

REPORT TO: Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 9th June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Dwayne Johnson, Strategic Director, Health and Community Directorate

SUBJECT: Health Policy and Performance Board Work Topic – Younger Adults with Dementia

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This Report puts forward the final report of the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board Work Topic on younger adults with dementia. It describes the process that the Work Topic group took in its investigations, considers key national and local issues for younger adults with dementia, and makes a number of strategic recommendations which are contained in the body of the final Report.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) **the contents of this Report are noted.**
- (ii) **the Report and Recommendations to be considered at a future Executive Board.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Context:

3.1.1 Following an unexpected increase in the numbers of younger adults with dementia requiring support from social services in 2007/08, the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance undertook a Work Topic to examine the issues that this raised. The membership of the Work Topic Group and the methodology of the Group are described in the main Report.

3.2 Key issues arising from the Work Topic:

3.2.1 Dementia is a destructive condition which leaves a person increasingly disabled. Although there are measures that can be taken to slow its effects and prolong a good quality of life, there are currently no medical interventions which can “cure” this condition. The Work Topic heard that, for younger adults (that is, those under the age of 65) there are potentially additional implications:

- there is a general lack of awareness of dementia in younger adults. This can mean that there is a reluctance to recognise and treat the condition in younger people, where there is less reluctance in older people.
- Younger adults who develop dementia may well have been economically active, and the development of this illness may have an increased impact on families when they can no longer work
- In the same way, younger adults with dementia may well be parents of young children, and there are further pressures on families as a result
- Younger people who develop this condition may be a generation (or more) younger than the vast majority of people who have dementia, and therefore have little in common with them.

3.2.2 There are only small numbers of younger adults with dementia – the initial figures suggest between 30 and 35 people, although more work needs to be done on this. There is, however, a considerable amount of social care and health funding attached to these people. It is also clear that there is a “planning Gap” for this group of people, who do not necessarily fall into standard eligibility criteria for services.

3.2.3 There were few examples nationally of known good practice against which Halton could benchmark; a number of areas were setting up services but with little effective evaluation. As a result, the Work Topic Group has made a number of recommendations which are less about the specifics of service provision, and more about the strategic approach to this problem.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This Report addresses and considers some of the recommendations arising from the National Dementia Strategy, and makes proposals for changes or additions to local strategies so as to fully meet the needs of younger adults with dementia. This Topic is also one which specifically addresses issues about the health of Halton residents.

4.2 It would be beneficial if the topic group recommendations and the local Dementia Strategy, planned for completion in the Autumn 2009, be simultaneously submitted to the Executive Board.

5.0 **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 All of the recommendations in this Report are strategic, rather than being specific recommendations about services and resources. As such there are no specific financial implications arising from this

Report. The recommendations however will be taken forward in other pieces of work – particularly the development and implementation of the Halton Dementia Strategy – and it is at this point that a full financial analysis will be provided.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no additional implications arising from this Report.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no specific risks associated with this Topic. However, failure to address the issues raised in this Report could mean that a small number of vulnerable people with complex needs do not receive the appropriate levels of help and support. To address this, the key recommendations will be addressed through the development of the Halton Dementia Strategy.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 This Report and its recommendations apply equally to all residents of Halton Borough Council. In addition, it specifically addresses the needs of a small number of people who have not previously received the attention locally of service planners, commissioners and providers.