

## **JOINT TEAM WITH THE PENSION SERVICE AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

**Report By: Director of Adult & Community Services**

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

1. To note the development of a Joint Team with the Pension Service and Voluntary Sector to provide an integrated service for older people.

### **Financial Implications**

2. Financial efficiency savings through joint working have been identified.

### **Background**

3. The performance report presented to the Committee in October 2005 referred to the consideration being given to establishing a joint team structure with the Department of Works and Pensions – suggesting this would prevent duplicated work and release social worker time to deal with front line issues. Some concern was expressed at the meeting about the approach and it was requested that a report be prepared for the Committee on the matter.
4. The background to the formation of the Joint Team is contained in the report to Cabinet on 14th July, 2005, a copy of which is appended.
5. The report to Cabinet noted that a strategy produced by the Department of Work and Pensions in association with the Local Government Association, recognised that for too many older people services were difficult to access. The strategy promotes the development of a holistic, integrated service for older people, initially through the bringing together of the Pension Service, Local Authority and Voluntary Sector to form Joint Teams. These Joint Teams will provide a “one stop service” for customers and stop the duplication of activity across the different agencies. The aim of the Government is to achieve 100% of all local services to work in Joint Teams by March 2006. Currently 36 local authorities were working as Joint Teams.
6. Cabinet agreed in principle to a Joint Team approach being adopted and the creation of a project team with representatives from Herefordshire Council (Revenue and Benefits, Social Care and Economic Regeneration), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Voluntary Sector.
7. Joint Teams can deliver a number of benefits including:
  - Increase ability to contact and support the most vulnerable members of society
  - Increase net take-up of entitlements and services

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Stephanie Canham, Head of Social Care (Adults) on 01432 260320

- Reduce duplication of effort
- Enable customers to provide details of their personal circumstances only once.
- Improve the quality of life and independence of older people by intervening before the time of acute need.
- Provide an integrated service to today's and future pensioners.

## **Progress to Date**

8. Progress has been made as follows:
  - Agreement has been reached on the scope of services to be shared.
  - Access to each other's office locations.
  - Draft service level agreement, memorandum of agreement and service specification performance monitoring arrangements and data sharing protocol have been prepared.
  - The formation of the Joint Team Strategic Board. Members: Stephanie Canham Head of Adult and Social Care; Teresa Fullilove, Regional Manager, Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) and Geoff Cole Head of Service. The Board will oversee the development of the Joint Team and ensure operational arrangements meet the strategic and performance aims of the organisations involved.
  - The formation of a Joint Team Implementation group. Members: Sue Dale, Adult and Social Care; Sue Wilce, Local Manager DWP; Susie Binns, Manager Revenue and Benefits; Pauline Hodges, DWP; Jean Howard, PCT; Zandra Pitt, Corporate and Customer Services, Geoff Tunstall, ABLE.
  - The model for joint working has been agreed. The Social Care financial assessment, welfare and housing benefits information-gathering functions will be included. A Gateway co-ordinator will screen and signpost customers to the Joint Team.
9. A pilot Joint Team is to be effective from the 1st December 2005 in order to identify issues prior to the finalising of the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreement. A staff member from Social Care financial assessment team and the housing benefit team will be based with DWP.
10. The Joint Team will be established in 2006 as a virtual team working towards a single location. The Joint Team approach will contribute to increased benefit take-up, as agreed in the LPSA2 target.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the report be noted subject to any comments Members might wish to make.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Cabinet Report – Joint Team -14<sup>th</sup> July 2005