

A Report to a Meeting of the Housing and Environment Advisory Committee.

The key objective in creating a Health Liaison Board lies in its title. It is a committee consisting mainly of Members who have an active involvement in health related issues who can bring that knowledge and information back to the Council, flagging up any relevant issues or concerns.

Over the last two years Members have attended a considerable number of external meetings and have provided valuable updates on the Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and the West Kent CCG, KCCs Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Patient Participating Groups (PPGs), the West Kent Health and Wellbeing Board, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Kent Health Watch. Members have also attended a variety of seminars such as 'Better Care Together' and Dementia Friendly Forums as well as a number of AGMs including that of the South East Ambulance Trust. There have been reports from Officers on a range of matters two of which have been the Council's Mind the Gap Health Inequalities Action Plan and most recently the Care Act 2014 relating to adult health and social care which could have a significant impact for the Council not least on the Housing department.

Some of the obvious concerns raised have centred around obesity, 50% of older people will be obese within the next 25 years, dementia, again exacerbated by an ageing population and an increase in incidents of autism. These issues alone will have a major effect on budgets and on the future delivery of health care. To help counteract the expected shortfall in provision, communities will need to play a much greater supporting role and individuals will be expected to take more responsibility for their own health.

Problems caused by bed blocking, the inadequacies of the Hospital Transport service and underperforming Children's Services with specific reference to Spring House in Sevenoaks were raised. CAMBS, (Children and Adult Mental Health Services) also came under the spot light, following the award of the new contract initial interviews and diagnosis were taking up to 2 years to be completed. Things have improved but more still needs to be done. It had been hoped that a representative would attend the February meeting of the Board but at the last moment they couldn't make it.

The Work Plan is themed around the Council's Community Plan to include subjects such as improving mental health and wellbeing, supporting older people to live safely and independently in their own homes and giving young people the best start in life. It also provides a platform for invited experts from the statutory and voluntary sectors to make presentations to the Board. Speakers have included Katie Skinner talking on Autism Spectrum Disorder, specialist support for drug and alcohol misuse was addressed by the Kenward Trust and Carers First attended twice to discuss support for those involved with coping with Alzheimer's and Dementia and again to talk about the pressures placed on young carers. Chairmen from several PPGs have also attended meetings to express concerns raised by patients and to explore ways in which the Council could offer support and exert some influence.

This is just a brief report on the activities of the Board but over the last two years it has become increasingly clear that factors which impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents can be identified in almost all the services which this Council provides. The importance of integrating health and wellbeing with housing, leisure and indeed the arts is now being increasingly recognised by both

health bodies and Government. As SDC prepares for a new four year term perhaps now is the appropriate time to consider bringing these three elements together under one Portfolio Member and one Advisory Committee.

Alison Cook

Chairman Health Liaison Board