

Multi-agency inspection

Collaborative working across services for
older people in Tayside

The inspection findings

Older people in Tayside were generally pleased with the services they received and the way these services worked together. Carers were less satisfied with the support they received, although this is consistent with the way carers across Scotland feel.

There is one health board, NHS Tayside, and three councils, Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross. There were distinctive differences in the way that the three health and social work partnerships in Tayside provided services. There was no over-arching strategy for health services for older people. This was partly because NHS Tayside and the councils have given priority to setting up the new Community Health Partnerships for each of the council areas.

The councils and the health board were working to ensure better joined-up care for older people. Collaborative working between health and social work services in Angus, both between frontline staff and senior managers, was very positive. Perth & Kinross were making progress towards developing a joint strategy and towards involving staff more in the development of this strategy. Dundee's position was affected by higher levels of deprivation and the presence of Ninewells Hospital in the city since two-thirds of acute admissions were people aged 65 or over. This had an effect on social work services, for example in relation to delayed discharges. The council and health board were aware of this issue and were addressing the situation.

Frontline staff generally worked well together in Tayside with a clear focus on assisting older people to live as independently as possible. This was particularly true of the multi-agency teams in the three areas. Health and social work staff need to be able to communicate quickly and easily, especially around single shared assessments, and the current systems did not always make this possible.

The councils and health board in Tayside were developing services to meet the growing emphasis on assisting older people by providing early stage, preventative services and promoting self care, particularly for people with long term conditions.

Improvement is required in some areas including:

- An overall strategy for health services, including community hospitals, which is developed jointly with the councils
- A more consistent approach to assisting staff help older people at home take their medication
- The development of dementia services
- Clearer financial plans, closely aligned to service developments
- Sharing information held in social work and health computer systems.

Examples of good services and positive collaborative working

- The falls prevention service in Perth & Kinross had had a significant impact in reducing the number of falls amongst older people. It brought together health and social work staff, older people and carers who worked together, for example giving advice on footwear, reviewing medication and encouraging older people to take regular exercise.
- The new partnership arrangement between Bield Housing Association and Dundee City Council Social Work Department at Rockwell Gardens has provided flats with a social care team on site.

- In Angus the Early Supported Discharge/Prevention of Admission teams of community nurses, social work and social care staff were very effective in supporting people in their own homes or enabling early discharge from hospital.
- The home care teams in Dundee had been re-organised so there were small self-managing teams of staff who provided care to a small number of people. The home care staff were able to go out with an occupational therapist when a discharge package was being planned so that they understood what appropriate help they should give an older person.
- The pharmacist in the Community Liaison Team in Perth Royal Infirmary assisted people before leaving hospital to understand their medication.
- The Angus Housing Strategy was based on a 20-year vision for housing suitable for older people. It recognised the diminishing need for sheltered housing and proposed more individual solutions such as telecare and electronic equipment.
- The '*Tayside Managed Care Network for Dementia – service mapping project, 2006*' highlighted aspects of good practice across Tayside and would be used as the basis for future service development.
- The Perth & Kinross Carers strategy clearly set out details about what services were available for carers, including carers emergency cards, and an Action Plan for 2005-08. The Carers Strategy for Angus was also very detailed and has an Action Plan for 2005-09.
- The community mental health teams in Angus provided a comprehensive care management service to people over 65 who had mental health problems.

What is a multi-agency inspection?

The Tayside inspection covered a wide range of services for older people – mainly health and social work. It looked at the way that these services worked together to assist older people to live as independently as possible.

The multi-agency inspection methodology was developed by the Social Work Inspection Agency, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland and the Care Commission. The inspection team was made up of a number of different people, including a consultant, a GP, nurse managers, social work inspectors, and a carer inspector.

The team analysed a large selection of information about services for older people in Tayside. The team members talked to older people and their carers, read social work case files and carried out surveys of people who use services, their carers and staff. The team also spent two weeks in Tayside meeting staff, managers and visiting some centres and offices. It did not duplicate the work of the Care Commission.

The inspection team looked particularly at the way that joint strategies were developed and implemented. It also looked at how staff worked together to provide services for older people.

This leaflet summarises the key findings of the inspection. The full details are set out in the inspection report published in May 2007. Actions are already being taken in Tayside to improve services, following the recommendations that were made in the report.

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of services for older people in Tayside

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