

Scrutiny Review of Care Homes for Older People - Executive Summary

This report presents the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Care Homes for Older People. The overall aim of the review was to seek to understand the reasons why Stockton on Tees Care Homes were not achieving the same level of CQC ratings as the Tees and national average and to identify what activities can take place by the Care Homes, the Local Authority and wider stakeholders to improve CQC ratings. The Integrated Strategy Team and the Procurement Team were planning activity with Care Homes to improve quality of provision and the involvement of the Select Committee has supported this process.

The key findings from the review were as follows:

- There are 31 regulated care homes for older people in Stockton on Tees
- The care home market is diverse and caters to a range of needs and preferences
- There is under-occupancy in the market and demand has been reducing. There are however an increasing number of residents with complex needs and an increasing number of dementia patients
- Social Workers complete assessments for eligibility under the Care Act
- There are 1239 residential beds and 339 nursing beds; over 95% of beds are contracted by the Council; the contract is in place until the end of March 2020 and the Council is reviewing the model for future delivery from April 2020
- CQC ratings impact on a care home's occupancy levels and staffing turnover
- Recruitment and retention issues remain key challenges in the sector
- The Healthwatch report highlighted that of the 28 homes they visited over 50% had changed care home manager in the previous 12 months and staffing levels were at the minimum required in many homes to meet residents' needs
- Poor care planning, lack of personalised care and poor records management are often reasons for care home to be inadequate
- The Council's Quality Assurance and Compliance Team and Integrated Strategy Team are working to drive up standards of quality and performance. The Provider Assessment and Market Management Solutions (PAMMS) is an online assessment tool used to assess the quality of care by providers. All Care Homes are due to be assessed between March 2019 and March 2020.
- CQC ratings have improved over the last 12 months
- Strong leadership is the foundation for improving standards in care homes; care home staff that have completed the Council's Well Led Programme have found this extremely useful
- Of the homes that have attended the Well Led Programme, six have subsequently had a CQC assessment. Two maintained their good rating and good in well led and four had improved their well led rating and their overall rating from requires improvement to good
- There was an opportunity for collaborative working with the Care Quality Commission to develop and promote a shared vision for care homes

Conclusion

Recognising that strong leadership and management is the foundation to improving quality, one of the main challenge within the care home sector remains addressing the high turnover of care home managers and staff. The Select Committee commend the Council for their quality assurance work and the introduction of the Well Led Programme. Historically, care homes in Stockton on Tees have not achieved the same level of CQC ratings as the Tees and national average and the Select Committee acknowledge that over the past two years CQC ratings in Stockton have been improving. The recommendations seek to build on this work and ensure that care home staff have the time and skills they need and that our care home residents can enjoy the safe and stimulating environment that they deserve.

Recommendations

That:

1. Recognising the importance of the strong leadership and management and the positive impact of the Well Led Programme, further activity should focus on continuing to improve leadership and management of all care homes in Stockton on Tees and specifically that all care homes be supported to participate in the Well Led Programme and actively participate in the Care Home Leadership and Peer Support Network.
2. The importance of personalised care be promoted through all contacts the Council and partners have with Care Homes; in particular the development and deployment of a varied activities programme tailored to individual needs and co-ordinated by a designated member of staff.
3. The benefits of technology for supporting personalised care are championed and promoted to all care homes in Stockton on Tees; in particular, the deployment of electronic solutions for records and medicine management should be supported by the Council.
4. Contract monitoring and quality assurance systems ensure that appropriate staffing levels are maintained in care homes.
5. The Council works with all stakeholders to promote and improve the local standing of careers in adult social care.
6. All care homes be required to work towards Dementia Friendly accreditation as part of the new contract arrangements.
7. The Council works with the Care Quality Commission to facilitate effective dialogue between the two organisations in order to share updates of projects and initiatives being developed by the Council and partners and shape the future of the care home market.
8. Healthwatch be asked to report back the Adult, Social Care and Health Select Committee on the implementation of their recommendations to care homes following further enter and view visits to homes.
9. The summary of Care Quality Commission inspection results, reported each quarter to the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee should include greater context including trend information of quality ratings and information about providers.