**Thriving Communities**

A new pathfinder model is being developed and introduced that provides a more focused and strength based review approach for our service users linked to understanding better the opportunities for activities and support within our communities. Cumbria Care is working closely with Area Managers and a wider multi-disciplinary team drawn from across the council. A dedicated pathfinder project, concentrating on the 2 geographical areas of Barrow and South Lakeland began in late July/early August.

We know, within communities there are vulnerable individuals who, with the right level of support and care, are able to fully participate within their community. We also know that the Council has a strength based review approach which identifies an individual’s interests, their capabilities and what activities they would like to take up or restart.

The Council has an excellent track record of working alongside communities to help put the right conditions in place to enable them to deliver activities and locally shaped services which meet need. It is this asset based approach which seeks to build on the unique strengths of a community enabling them to do things for themselves but offering light touch support if needed.

Opportunities now exist to bring both the individual strength based approach and the community approaches together, to harness the assets and knowledge within communities in order to support individuals. This would provide individuals with a wider range of choice and opportunities, which are already available in the community, to meet their interests and provide them with an enriched community experience.

The initial stage is nothing new – it will be to assess or review (as part of the 2014 Care Act) the care packages we offer people who use our services. This is particularly important as their needs change over time, as do their interests and aspirations. A social worker will make an appointment for this review/assessment and will take all circumstances into account, together with the wishes of the service user and his or her family and carers.

Supporting the social worker to identify potential activities and opportunities will be a multi-disciplinary team, which will be made up of staff from a number of service areas including Cumbria Care services, linking particular knowledge and expertise to concentrate on matching people with what’s available in the community where appropriate. The overarching aim will be to enable individuals to become more independent by building personal resilience and confidence to access local opportunities and build their social networks.

For each individual this will inform a unique package of care, which could be very similar to what they receive now; may require increased time at Day Services; or may include a blend of community activity, volunteering/work as well as sessional time at Day Services.

Of course, for Day Opportunities this is nothing new and Cumbria Care services have links with the community which already benefit people in our care. This pathfinder is seeking to strengthen those links and provide that extra capacity by bringing together the various teams who are working within communities to wrap around people who use or may need services and their families.