

WIRRAL COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:  
25 MARCH 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

## **End of Life Care and Dying Matters Coalition and Awareness Programme**

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### ***Executive Summary***

*This report provides elected Members with a progress update on the work being undertaken by the Department of Adult Social Services in partnership with NHS Wirral on a number of initiatives to improve social care support in end of life care and to promote public awareness on issues of death, dying and bereavement.*

*This item falls within the Social Care and Inclusion portfolio.*

### **1 Background**

- 1.1 The End of Life Care Strategy was launched by the Department of Health in 2008 and provided a platform for the formation of a new national coalition to support the implementation of the strategy with a focus on raising public awareness in relation to death and dying and standards of care and support across public sector organisations.
- 1.2 The need for a national strategy and a targeted programme of work in this area was overwhelming. In 2005 a BBC survey found that only 34% of the public had discussed their wishes on dying. In 2007 the Health Care Commission highlighted that 54% of complaints in acute hospitals relate to care of the dying. Of the 500,000 or so people who die each year in England, 58% die in hospitals yet surveys show that 56-70% would prefer to die at home.
- 1.3 During the development of the strategy, it became clear that changes to the way society views death and dying, have impacted on the experience of people who are dying and bereaved. There is much less familiarity in society with death and dying than in times gone by when people died at home and at a much earlier age. Moreover, the need to provide the right support at the right time during the progression of an illness and to allow people to make informed choices about their place of death, was a major challenge for public sector organisations. Also the changing age demographic of society, reflected in the increasing numbers of older people with conditions such as dementia, highlighted the need to work with families and carers to support them through longer periods of non-curative and progressive conditions to the end of their life.
- 1.4 In April 2009, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services network further identified the need to understand the issues in relation to the End of

Life Care strategy from a social care perspective and Wirral, through Rick O'Brien as Head of Branch, has made a contribution to some of the national initiatives, whilst drawing on local resources and examples of good practice to inform this work. This report provides a focus on some of the work being undertaken by the Department of Adult Social Services in response to the delivery of the national strategy.

## **2 Developments**

2.1 Through its national, regional and local networks, the Department of Adult Social Services is contributing to a national awareness campaign called 'Dying Matters'. A national awareness week from 15-19 March is taking place and a programme of events will be taking place in Wirral to raise awareness and promote the debate about living and dying well. The main events are:

- On Tuesday 16 March at the West Kirby Concourse between 10am-4pm, there is a rolling programme of speakers and displays on 'End of Life Issues,' with short presentations and Question and Answer session following each speaker. This is for all age groups
- On Wednesday 17 March at the Clatterbridge Oncology Post Graduate Centre between 10am-3pm, there is a series of presentations by NHS Wirral End of Life Care Team and Community Specialist Palliative Care Team (this event is already fully booked-up!).
- On Thursday 18 March at St John's Hospice, Clatterbridge between noon-2pm, there is an open information session, presented by staff of the Hospice.
- On Friday 19 March, Wirral's Older People's Parliament are hosting an 'End of Life Matters' all-day event at the Williamson Art Gallery with advice and information about what we should do to plan for our death.

2.2 The Department of Adult Social Services is working closely with partner agencies to more explicitly identify the role of social care services in the care and support of people at the end of their lives and to raise standards across the social care workforce, with a view to undertaking targeted work programmes to improve standards of practice in care homes; with domiciliary care providers and social care assessment teams.

2.3 Most recently, training and development monies have been provided through NHS Northwest for the development of a targeted training programme for local domiciliary care agencies. This initiative is being developed in cooperation with Wirral Metropolitan College, NHS Wirral, NHS Northwest Regional Cancer Network leads, the Department of Adult Social Services and local domiciliary care agencies, with the aim of providing improved social care support for people with progressive conditions.

2.4 Other recent initiative include the recruitment and deployment of a social worker into the NHS Wirral Specialist Palliative Care Team which is

providing significant benefits in terms of a coordinated and more seamless response across health and social care.

**3 Financial Implications**

None, external funding has been secured for training.

**4 Staffing Implications**

None.

**5 Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment**

None.

**6 Community Safety Implications**

None.

**7 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

None.

**8 Planning Implications**

None.

**9 Anti Poverty Implications**

None.

**10 Social Inclusion Implications**

None.

**11 Local Member Support Implications**

None.

**12 Health Implications**

None.

**13 Background Papers**

[www.dyingmatters.org](http://www.dyingmatters.org) provides a wide range of material on the “Dying Matters” awareness campaign.

## **14 Recommendations**

1. That Members note the initiatives to raise awareness of death and dying and the programme of work being developed to improve end of life care support.

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