

Health Liaison Board, 23 May 2018 - Member Updates

Care and Support for Older People - Rural Services Network

Members will be aware that the government will publish a Green Paper on care and support for older people in the Summer. The paper will set out plans for how government proposes to improve care and support for older people and tackle the challenge of an ageing population. Meanwhile the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee is looking at evidence to identify funding reforms which will command broad consensus, and which will enable the Government to make swift and tangible progress.

The Rural Services Network has made a submission to the Committee which stressed the particular challenges of providing care in rural areas:

- Funding for Adult and Children's Social Care Services is unfair and inequitable in rural areas.
- County/Unitary local authorities should receive 100% national funding because Council Tax is not suitable.
- Council Tax should only fund discretionary services above the national core level(s).
- It costs much more to provide Social Care in rural areas and there is higher demand from an older population.
- Funding must fully reflect the different costs of delivery imposed by geographical conditions and demography.
- A future system of dealing with care needs must address, and fund, prevention services including those provided by District Councils which enable people to live healthily and safely in their own homes.

I attended the Rural Services Network Social Care and Health Group on 9 April when there was discussion on this topic which confirmed:

- Realistic expectations of what can be achieved in rural areas need to be addressed; radical thinking is necessary.
- Money needs to be used constructively. Management of issues would be best done at a local level.
- Early intervention and prevention is a key to enable better use of resources and quality of life for residents.
- Sharing of best practice and ideas would be most useful.
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In respect of the sharing of best practice I have submitted details of the West Kent Hospital Discharge Scheme.

GP Crisis

It emerged at last week's PPG meeting of the Jubilee Medical Group (New Ash Green and Longfield) that for their two surgeries the Group now only has four GPs (with one about to go on maternity leave) where there is a need for at least seven but recruitment is proving impossible. Consequently there is a great deal of frustration and anger locally about waiting times, generally, of three or four weeks for an appointment with a doctor.

The practice is trying to manage the situation creatively with the appointment of specialist nurses and a triage system with telephone consultations in some cases but this cannot be a long-term sustainable position.

Would there be any advantage for this Board to discuss the situation with the Practice Manager and CCG?

Community Hubs

New Ash Green Community Hub is a new venture led by Jackie West, KCC Community Warden. It started at the beginning of this month, initially with meetings in New Ash Green Village Hall on the first Tuesday morning of each month, to help to tackle isolation and loneliness initially with a particular emphasis on support for carers. The first meeting was well supported by volunteers and residents with the hall provided free of charge and refreshments donated by the Co-op.

Action with Communities in Rural Kent are taking their Big Lottery Funded Coffee Caravan to 19 villages in Kent during the summer with information and a friendly, informal meeting place. In this District they will be visiting Hodsoll Street village green (5 June, 3 July, 31 July).

Cameron Clark