

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

6 JUNE 2017

QUESTION 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Councillor Emmett McKenna to ask the Chair of the Committee:

Dying Matters Awareness Week 2017

Could the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care please update me on what was done to mark Dying Matters Awareness Week 2017 ?

REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee

I invite Councillor Eden, the Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Councillor Eden, Lead Councillor for Adult Social Care:

As the end of life champion I invited people within Reading come forward and lead a local campaign to raise awareness of Dying Matters. Champions came forward from organisations including Reading Borough Council, local NHS partners and Sue Ryder. There was a series of events held around Reading from the 8th-17th May and locally the campaign was titled 'Dying to Talk'.

Our aim was to encourage people to start having conversations about death and dying, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to make their wishes known and understands who to approach locally for support to have those wishes carried out. The conversations covered topics such as legal and financial issues, organ donation and funeral planning. The planned schedule of events included a slot on Reading's community radio station, an open day at the crematorium, drop in sessions for cake and a chat about Dying Matters in Whitley, planning sessions with the Duchess of Kent, a BBQ at the Sunrise Home in Sonning and an event at the RISC café, hosted by the Utulivu Women's Group.

In addition to the planned events, awareness of Dying Matters was increased through postings on the Reading Services Guide, the Healthwatch Reading website and Reading Voluntary Action's website, as well as on social media. Over 500 flyers were distributed throughout Reading to community groups and at local events such as the Southcote Mayfair. The events were also covered in GetReading.

The campaign was very well supported locally and the events, alongside the widespread coverage, prompted many conversations and raised awareness of the importance of planning for death and communicating with family and friends about their wishes.