

Multi-agency Inspection Summary

Collaborative working across services for older people in Forth Valley

What is a multi-agency inspection?

The Forth Valley inspection covered a wide range of services for older people – mainly health and social work. It focused on NHS Forth Valley, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Councils. It looked at the way that these services worked together to assist older people live as independently as possible.

The multi-agency inspection 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 doctor for older people, a GP, a nurse manager and occupational therapist manager, social work inspectors, and a carer inspector.

The team analysed a large selection of information about services for older people in Forth Valley. 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 May and June 2007, in Forth Valley meeting staff, managers and visiting some centres and offices. It did not repeat the work of the Care Commission.

This leaflet summarises the key findings of the inspection. The full details are set out in the inspection report published in January 2008. Actions are already being taken in Forth Valley to improve services, following the recommendations that were made in the report.

If you would like a full copy of the report please contact:

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The inspection findings

Older people in Forth Valley are generally pleased with the services they receive and the way these services work together. Carers are less satisfied with the support they receive, although this is consistent with the way carers across Scotland feel.

There is a very positive culture in Forth Valley between managers and staff at all levels in NHS Forth Valley, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Councils about working together in partnership to help older people and their carers lead as independent lives as possible.

Significant successes have been achieved by the partners in relation to the way that older people are supported in the community and are admitted and discharged from hospital. There are many good examples of proactive services such as the Fast Track team in the hospitals and the joint rehabilitation services.

However, there are distinctive differences in the way that the three health and social work partnerships in Forth Valley provide services. There is no over-arching strategy for health and social work services for older people. This is partly because each council can decide what level of community care services to provide and also because NHS Forth Valley has been developing a new acute hospital in Larbert and four community hospitals. The partnerships are all developing the role of the three Community Health Partnerships.

Collaborative working between health and social work services in Clackmannanshire, both between frontline staff and senior managers, is positive. Outcomes for older people are good. Falkirk Council provides free home care which is valued by older people and their carers. The managers need to involve staff more in the

development of social work services. The partnership's position in Stirling is affected by the lower levels of home care provided by the council, which means that older people and their carers are less satisfied than in the other two councils.

Overall, the main issue for the partnerships is the need to develop a joint strategy for future community health and social work services. They should urgently progress the development of a joint Forth Valley-wide framework for older people's social work and health services in the community. This should be done in conjunction with the current work on developing plans for services in the community hospitals.

Frontline staff generally work well together in Forth Valley with a clear focus on assisting older people to live as independently as possible. They need to be able to communicate quickly and easily, especially around single shared assessments, and the current systems do not always make this possible.

The council and health services in Forth Valley are developing services to meet the growing emphasis on assisting older people by providing early stage, preventative services and self care, particularly for people with long term conditions.

Improvement is required in some areas including:

- An overall strategy for community health and social work services for older people
- A more consistent approach across Forth Valley to assisting staff help older people at home take their medication
- The development of mental health and dementia services for older people
- Clearer joint financial plans.

Examples of good services and positive collaborative working

The NHS Fast Track team carries out immediate assessments in A&E to support decisions to admit or discharge a patient. It consists of four senior therapists (OTs and physiotherapists) and two therapy assistants. There are strong links between them, social work staff and the NHS Forth Valley discharge co-ordinator. The team is widely considered to be very effective.

Forth Valley Sensory Centre - this new purpose built centre provides an impressive range of services, such as audiology and interpreter services for deaf people, across all of Forth Valley. It was developed as a partnership across the statutory and voluntary sectors and with significant involvement of service users. Within the one setting, older people can have access to a wide range of advice, guidance and services.

Mobile rapid support service - Clackmannanshire Council's contract for a mobile home care service which provides rapid support has been very successful. It has expanded from two to eight mobile units deployed to provide help in people's homes between the hours of 7am and 11pm, seven days per week. The service is delivered in partnership with a private home care provider contracted by the council, with community nurses supervising and training home carers in the delivery of health related tasks. These include administration of medication, assistance with personal care and wound dressings, catheter care and monitoring of pressure areas.

Falls prevention schemes - the mobile emergency care service (MECS) works with 6,000 older people in Falkirk, providing a community alarm system. As part of the falls prevention programme, MECS alerts health and social work staff if an older

person has had two or more falls in the last six months and refers them to FALGO, the Falkirk outreach service for support and treatment.

Rehabilitation service in a Stirling Council care home was developed by using health funding for the building of the rehabilitation and respite suite in Strathendrick care home. Social work services fund the costs of the staff and equipment and NHS Forth Valley funds the specialist staff. Immediately on admission, detailed care plans for older people are drawn up to identify goals to be achieved.

Kinglass Centre, Bo'ness is a joint centre for social work and health services. Built in 2002, it promotes positive joint working with health and social work staff being located in one building. It has some shared facilities such as a conference room, small library and kitchen facilities. The chair of the management meeting, who is a patient, is also a member of the Scottish Health Council.

Ludgate House, a resource centre, provides a range of services, such as day care service, home care, respite and the mobile emergency community services. It operates 7 days a week and provides a focal point for older people's care services in Clackmannanshire. Specialist dementia day care is also provided. Older people said that this service alleviated their loneliness and they enjoyed attending.

The NHS psychiatric liaison service involves dedicated nursing staff liaising with care home staff. It has had significant success in supporting staff in care homes, with the result that older people with dementia can continue living in care homes. This approach is also being extended to patients in care homes with palliative care needs.

Carers assessments - a new agreement has been put in place with the Stirling Carers Centre to undertake assessments on behalf of the council. The assessment form had been jointly developed by the Carers Centre, Stirling Council and NHS Forth Valley.

Assessments are recorded onto the council's system. Carers like this system. Community nursing services use a 'carer's views' form to encourage the identification of their needs. A full training programme about carers needs had been put in place by the Carers Centre for council staff.

Joint leadership and maximising resources in a small organisation - the Head of Community Care and the CHP General Manager in Clackmannanshire work together very effectively. They are prepared to consider innovative solutions, and in doing so, they minimise the difficulties of the CHP and council being small in terms of numbers of staff and managers.

The NHS Public Partnership Forum (PPF) in Falkirk responds to issues about the CHP which are raised with it, such as questions about the new acute hospital. We attended a lively and positive meeting where we saw this in action. There were also detailed presentations about local dental services and how the public representatives on the PPF represented local views at the CHP Committee meetings.

Killin Community Trust emerged from social work services working with the community with the determined aim of maintaining a small local care home when it was put up for sale. The Falls of Dochart Care Home was bought by a Community Trust, with assistance from the council on fund raising, plus finance from social work and health. It continues to provide an important 'hub' for residential and respite services in the heart of this rural community.

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