

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Living Well, Staying Independent and Taking Part in North Tyneside – an information and guidance strategy

To make high quality information and advice available to all adults and their relatives and carers who need, or may need, services and support in order to lead their lives and to make sure that the information and advice is available when, how and where they need it.

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Section 1 – Defining what we mean by advice, information and social prescribing

Introduction

Information and advice are essential for all adults and their relatives and carers who need, or may need, services and support in order to lead their lives. This cuts across the full range of people's needs and financial means.

In particular, information and advice are necessary to enable people to have control of their lives, make choices and receive tailored services; all of which are core to the personalisation agenda proposed through government policies including the partnership agreement *Think Local Act Personal* (November 2010); the I&DEA paper *Transforming Adult Social Care – Access to Advice and Advocacy* (February 2009) and more recently the DH Guidance *A Vision for Adult Social Care – Capable Communities and Active Citizens* (November 2010), which states that:

“To have real autonomy and choice people need information and advice. Lack of good, accessible information to help support their choices is a real concern for people. Councils' role here is to ensure that everyone – whether using their personal budget or their own funds – can get the information and advice they need. This could include

- Good quality, up to date and accessible information direct from the council, especially on websites;
- Working with local voluntary and/or community organisations and experts in user-led organisations, including carer-led organisations, to provide support, advocacy and brokerage services;
- Advocacy, which helps people express views and receive the services they want as a result. This can range from a person helping a disabled person speak up for themselves to a paid advocate employed by the Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Service; and
- Recognising that provision of information and advice is a universal service, and that people funding their own care have a particular need for information and guidance to help plan how their care needs are met.”¹

¹ A Vision for Adult Social Care – Capable Communities and Active Citizens

Locally, our customers, staff and partners have indicated that although North Tyneside already offers a wealth of local information and advice, this is not always provided how, when, where and by whom our customers want and need it. North Tyneside is committed to improving our customers' experience of information and advice. In order to do so we accept there is a need for Adult Social Care services to work with a wide range of partners to deliver an effective community based approach and through this:

“Ensure all people have the information and advice needed to make care and support decisions which work for them, regardless of who is paying for that care. This includes help to make the best use of their own resources to support their independence and reduce their need for long term care.”²

Social prescribing is an innovative approach to provide a parallel pathway to conventional medical prescribing. Health and social care staff are facilitated to offer social and leisure activities to those who may benefit from participation in such activities ('taking part'). This is a population approach towards taking part, it is wholly inclusive, and activity groups are available to everybody, including those with disabilities or in recovery from mental illness. The pathway aims to provide social inclusion and participation, increasing resilience through a sense of autonomy, choice and control for those who participate in activity. The service facilitates primary and secondary prevention of poor wellbeing

'enabling health, independence and well being, support for people with long term needs, ensuring reforms put people in control, making sure change happens'³

Currently, there is no single point of access to which a GP, social worker or practice nurse can refer a person who might benefit from 'Taking Part' in an appropriate activity in their locality. There is no one place to find all activities in an area, whether provided by Local Authority Leisure Services, voluntary sector, or Taking Part Workshops.

² Think Local, Act Personal – See www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

³ Our Health Our Care Our Say

Definitions

Information and advice are frequently used terms. They are sometimes used interchangeably which can cause confusion, but when they are combined, the meaning is generally understood. Social Prescribing is a relatively new concept introduced in *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* (January 2006) setting out a new direction for community services:

- **Information** - provision of knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstance in a variety of forms
- **Advice** - the offer of an opinion or recommendation as a guide to action to enable realisation of a need through accessing services or entitlements
- **Social Prescribing** - seeks to link people up with the non-medical facilities and services available in the wider community that they can access to address the factors that influence their wellbeing

Section 2 – The policy agenda and why these services are so important right now

The Policy Agenda

The Coalition Government has stated its commitment to continuing the reform of social care in England through extending the roll out of personalisation and Personal Budgets. It is clear that the general direction of travel for health and social care is towards greater choice and personal responsibility, integrated services and partnership working.

There have been further significant changes for health and social care which have already been heralded through the new *Health & Social Care Bill* (January 2011) and the *Public Health White Paper* (December 2010). *A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens* (DH November 2010) outlines the timeline towards legislative reform and the new agenda for Adult Social care in England.

The Partnership Agreement *Think Local Act Personal* (November 2010) developed together with partners in adult social care, built upon the original *Putting People First* concordat. It supports personalisation, but with greater emphasis on a community based approach, devolving power to communities and allowing people including the most vulnerable to lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens (November 2010) identifies seven principles to delivering the new agenda for adult social care

- **Prevention:** empowered people and strong communities will work together to maintain independence. Where the state is needed it supports communities and helps people to retain independence.
- **Personalisation:** individuals not institutions take control of their care. Personal budgets, preferable as direct payments, are provided to all eligible people.

- **Partnership:** care and support delivered in a partnership between individuals, communities, the voluntary and private sectors, the NHS and councils – including wider support services, such as housing
- **Plurality:** the variety of people's needs is matched by diverse service provision, with a broad market of high quality service providers
- **Protection:** there are sensible safeguards against the risk of abuse or neglect. Risk is no longer an excuse to limit people's freedom
- **Productivity:** greater local accountability will drive improvements and innovation to deliver higher quality care and support services. A focus on publishing information about agreed quality outcomes will support transparency and accountability

Why are Information, Advice & Social Prescribing Services Important?

Personalisation is based on a principle that individuals and their families can make informed choices about the different care and support they would like to access available to them in their community.

The role of credible, up-to-date information and advice is therefore intrinsic to Personalisation, as without this Adult Social Care customers will be unable to directly purchase a range of solutions from providers and agencies available in the community and so cannot have informed choice and consequently control over their lives. As we tailor care packages for each individual customer it is crucial we have the information resources available to enable individuals to make informed choices and decisions about the quality and range of options available.

Within North Tyneside Adult Social Care Service Plan we have made a commitment to expand our functions to include a high quality advice and brokerage service. This will be available to everyone, including people who fund their own support, will explain with clarity the assessment processes for accessing public funding and will allow people to be more self sufficient in finding out both what they may be entitled to and the types of services available.

The aim is for people to be able to easily access the support they need at the time that they need it, and through signposting enable people to access services without the need for full assessment to simplify the process for them and reduce the workflow for Adult Social Care. Information and advice will be available for those receiving state funding, those who fund their own support and for people across the spectrum of need from critical to low level needs.

The provision of information and offer of advice to enable access to community resources is not the end of the journey; once the information and knowledge about community resources and support is made available, we need to ensure those services are able to be easily accessed.

We envisage achieving the offer of access to this information and advice provision through work with our User Led Organisations strengthening them to form a support network for those customers who are unable to access the information and advice offering without support.

We also wish to embrace social prescribing as the mechanism for linking people with community resources. This is an important factor in our strategy as social prescribing contributes positively to a range of health related outcomes and is a conduit to collaboration between agencies due to its focus on joint commissioning.

It also provides considerable scope for improved mental health and well being for vulnerable individuals, groups and communities as it includes a diverse range of opportunities such as opportunities for arts and creativity, physical activity, learning new skills, volunteering, mutual aid, befriending and self-help, as well as support with, for example, employment, benefits, housing, debt, legal advice, or parenting problems.

Section 3 – The evidence and benefits – national and local

National evidence and benefits

The Think Local Act Personal and Transforming Social Care agendas both recognise the central role that information and advice plays in enabling choice and control for people that need or may need support with their daily lives.

In *Think Local Act Personal* we are directed to consider a personalised, community based approach for everyone by placing

“ a huge premium on efficient, effective and integrated service delivery alongside partnership working to support the contribution of individuals, their families, carers and the wider community – reducing the need for acute health and care support.

...effective provision of information and advice will be critical to support the changes to service delivery models.”

We therefore need to make formal connections to our partners in order to deliver this integrated service and pool resources. We have begun to move this forwards through the work of our JNSA. The strengthening of partnership working between health and social care will be vital in supporting our customers with long term needs manage their conditions and live independently.

The long term conditions chronic care model within the Department of Health's Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QUIPP) programme is exploring how different services can work together to promote self care, preventative care and early intervention, minimising the need for hospital and residential care. This promotes partnership working between statutory health, social and third sector services, building on the work started in *Our Health Our Care Our Say* (Dept Health 2006).

The NHS has also developed its web site NHS Choices⁴ which provides information on conditions, treatments, local services and healthy lifestyles. The site is also seen as a first step towards providing public information about service quality in the NHS as it includes such details as Care Quality Commission ratings and MRSA rates.

Nationally other authorities who have updated their websites with information and advice provision report that they have noticed both cash benefits and benefits in kind as the enquiries that do come to their first point of contact are more informed. In addition access to social prescribing increases public knowledge on how to improve mental wellbeing and thus leads to reduction in NHS and social services usage.

Social prescribing is an emerging field and delivers the preventative approach endorsed in the new national mental health strategy: No Health Without Mental Health (2011). The evidence base for the effectiveness of different approaches and interventions varies, however local short and medium term outcomes include:

- Increased awareness of skills, activities and behaviours that improve and protect wellbeing – e.g. the adoption of positive steps for mental health;
- Increased uptake of arts, leisure, education, volunteering, sporting and other activities by vulnerable and at-risk groups
- Increased levels of social contact and social support among marginalised and isolated groups;
- Reduced levels of inappropriate prescribing;
- Reduced waiting lists for counsellors and psychological services; and

⁴ <http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

- Reduced levels of frequent GP visits

The central role that information and advice is expected to play in future adult social care provision was highlighted in the social care green paper, *Shaping the Future of Care Together*, and the subsequent white paper, *Building the National Care Service* (2010), which describe universal information and advice provision as one of the six pillars of the proposed National Care Service.

Having good information and advice will also help us to meet a number of the positive outcomes highlighted in *A Vision for Adult Social Care: Capable Communities and Active Citizens*, including restoring individual's independence and autonomy, protecting and enhancing people's dignity and freedom, supporting social care choices, matching the variety of people's needs by diverse service provision from a broad market of high quality service providers, linking with mainstream and universal providers who do not exclusively work in the social care sector, whilst minimising risks without forming barriers to real choice and better quality of life for individuals.

Effective information and advice plays a particularly vital role in changing people's attitudes to social care, and encourages take up of preventative and early intervention services as problems emerge, rather than waiting to access services until a point of crisis. Research shows that people who fail to reach the right services at the earliest opportunities often experience a crisis at an earlier stage in their life and can require intensive services provided in greater volume and over a longer period of time. More significantly, local evidence has highlighted a link between people failing to access services until a point of crisis and a corresponding faster rate of decline in health and independence. (Department of Health, 2008).

Local Need: Demographics

We know from experiences of service delivery in the statutory, private and voluntary sector that people tend to need services and support as a result of a physical or learning disability, mental health problem, long term illness, condition or acquired injury or frailty associated with getting older.

The population of North Tyneside continues to grow and is projected to increase from 199,800 in 2011 to 227,700 by 2030. The age profile of the population will change significantly and will get older with 44% of the population expected to be over 65 by 2030 compared with 17% now. The growth in the number of older residents will create challenges in supporting these residents as they age. However, there are also opportunities offered by the growth in this age group, for example, nationally 65% of volunteers are aged 50 or over.

The 'prime age' population for North Tyneside will reduce slightly from 41.5% of the population to 40%. This is the most mobile and highly qualified section of the workforce and is crucial to sustain a competitive economy.⁵ Overall, 9,520 people were in receipt of incapacity benefit / severe disablement allowance/ Employment & Support Allowance in February 2011, with 11,970 Disability Living Allowance claimants⁶

Adult Social Care Services currently supports 3422 older people, 365 people with a learning disability, 629 people with a physical disability and 326 people with a mental health problem to live independently in the community (AIS 2009/10)

⁵ <http://www.pansi.org.uk>

⁶ DWP Tabulation Tool

Local Need: Customer Experiences and Preferences

Information and advice is very important to our customers, however our customer base within Adult Social Care is varied and diverse due to age range and disability or health related issues. We need to be very clear about the variety of users of our information and advice and that 'one size does not fit all'

- **Older People** – prefer to have information provided face to face, with a strong reliance on the written word, preferring to have official information in printed form. This group was disengaged from the internet as a source of information according to the ONS survey 2010 which reports that 60% of people over the age of 65 had never used the internet.
- **People with Learning Disabilities** – again the preference is for face to face communication as confirmed by Mencap in 2008, impersonal delivery of information through audio, video and easy read printed information are accepted as the best alternatives.
- **People with Mental Health needs** - prefer their information to be provided in clear and simple English in summarised forms and like real life examples of the topic of the information.
- **Carers** – benefit from one to one support, have little access to the internet and rely on receiving information from peer groups.

To further the personalisation agenda and better understand our customers' experiences and preferences in information and advice provision we have looked closely at the North Tyneside Local Involvement Network (LINK) independent report – Information for Personal Budgets Researching improvements to the provision of information on personal budgets in North Tyneside. This report looked at the target audience, what information we should be providing versus what is already available, how we made this information available and then made some proposals on how we could amend our offer.

Written and on line information is very important to our customers as it offers a private way of evaluating their situation and finding out what is available to support them. However people told us the online and written information provided by North Tyneside Council Adult Social Care was not always easy to access and that it did not cover all of the information they needed.

The information booklets provided were good summaries for new customers, mainly focussed on the beginning stages of the personal budget process, but were not useful for existing customers as they had particular stresses and concerns about the perceived threats to their current provision. Existing customers wanted information introducing personal budgets, explaining the differences in how they could continue to receive their services and inform them of their choices. New customers needed more information to help them get to grips with the various decisions and information the personal budget pathway demands.

The North Tyneside's Adult Social Care internet resources were hard to find due to being positioned within the council's web site under Health and Well Being, with the search facility on the home page producing misleading and confusing information. Whilst there were a number of links on the information pages, there were not any directions or context about where to find information and it was not clear what the organisations included in the links were or what information they might provide. Again the information offering was limited with regards to personal budgets and the information on offer was text only, without images although there were some options to download information, have the page read aloud and to change the font to make it easier to read.

People wanted information and advice to be clear, up to date, in everyday language avoiding adult social care terminology, provided in a clear structure, easily navigated so that they could find information quickly. Clear indication about eligibility for services and details about the assessment process were needed to enable people to participate in this fully and understand all aspects of the assessment such as the self assessment and financial assessment.

The information and advice resource should have specific topics kept in one place to make it simpler to access, grouped according to the help people need as opposed to the disability group they belong to. Details should be included about support services, free and paid for, available within our area and information about the quality of those

services to enable service users to have a choice in selecting social care providers and exploring alternative ways of meeting their social care needs. Contact details should include links to the services; explain what service the organisation provides and opening hours alongside contact details including telephone numbers for those people who prefer to speak to someone one to one.

People felt we should include a 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) section as this is a useful tool for answering questions and also make use of case studies as a way to illustrate the options of how personal budgets could be used. We should make better use of audio and video resources for people with learning disabilities and for people with mental health needs. This information could be provided via DVD or as an accompaniment to information held on the web pages.

Future information resources should recognise all groups but must be acutely conscious of the needs of the main users of personal budgets. The resources we design must be relevant to older people and must be accessible to people with mental health needs, physical disabilities and people with learning disabilities and their carers. We also need to consider the professionals who will access this information to ensure it is a manageable resource for them to better support their client base.

It concluded that the information a person needs depends on their capacity to understand that information and how they choose to access services through personalisation; that the way the information was delivered would need to be differentiated according to the accessibility needs of different people, but that they should receive the same standard and quality of information regardless of their preferred method of obtaining it.

Section 4 – Detail of the element as it is now, what funding it brings and what resources it needs for the new model to work

- **Adult Social Care Web Pages**

The current website is located about two clicks away from the main council's home page via a link on the health and well being menu option. The pages are entirely text based, using bullet points and headers to mark out the information.

This information is presented as long pages that have to be scrolled down to be read in full, giving the impression of a printed page transferred to the internet. There are options to have the page read aloud and to change to colour and size of the font to make it easier to read. However the web pages have a limited range of information and confusing navigation. There is no information or explanation about the links used or anything to clarify who the organisations are or what information they might provide.

The website needs to be replaced with a new, larger and more interactive site. The ability of the web to create up to date, detailed and accessible information should be harnessed as quickly as possible. This website must be regularly checked and updated to ensure the information held is current. The council do not currently have any permanent information staff to take care of the website which could lead to any new facility becoming out of date and uninformative.

- **North Tyneside Council Adult First Call Team**

The team provide a telephone service held within Adult Social Care providing a convenient way for the public to access advice, information and support for people with adult social care needs and offering a first point of contact for all adult social care referrals.

Queries come from a variety of callers including people already receiving social care services, people wanting to fund their own services and people with low level needs looking for information and advice. The team offer an initial triage service for callers to Adult Social Care, called a contact assessment, filtering each case individually to ascertain the best or preferred course of action.

The team also provide a significant advice and information service to those not eligible for adult social care services for people with critical and substantive needs. The team have built up a bank of signposting information, and would welcome a formal website which would standardise the information and advice given.

- **Social Workers, support staff and other customer front facing staff**

Our front line staff, including Social Workers and Support Workers, is fully prepared for their roles and responsibilities with regards to information and advice through involvement in awareness raising and other events focussing on the key information resources available.

They regularly have information cascaded to them as received by the Council regarding changes and additions to the available offering. We also provide information and awareness raising sessions for our Contracts and Monitoring Staff, community engagement team and those in similar roles in our third sector and private provider services.

- **Written publications**

Our current written material, whilst well written, is limited in scope and does not reflect the information preferences of the various groups. In order to address this we are working with a newly established Carer Reference group on a new set of customer leaflets which will be available in summary form and in a range of fact sheets. At present we envisage a 3 stage approach to printed information; Personal Budgets – A Short Guide; Personal Budgets – A Step By Step Guide and a series of Factsheets covering the journey to obtaining a personal budget. These leaflets are aimed

primarily at service users but will also be useful to workers as a reminder of the facts and the processes as they share information with people about Personal Budgets.

We will also ensure all our written publications are produced in accordance with the communications guidelines laid down by North Tyneside's Communications Team and with particular reference to issues around accessibility and usability.

We will ensure that the content of all public information is clear and easy to read, uses plain English, is free of jargon and buzz words and is suitable for our target audience.

- **Communication and publicity**
In order to reach a greater proportion of the public and the more diverse range of the population we need to raise the profile of our information and advice services more widely and in more mainstream places. This will help to ensure that when people do need help and support they are aware of what is available and where to go.

- **Mainstream advice**
North Tyneside has a wealth of mainstream information and advice provision accessible by people with a social care need. Examples of these include North Tyneside Welfare Benefits Team, North Tyneside Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK North Tyneside's Information and Advice Service and North Tyneside Disability Forum's Good Advice Project. Frontline staff in a number of statutory and third sector organisations also offers mainstream sources of information and advice, for example library staff.

We are in the process of raising the awareness of Adult Social Care specific information and advice providers so that they know which information resource would best suit their service user's situations. We are aware that we need to do more to make adult social care information as accessible as possible.

- **Campaigns and Events**

North Tyneside Council's Adult Social care arranges a number of public events and also attends those organised by other local organisations. These events are seen as an invaluable way of sharing information about the advice and information available direct to members of the general public, service users, their carers and other professionals. This is done through market place stalls with displays of available information, and through face to face contact with the customer base.

Examples of recent events organised by Adult Social Care include – Transforming Adult Social Care, State of the Area event and Personalisation conference. Others organised by local organisations include Age UK NT's Age Takes Centre Stage, and a series of community information days. We also lead on, or participate in, national and local topic-specific campaigns such as Multi Agency Advice Days, the North Tyneside Carers' Centre's Carers Week.

- **Specialist information and advice**

North Tyneside currently offers a range of specialist information and advice which is usually provided by organisations in the third sector, such as Age UK North Tyneside, Disability North, North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People and North Tyneside Carers' Centre. People are able to refer themselves to these services and other advice and information workers also routinely refer people to these organisations if they feel that specialist advice and information is required.

- **Signposting Information Guidance Network – North Tyneside - SIGN – NT**

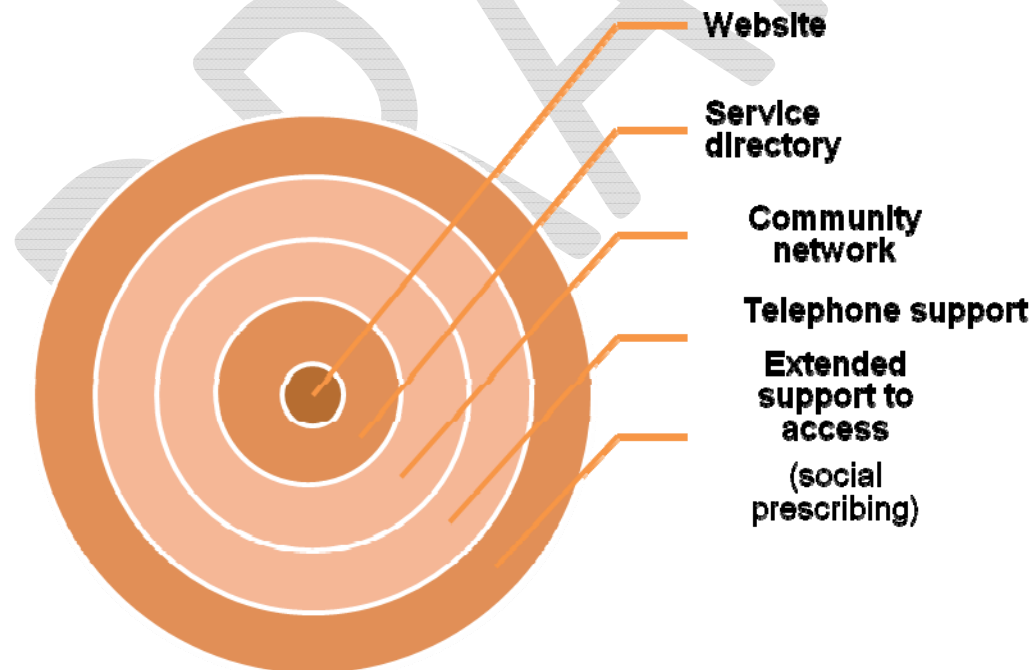
This is a new network of advice and support providers from the voluntary and third sector, who are working with Adult Social Care to build on their current offerings. The aim is to work with our User Led Organisations (ULOs) to bridge the gaps we are aware of and form an advice and guidance network to ensure streamlined service provision and signposting/referral between these agencies. It is envisaged this network will offer the support needed by our residents in finding the information they need to ensure they access the services they require. Work is ongoing to agree Standards and a Code of Conduct to ensure smooth flow of information between the organisations involved and training is planned to raise awareness of the ways in which other ULOs throughout the country have come together to work in partnership with Adult Social Care to further the prevention agenda.

Section 5 Our proposed model described, recognising that we can't do it all now but saying where we can start

Our model is based on maximising what we already have but addressing the known gaps and shortages by:

- Creating a greater co-ordination through a central point,
- Better understanding what we already have and collating this information,
- Providing practical support for people to access resources,
- Investing in Social Prescribing

The model has a layered approach recognising the different levels of intensity of intervention require but starting with a website and service directory at its core.



Website - North Tyneside Council are currently procuring a new adult social care online information and advice website designed to make it easier for people to access high quality, accurate information about the help and support available locally, either from the Council or from local independent and voluntary organisations. It is envisaged that this website will enable all providers of information and advice to have one centralised and standardised source of information, which will allow for more efficient back office processes and easier information management.

It will initially target four main audiences:

- People who are not sure if they have a need,
- People who know they have a need but don't know what choices they have,
- People who know what they need and just want the solutions,
- Professionals and volunteers supporting others.

Visitors to the site will be able to navigate through the choices and information which longer term will link through to the available services and providers.

Service Directory – This will be a basic A to Z of services, products and events for people living in North Tyneside. Work on agreeing the approach for this directory and the time frame are in progress.

Community network - We know there is a wealth of community and voluntary sector resources that can assist us at local, regional and national levels. We are mapping the organisations that are out there providing information and advice and working with them to ensure a network is set up to guarantee help is available relating to the specialist knowledge they provide. We will also devise a code of conduct and standards to ensure the support provided is equitable and set up a more structured referral and signposting system.

Telephone Support – We know that a website or even good service directory is not the solution for everyone and some people will need and want to speak to someone for help to access the electronic information on their behalf.

Again we have a range of options and some existing resources to build upon including My Signpost, Adult Social Care First Call, the Council's corporate Customer Contact Centre and the wider community network detailed above.

Extended Support to Access Services - Integral to the setting up and maintenance of our model is the provision of extended support to access universal and prevention services. This is envisaged through linkages with the Taking Part Workshop hub and a community led directory of local services and activities, provider yet to be determined, which would run alongside the portal as a complementary resource.

The social prescription pathway will be nurtured and improved, and stronger links established between health/ social services and community activities.

This will enable a strong referral pathway between all health professionals, social services, care organisations (such as carers centres, day care centres, Alzheimer's society), social landlords, police and neighbourhood services into activities that have been shown to lead to a large and rapid improvement to health and wellbeing. Empowering the multiple referrer model will reduce health inequalities by targeting the people most at risk of ill health.

What it needs for the new model to work

In order to ensure equitable access to the information and advice we seek to provide our North Tyneside customers we will have to ensure that sufficient support is available to assist those without IT skills or lack of access to IT provision to attain the information they require to make informed decisions about the services they need to keep independent, safe and well.

It is envisaged that the support will be delivered by a network of providers of advice and information in the borough. There are already a large number of advice and information providers operating in the borough. Those involved in the progression of the support network include:

Age UK North Tyneside, North Tyneside Coalition of Disabled People, North Tyneside Disability Forum, Independent Living Zone, North Tyneside Advocacy, Disability North, Skills for People, North Tyneside Carers Centre, Learning Disabilities Federation and the Community & Healthcare Forum.

However it is important that we engage with as many providers of advice and information as possible and to this end we are currently undertaking a mapping exercise to

- make better use of the available resources through identification of gaps and areas of duplication,
- understand the current signposting arrangements between advice and information providers and services, and
- look at the standards being used by our information and advice providers.

The network of organisations will continue to offer information and advice to people through their usual delivery routes. However it is hoped that from the information gathered we will be able to engage further with the local organisations and aim to support these providers by:

- Agreeing quality standards for the content and delivery of information and advice;
- Developing existing networks to enable a more coordinated approach to provision and formalising signposting and referral systems;
- Developing new service delivery options where needed by co-ordinating and integrating services where possible.

We will hold events for providers to come together to discuss their issues and seek solutions and hold training sessions to share national knowledge around networking for ULOs and formalise working arrangements.

Outcomes to which the provision of clearer access to information and advice will contribute are:

- People will be able to preserve or increase their independence
- People will be better supported to preserve or increase their health, wellbeing and safety

- People will be able to make informed personal choices about how to help themselves or regarding who to approach for support
- People will be better able to maintain dignity
- People will be prevented or delayed from needing more intensive support or active referrals to services
- People will be more accurately referred to and between services
- People will be able to gain access to relevant information, advice and support quickly and easily
- A functional network of providers of information and advice, that is knowledgeable, able to actively refer between services and offer a consistent standard of service
- A variety of channels established for people to access information and advice

The development of this strategic plan has provided an opportunity to review how information and advice is managed and delivered to our customer base and the wider population. It is also an acknowledgement that in order to transform social care and deliver personalisation we will need to reach beyond traditional care services; supporting our customers stay as independent for as long as possible through ensuring council-wide and partnership approaches to universal services, e.g. leisure, adult education, transport, employment, healthy living and health improvement (backed by targeted intervention), along with housing and supported living options.

An action plan covering the key actions that will be required to deliver this agenda can be found in Appendix A. Some of this work has been concluded for example the mapping of available resources and the LINK Report , some is already underway, for example the commissioning of the new website and the formation of the SIGN – NT group.

The resources required to implement and maintain this new information and advice framework will be assessed as part of the implementation process, detail will need to be quantified as the work progresses; for example the format of the new information website is yet to be decided upon, with cost implications being implicit within this decision. Attention must be given to the potential savings to be made and this should form part of the governance of the process, reporting to the Adult Social Care Senior Management Team.

Appendix A
Information and Guidance Action Plan

Priority	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Person
Understanding what people need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A LINKs report commissioned about information required for Personal Budgets • Work with community groups to gain feedback and develop ideas on how best to provide information and advice 	September 2011 November 2011	Keith Metcalf Ian Lane/Lesley Crawford
Improving our infrastructure and delivery models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission and provide a consistent and comprehensive web based information resource for use by citizens and partners • Develop the content of the ASC data bases supplying the website to include increasing access to information about services both in and out of the borough • Apply best practice to areas where more development may be needed in providing information and advice 	January 2012 January 2012	James McIntyre Lesley Crawford
Improving our coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the current information and advice providers to ascertain current levels of provision and identify any gaps in services • Develop mechanisms to share information and co-ordinate delivery through the formation of SIGN – NT • Work closely with the Health and Well Being Board to promote information on prevention and self management. 	October 2011 December 2011 On going	Lesley Crawford Lesley Crawford Lesley Crawford/ Anne Graney

<p>Increasing general awareness of information and advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Guide/Directory of information and advice providers available within North Tyneside to be widely publicised which will link information and advice from a variety of sources and enable signposting people to appropriate organisations • Explore the potential for a series of multi agency road shows throughout North Tyneside • Engage with key stake holders, including partners and Councillors to increase their awareness and understanding of the advice and information resources available 	<p>January 2012</p> <p>January 2012</p> <p>January 2012</p>	<p>Lesley Crawford</p>
<p>Improving things for 'unengaged' and socially excluded groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review information provision for Self Funders, vulnerable adults and groups who find engaging with Information and Advice services difficult using the findings to make changes to ensure information is accessible to all • Explore new ways to target information and advice to specific groups needs 		
<p>Improving the quality and consistency of information and advice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transform the current Advice and Information group into an Editorial Group which will meet regularly to monitor the information and advice content • Create a clearly defined system and process for ensuring the quality of information available to monitor the use of services, evaluate outcomes and use to plan ongoing service delivery and development 	<p>January 2012</p>	<p>Haley Hudson</p>