



Darlington Borough Council

Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy 2024-2028

Foreword

‘Prevention in social care is about encouraging people to be more proactive about their health and wellbeing, increasing independence and delaying the need for care and support services’ (SCIE).

Our standard operating model of Strength Based Practice supports the prevention of needs arising, building personal resilience, and having increased choice and control at the right time and life stages assured of the right support at the right time and the right way. Therefore, our teams engage with people to focus on a *what is strong not wrong* and provide appropriate and proportionate support when needed.

“Prevention is about helping people stay happy, healthy and independent for as long as possible, reducing problems arising in the first place, but if they do how we support people to manage their needs as effectively as possible.”

(Department of Health and Social Care 2018)

“We will work with people and partners and local community to make available a range of services and facilities to prevent, delay or reduce needs for statutory care and support.”

1. Introduction

Darlington is a historic market town in the Tees Valley region of North East England. With a population of approximately 107,000, the borough of Darlington faces unique challenges and opportunities in providing adult social care. Understanding the demographics is crucial to tailoring our prevention strategy effectively.



Demographics

Age

Darlington's population is ageing, with a significant proportion of residents aged 65 and over.

According to the latest census data:

- **16.5%** of the population is aged 65-74.
- **9.1%** are aged 75-84.
- **2.5%** are aged 85 and over.

The increasing elderly population underscores the need for robust prevention and early intervention strategies to support healthy aging and independent living.

Disability

A substantial portion of Darlington's residents live with disabilities. Census data indicates:

- **18%** of the population reports a long-term health problem or disability that limits daily activities.
- This includes both physical disabilities and mental health conditions, necessitating a comprehensive approach to support varied needs.

Health Inequalities

Health inequalities in Darlington reflect broader national trends but are particularly pronounced in certain areas:

- Life expectancy varies significantly across the borough, with up to a **10-year gap** between the most and least deprived areas.
- Chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory illnesses are more prevalent in lower socio-economic groups.
- Mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, are also more common in disadvantaged populations.

These demographic insights highlight the importance of targeted prevention and early intervention measures to address health disparities and improve overall well-being.

2. Legal and Policy Context

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on Local Authorities to provide or arrange services that help prevent or delay people from developing care and support needs. Prevention is a core principle of the Care Act, emphasising the importance of maintaining independence and



well-being. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care is committed to adhering to these principles and ensuring their effective implementation within our community.

Think Local Act Personal Statements



WELLBEING AND INDEPENDENCE

Living the life I want, keeping safe and well



INFORMATION AND ADVICE

Having the information I need, when I need it



ACTIVE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

Keeping family, friends and connections



FLEXIBLE AND INTEGRATED CARE AND SUPPORT

My support, my own way



WHEN THINGS NEED TO CHANGE

Staying in control



WORKFORCE

The people who support me

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) emphasises the importance of personalised care and support. The TLAP framework supports the co-production of services, ensuring that individuals are at the heart of decision-making processes. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will integrate TLAP principles to promote person-centred care.

People at the Heart of Care White Paper 2021 and Health and social Care Act 2022

The "People at the Heart of Care" White Paper outlines the government's vision for adult social care. It focuses on personalised, preventative, and joined-up care, ensuring that individuals have choice, control, and support to live independently. Our Prevention strategy will underpin the ambitions of the Health and Social Care Act 2022 with an adult social care service vision that we enable more people, including unpaid carers, to live safely at home for longer.

The main objectives are that:

- People have choice, control, and support to live independent lives.
- People can access outstanding tailored care and support.
- People find Adult Social Care fair and accessible.

The SCIE Prevention Wheel

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) Prevention Wheel provides a framework for understanding and implementing preventative measures. It highlights different levels of prevention — primary, secondary, and tertiary — targeting various stages of need. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will use the SCIE Prevention Wheel to structure our prevention initiatives.



3. Strategic Objectives

Our strategy is guided by the following objectives:

1. **Promote Independence:** Enable individuals to live independently and maintain their well-being.
2. **Early Intervention:** Identify and address issues before they escalate.
3. **Personalised Support:** Tailor services to meet individual needs and preferences.
4. **Community Engagement:** Foster strong, supportive communities within Darlington.
5. **Collaborative Working:** Strengthen partnerships with health, social care, and community organisations in the Tees Valley and Durham region.

4. Prevention and Early Intervention Framework

Level 1: Universal Services: (Primary Prevention)

Primary prevention focuses on promoting health and well-being to prevent the onset of care needs. This includes public health campaigns, promoting healthy lifestyles, and creating supportive environments including, recreational spaces, learning and volunteering opportunities e.g.

- Access to available tailored information and advice provided in accessible formats.
- Supporting Safer Neighbourhoods and access to Fire Safety assessments through Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.
- Promoting healthy and active lifestyles and access to exercise groups.
- Reducing loneliness and isolating, e.g. befriending schemes or community activities.
- Future planning discussions and contingency planning including guiding people to seek independent financial advice.

Level 2: Prevention and Early Intervention (Secondary Prevention)

Secondary prevention aims to identify and address emerging care needs early. This includes screening programs, early intervention services, and support for those at risk. Our council will work with local healthcare providers to ensure timely identification and support for at-risk individuals. Early interventions can include:

- Falls Prevention Support and advice
- Housing adaptations
- Assistive technology

Level 3: Planned Care and Support to meet needs (Tertiary Prevention)

Tertiary prevention targets those with established care needs, aiming to prevent further deterioration and promote rehabilitation. This includes tailored care plans, reablement services, and ongoing support. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will work with people and unpaid carers to develop a support plan after a Care Act Assessment. These will be focussed on supporting people to retain or regain independence. To prevent needs from emerging across health and care, integrated services should work on a multi-agency basis working collaboratively to deliver prevention services.

This will include support for carers e.g. peer support, breaks from caring or support to develop mechanisms to protect their physical and mental health needs and may include:

Provision of information and advice in accessible formats.

Referrals to Darlington Cares who can advise re carer cards, vouchers, short breaks and register on the local carers register so are kept in contact.

Advice and signposted to welfare benefits / financial options.

The duty to prevent carers from developing needs for support is distinct from the duty to meet their eligible needs and should still be offered a Carers Assessment.

Further interventions may include:

Intermediate care and reablement are preventative, short-term intensive, goal-focused interventions. Also described as hospital discharge to assess pathways, people should also be considered for short-term reablement when they have the potential for further independence including as an avoidance for unnecessary hospital or residential care.

Types of Intermediate Care include:

- (a) Crisis / Rapid response short-term care
- (b) Home-based Intermediate Care / Reablement – health and social care provided at home.
- (c) Bed-based Intermediate Care in community hospitals and short-term residential care or nursing settings.

5. Community-Based Prevention Approaches

We will actively support a range of community-based prevention approaches such as:

Asset-Based Community Development

Leveraging community assets, such as local organisations and volunteer networks, to support individuals and foster resilience. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will map local resources and establish partnerships with community groups.

Social Prescribing

Connecting individuals with non-medical support within the community, such as exercise activities, social groups, and educational opportunities. We will collaborate with local GPs and health services to develop a robust social prescribing offer.

Technology and Digital Solutions

Utilising technology to provide information, support, and services, including telehealth, digital care records, and online support communities. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will invest in digital platforms to enhance service delivery and accessibility.

6. Who We Support and How We Support Them

Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care is dedicated to supporting a diverse range of individuals within our community, particularly those who are elderly, disabled, or experiencing health inequalities. Our support mechanisms are designed to promote independence, improve quality of life, and reduce the need for long-term care.

6.1 Reablement

Our Reablement services focus on helping individuals regain their independence after a period of illness, injury, or hospitalisation. This short-term, intensive support is provided by trained professionals who work with individuals to restore their skills and confidence in daily activities.

Key aspects of reablement:

- **Personalised Care Plans:** Tailored to meet the specific needs and goals of everyone.
- **Holistic Approach:** Addressing physical, emotional, and social needs.
- **Collaborative Effort:** Involving healthcare professionals, social workers, and family members.

6.2 Adaptations to the Home

Home adaptations are modifications made to an individual's living environment to enhance safety and accessibility. These adaptations are crucial for enabling people to live independently and comfortably in their own homes.

Examples of home adaptations:

- **Installing Grab Rails:** To assist with mobility and prevent falls.
- **Stairlifts:** To provide safe access to upper floors.
- **Bathroom Modifications:** Such as walk-in showers and raised toilet seats.

6.3. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

The Disabled Facilities Grant is a means-tested grant provided by Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care to fund necessary home adaptations for disabled individuals. The DFG helps cover the cost of major modifications, ensuring support for individuals to continue to live safely and independently.

Features of the Disabled Facilities Grant:

- **Eligibility Assessment:** To determine the individual's needs and the suitability of adaptations.
- **Financial Support:** Covering the cost of approved adaptations.
- **Professional Guidance:** Assistance from occupational therapists and housing officers in planning and implementing adaptations.

6.4. Support for Carers

Carers play a vital role in supporting individuals with care needs. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care recognises the challenges faced by carers and provides a range of support services to ensure their well-being and sustainability.

Support services for carers:

- **Respite Care:** Offering temporary relief for carers to take a break and recharge.
- **Carer Assessments:** Evaluating the needs of carers and providing tailored support plans.
- **Training and Resources:** Providing access to training and informational resources to enhance carers' skills and knowledge.

7. Partnership Working and Collaboration

Integrated Care Systems (ICS)

Working within ICS frameworks we will ensure seamless service delivery across health and social care sectors. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will actively participate in both Tees Valley and Durham and Darlington Integrated Systems to coordinate care efforts.

Voluntary and Community Sector Partnerships

Collaborating with voluntary and community organisations to enhance service provision and reach vulnerable populations. We will establish regular communication and joint initiatives with local voluntary and community sector.

Multi-Agency Working

Promoting multi-agency approaches to address complex needs through coordinated care plans and shared resources. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will facilitate multi-agency meetings and joint case management.

8. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Darlington Borough Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of our adult social care services. We recognise the importance of creating a fair and inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, can access the support they need to live fulfilling and independent lives.

8.1 Our Commitment to EDI

Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion is reflected in our policies, practices, and service delivery. We strive to ensure that:

- **All individuals have equal access to services:** Regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.
- **Services are culturally sensitive and inclusive:** Recognising and respecting the diverse backgrounds and needs of our community members.
- **Discrimination and inequality are actively challenged:** Through robust policies, training, and awareness raising.

8.2 Inclusive Service Delivery

To achieve an inclusive service delivery, we will link this strategy to the Corporate Equality Policy and implement the following approaches:

Comprehensive Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs):

- Conducting EIAs to identify potential barriers and ensure that our services meet the needs of all community members.
- Using the findings to inform service planning and delivery, ensuring that no group is disadvantaged.

Community Engagement and Consultation:

- Engaging with diverse community groups to understand their needs and perspectives.
- Consulting with service users, carers, and stakeholders to co-produce services that reflect the community's diversity.

Staff Training and Development:

- Providing regular training for staff on EDI principles and practices.
- Encouraging continuous professional development to enhance staff understanding and competence in delivering inclusive services.

Accessible Information and Communication:

- Ensuring that information about our services is accessible to all, using multiple formats and languages as necessary.
- Adopting inclusive communication strategies that consider the needs of individuals with disabilities and language barriers.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Regularly monitoring service delivery to ensure compliance with EDI standards.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of our EDI initiatives and making necessary adjustments based on feedback and data.

9. Workforce Development and Training

Implementing comprehensive training plans to equip the workforce with skills in prevention, early intervention, and personalised care. We will offer regular training sessions and workshops for our staff and partners.

Continuous Professional Development

Supporting ongoing learning and development opportunities for staff to stay updated on best practices and emerging trends. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will provide access to professional development resources and encourage participation in relevant conferences and courses.

10. Monitoring, Review, and Governance

Performance Indicators

We have established clear performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of prevention initiatives and early intervention strategies. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will use both data and feedback to track progress and outcomes.

Regular Reviews

We will conduct regular reviews of services and strategies to ensure they remain relevant and effective. We will schedule quarterly and annual reviews, involving stakeholders and service users in the evaluation process.

Governance Framework

We have implemented a robust governance framework to oversee this strategy, ensuring accountability and transparency. The governance structure will include oversight from Senior leadership and regular reporting to the council and the public.

11. Implementation Action Plan

We have developed a detailed overarching Adult Social Care action plan with specific activities, timelines, and responsibilities to achieve strategic objectives outlining key tasks, deadlines, and assigned roles.

12. Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders throughout the implementation process to ensure buy-in and support. Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care will hold regular stakeholder meetings and forums to gather input and feedback.



13. Summary

The Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy for Darlington Borough Council Adult Social Care is a comprehensive approach to enhance the well-being of our community through prevention and early intervention. By aligning with key legislative and policy frameworks, and focusing on personalised, community-based approaches, we aim to create a supportive environment where individuals can thrive independently.

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