before the group outlining the Scottish Governments proposals for a new action plan for mental health improvement. This policy will include action to promote and protect mental wellbeing, reduce the prevalence of mental health problems and support those experiencing mental health problems and mental illness. The proposed action plan will set out how we build on current success from now until 2011 and beyond, looking at strategic priorities and the infrastructure and support that Government will put in place to help facilitate implementation and delivery.
- Review of Older People's Care – an update on the preparatory work that COSLA has undertaken in pursuit of the reform of older people's

care was circulated to the group. This paper has been developed in reaction to the demographic changes that are taking place/impending. The group endorsed the recommendation to have a national debate about the future of older people's services, using post Sutherland work to facilitate this, and agreed the forward activity to be carried out by COSLA.

Other topics discussed were; the health of the working age population, including the promotion of healthy working lives; the recent launch of the continuous learning framework; and an update on a number of ongoing/completed consultations in regard to health and wellbeing.

The next meeting is scheduled for 16th April 2009.

6. Meeting with Shona Robison MSP

In regard to item 2 above, a meeting was arranged with Shona Robison MSP, Minister for Public Health in order to discuss the distribution of alcohol monies from NHS Highland to the Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drugs Action Team.

7. IDEA

A further meeting with IDEA, Islay was held on 23rd February 2009 at the Service Point, Bowmore. The Head of Adult Care was in attendance, as well as Councillors Horn and Currie. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current financial and management position of IDEA and the way forward. It was agreed that the Council would continue to support IDEA by providing recurring funding of £26,000 per year. It was also agreed IDEA would seek to find alternative funding sources and in order to achieve long term stability IDEA would look at providing flexible outreach work with less dependence on traditional patterns of employment and more use of volunteers wherever possible.

**Councillor Donald McIntosh
Social Services Spokesperson
March 2009**