

### **Commitment to Armed Forces**

Hampshire County Council has underpinned its continuing commitment to the County's Armed Forces communities, with a special seminar focused on the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant and its operations in practice. The recent event in Winchester brought together District, and Borough Councils and Armed Forces representatives to reinforce existing links and help to establish new ones to support Hampshire's Armed Services in line with the ambitions of the Hampshire Armed Forces Covenant.

The Covenant was signed by the County Council in 2011 and echoes the aims of the national Covenant. On a local level, it aims to improve the range and quality of services available to service personnel, their families, veterans and reservists. Hampshire has one of the largest Armed Forces populations in the country, including 20,000 serving military personnel plus 1,200 reservists, over 60,000 veterans and 4,000 civilians employed by the Ministry of Defence.

### **Free Childcare**

The County Council has asked parents and carers of children under the age of five years to help them assess the level of demand for free childcare from September 2017. The survey aims to find out how many parents would be likely to take up the offer of up to 30 hours per week of free childcare with a nursery, pre-school or a registered early years education childminder.

The Government's move to double the number of hours of free child care is great news for working parents and it will be important to ensure that any increased need for childcare places can be met. HCC are keen to establish the potential level of demand across the County in order to help ensure there are enough early years education child care providers, with the capacity to offer additional places, in the areas where parents live and work. The outcome of the survey will help shape the Council's operation of the Government's forthcoming extended childcare offer for working parents of three and four year olds, that comes into effect in September 2017.

### **Parents/ Carers who suffer Mental Health problems/substance misuse/domestic abuse**

Parenting can sometimes be challenging for anyone, requiring a great deal of physical and emotional effort. Most parents and carers have the capacity to provide good parenting for their children most of the time, but occasionally a usually capable parent has such overwhelming needs of their own that they may not have the capacity to be such a capable parent. If this is a short term problem, such as a parent being physically ill, then providing the children are being kept safe and well, most children have the resilience to overcome the stress of this, with the support of their friends and family. However a parent or carer who suffers domestic abuse, takes part in substance misuse or has a mental illness will often struggle for a much longer period, and this can have severe effects on any children living with them.

If you have concerns about a child who lives with an adult who has mental health problems, suffers domestic abuse or is taking part in substance misuse, you can contact Children's Services at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/child-protection.htm> or, during office hours (8.30am – 5:00pm) - you should ring **0300 555 1384**. At all other times you should contact the **out-of-hours Service: 0300 555 1373**. If this line is engaged you will be put through to an answerphone. Leave your name and number and you will be called back as quickly as possible.

### **Paying for Adult Social Care**

The public is to be asked for their views on some proposed changes to how HCC charges people for adult social care support. The proposed changes are designed to bring the County Council's paying for care policy into line with other comparable local authorities, and to help the Authority offset some of the cost of providing support by charging in a way that is fair and equitable for all those who use its services. However, even if changes to the policy are made following public consultation, people who are assessed as being unable to afford to contribute anything towards their care, using criteria set nationally, will continue to receive their care for free.

The County Council must find savings in adult social care of £43.1 million by 2018 and with ongoing reductions, the Council is having to make some very difficult decisions about the services it provides. The County Council will ask for people's views on four proposed changes. These are:

- Charging people for the cost of both of their Carers, if they need two Carers (double up care) during a home care visit [if they have been financially assessed as being able to afford to pay for both Carers]. The proposal would apply to new situations where people have a need for a second Carer, although the consultation will also ask for views on alternative options.
- Taking into account 100 per cent of a person's disposable income [rather than 95 per cent] when a financial assessment is carried out to establish how much they can afford to contribute towards the cost of their care, in order to support them to continue living independently at home.
- Charging residents in Hampshire County Council-run residential and nursing homes for periods of absence, in the same way that residents in private sector homes are charged.
- Taking into account income a person receives from letting out their own home, if they choose to do so, when assessing how much they should pay towards their care costs in a residential or nursing home under the County Council's Deferred Payment Scheme. This Scheme allows a person to use the value of their home to help pay for residential or nursing care costs, deferring the sale of the property until a later date. This proposal would be for new clients applying for a Deferred Payment only.

Adult social care clients have both a care assessment, as well as a financial assessment. The latter determines how much, if anything, a person can afford to contribute towards the cost of their care, and is based on a nationally prescribed formula. Currently around 44 per cent of clients have their care and support at home paid for in full by the County Council.

While the County Council is able to make a charge for adult social care support to help in part, to offset the cost, many key services continue to be provided free of charge in Hampshire. These include reablement (to help people make the transition back to their own home after a stay in hospital), occupational therapy support, Carer support services, items of equipment such as special beds and walking aids, telecare and prevention services such as falls awareness classes. The public consultation will close on Friday, 26 August 2016.

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