



Housing LIN

Connecting people, ideas and resources

Partnership between Housing and Adult Social Care – Reflections on the 2017 Housing LIN Conference

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Funding of Adult Social Care seems finally to have come to the attention of the headline writers and political editors across the media. Whilst most of this interest is on the back of financial issues in the NHS, nevertheless, it has presented the opportunity to get the social care message across, and has resulted in the Chancellor announcing some additional cash in last month's Budget that will begin to make an impact on the funding gap.

Many of us are equally keen to see the contribution housing makes in supporting the health and social care agenda also get the recognition it deserves. Myself and Alan Adams, my fellow Co-Chair of the ADASS Housing Policy Network (and Director in Hounslow), have been ensuring the ADASS National Executive Council is regularly updated on developments and ensuring that housing maintains a high profile with Directors of Adult Social Care. I was recently also privileged to be part of the judging for 'Outstanding approach to meeting specialist housing needs' for the forthcoming 2017 UK Housing Awards. This will provide an opportunity to showcase some great examples of the sectors working together - watch out for the announcement of the winners in April.

However, as was apparent at this month's Housing LIN conference, the current debate on the future funding for supported housing is focussing our minds. At ADASS, our response was one of almost 600 received by DCLG to their recent consultation. We also keenly await the publication of the Green paper and we will be joining colleagues from across the housing sector in trying to further shape how whatever new system is put in place can work.

Even with some additional revenue funding, Local Authorities, and therefore Adult Social Care Departments, are facing unprecedented financial challenges as a result of savage budget cuts from Government. In this context, Directors of Adult Social Services (DASSs) are especially concerned about how they meet their responsibilities in relation to prevention, a key component of the Care Act and a principle ADASS worked hard to ensure was embedded in the Act and its accompanying Statutory Guidance.

In my experience working in senior roles in two-tier or unitary authorities, housing is most noticeable to senior leaders in the NHS and social care when it is exercising its

partnership role, supporting those with more profound needs, such as people with a learning disability, older people living in Extra Care schemes, or dealing with issues such as hospital discharge or homelessness. Yet, the major contribution made to preventative services is often less visible and more difficult to quantify in financial terms. As a result, we need to better evidence where prevention works. The Housing Policy Network (HPN) is keen to highlight the work done in this area and give a higher profile to what it is achieving, and we are being supported in this by our colleagues at Public Health England (www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-for-health) and of course through the Housing LIN.

A specific area of interest to the HPN over the last year or so has been 'technology enabled housing' and the contribution it makes to prevention at all levels; preventing the need for any health and social care interventions at all, through to preventing people moving up the 'ladder' of care. Supported by the Housing LIN and colleagues from Tunstall we recently brought people together from across the technology, housing, and social care sectors to develop a briefing resource for DASSs to support them in better engaging in this arena and embrace the opportunities available. This was featured in a packed workshop at the Housing LIN conference, and we expect to launch the online resource at the ADASS Spring Seminar in May 2017.

Given the current climate it has never been more important for social care and housing to work together to support positive outcomes for, and the aspirations people of all ages and abilities want to achieve. In this context, the Housing LIN conference gave us an ideal opportunity to take stock of what our existing and future technology enablers are and what's in store for the housing and care sectors.

And lastly, I'm looking forward to meeting up with ADASS colleagues and partners in a couple of months to further develop our collective thoughts so that we can generate great solutions together.

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