



Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am

Wednesday, 1 November 2023

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introduction/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny held on 30 August 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)
4. Update on NHS Dentistry provision and Primary Care Dental Access Recovery Plan – Presentation by the Senior Primary Care Manager (Primary Care Dental Commissioning Lead) North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (Pages 9 - 20)
5. Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy – Report of the Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues (Pages 21 - 42)
6. Healthwatch Darlington Annual Report 2022/23 – Presentation by the Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Darlington (Pages 43 - 86)
7. Work Programme – Report of the Assistant Director - Law and Governance (Pages 87 - 110)

8. Health and Wellbeing Board –
The Board last met on 7 September 2023. The next meeting is scheduled for 14 December 2023.
9. Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee –
The Committee last met on 6 October 2023 and was not quorate
10. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at the meeting.
11. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Tuesday, 24 October 2023

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Baker, Crudass, Dillon, Holroyd, Johnson, Layton, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Pease and Mrs Scott

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HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 30 August 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Layton (Chair), Baker, Crudass, Dillon, Holroyd, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Pease and Mrs Scott

APOLOGIES – Councillor Johnson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Roche, Allen and Curry

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Ian Thompson (Assistant Director Community Services), Ken Ross (Public Health Principal), Claire Gardner-Queen (Head of Housing), Matthew Hufford (Communication and Engagement Co-ordinator) and Hannah Miller (Democratic Officer)

HH7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

HH8 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON :-

(1) 14 JUNE 2023

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 14 June 2023.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 14 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

(2) 28 JUNE 2023

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 28 June 2023.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 28 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

HH9 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2024 UPDATE

The Communications and Engagement Co-ordinator gave a presentation (previously circulated) updating Members on the Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024.

The presentation outlined the Engagement Strategy and the Council's aims; details were provided of the increased customer engagement in 2022/23, with events being held in new locations and Estate walkabouts continuing; and particular reference was made to the engagement event in Lancaster Close and an estate walkabout in Skerne Park.

It was reported that the Council continued to be a member of Tpas, promoting, supporting

and championing tenant involvement and social empowerment in social housing; details were provided of the Housing Webpage and an overview of the Tenants Panel; and reference was made to the Community Engagement Fund which had been set up by Housing Services to support community projects in areas where Housing Services own properties.

Members noted that the second edition of Housing Connect was due in August 2023, was accessible online and delivered to every tenant; the engagement work undertaken with refugee families; and a customer satisfaction survey was being undertaken in 2023/24.

Details were provided of the regulatory standards; investment in staff including further training provided for staff in 2022/23; and Members were informed of the next steps for 2023 and 2024.

Discussion ensued regarding estate walkabouts and how these were prioritised; Members highlighted concerns regarding feedback to residents when a concern was reported and were assured that work was being undertaken to improve feedback to residents including the use of the Council's website, noticeboards and You Said We Did.

Further discussion ensued regarding the tenants panel, including how this was advertised to tenants and their involvement in the management of complaints received by the Council.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

HH10 HOUSING SERVICES ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY ANNUAL REVIEW

The Assistant Director Housing and Revenues gave a presentation (previously circulated) providing Members with an annual update on the anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy.

It was reported that the policy was approved by Cabinet in 2022 to ensure the Council was meeting the Regulator of Social Housing consumer standards; the aims of the policy were outlined; and reference was made to prevention, early intervention and support and enforcement action.

Members were provided with details of performance, noting that 444 cases involving tenants were opened in 2022/23; details were provided of the main reasons for ASB complaints; and it was reported that 424 cases were positively resolved in 2022/23, with the majority of complaints being resolved through early intervention.

The presentation outlined the work undertaken in the last 12 months along with planned work for the next 12 months.

Following a question, Members were informed that action plans were agreed with residents following a complaint being made in relation to ASB, with regular feedback provided to the resident; and an additional tenancy enforcement officer had been appointed to enable increased engagement with residents.

Members queried the allocations procedure when a tenant was evicted from a council owned property; and queried the Council's engagement with Ward Members when complaints were received.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

HH11 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMPLIANCE IN COUNCIL HOUSING

The Assistant Director – Housing and Revenue submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the health and safety compliance standards for Council housing stock and performance against these in 2022-23.

It was reported that the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) sets a number of consumer standards, which social housing providers must comply with; and the Council has well established and robust processes in place to monitor health and safety compliance in relation to its Council housing stock.

The submitted report provided details of the areas where compliance was monitored on a regular basis, including asbestos, electrical, gas, fire, fire door and water safety, and damp and mould.

Particular reference was made to the legal requirements set out in the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 in respect of fire door safety; Members were informed that whilst there were no specific issues with the existing fire doors within the Council's housing stock, due to the age of the doors and the lack of certification in relation to any previous installation and testing, the Council deemed the fire doors as not compliant with the new regulations; and as part of the door replacement programme, 236 blocks and approximately 1,200 doors affected by the new regulations would be replaced.

Reference was also made to the Stock Condition Survey undertaken in 2022-23, which identified that of the 10 per cent of the Council's stock surveyed (550 properties) by an external contractor, 5 had issues with condensation or ventilation not working and 8 had signs of damp and mould (or 1.5% of the properties inspected), although none of these were classed as serious hazards; and that the Council had recruited its own Stock Condition Surveyor who would carry out a rolling programme of stock condition surveys on 100 per cent of Council homes.

Members commended the work of the housing team in relation to damp and mould; discussion ensued regarding the procurement process in respect of the door replacement programme; and recruitment and retention of Gas Safe Engineers.

Members requested further details regarding the number of Council properties containing asbestos, the number of incidents whereby legionella was identified in a Council property; and the structure of the stock condition survey team.

RESOLVED – (a) That the contents of the report be noted.

(b) That this Scrutiny Committee continues to consider reports on health and safety compliance in Council Housing on an annual basis.

HH12 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH - LIVING IN DARLINGTON AND RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC 2022/2023

The Interim Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) sharing the Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2022/23 with Members and wider stakeholders.

It was reported that the Annual Report has a particular focus on how some of the community responded to the COVID 19 pandemic and how they see their future; and that the Annual Report is the last report of Penny Spring as Director of Public Health due to her retirement in June 2023.

The submitted report stated that it is a requirement of the Director of Public Health under the 2006 NHS Act to produce an annual report; the subject of the annual report for 2022/23 is how young people, families and staff in Darlington responded to the pandemic and how it affected their lives; and the report is presented in a video format produced with students from Darlington College, using the testimony of individual young people, families and staff.

Members requested context regarding the Covid-19 inequalities in the wider determinants.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Annual report of the Director of Public Health 2022/23 be received.

(b) That the testimony of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on lived experience be noted.

(c) That the legacy and ongoing impact of the pandemic on local people living and working in Darlington be noted.

HH13 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 4 - 2022/23

The Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues, Assistant Director – Community Services and Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with performance data against key performance indicators for 2022/23 at Quarter 4.

Details were provided of the 36 indicators reported to this Scrutiny Committee, six indicators were reported by both Housing and Culture and 24 by Public Health.

It was reported that at Quarter 4, 20 of the 36 indicators showed performance better than from when last reported; 13 indicators showed performance not as good as when last reported; and 1 indicator showed performance the same as when last reported.

Particular reference was made to the increase from the previous year in rent arrears of current Council tenants in the financial year as a % of rent debit; the decrease from the previous year in the amount of rent collected as a proportion of rents owed on Council homes; the increase in the average number of days spent in Bed and Breakfast accommodation; and the increase in the number of positive outcomes where homelessness had been prevented.

Following a question regarding HBS025 – Number of days spent in Bed and Breakfast, Members were advised that the increase was due to a variety of reasons and that a breakdown would be provided to Members; and Members queried the method used to measure physical activity in the adult population.

Particular reference was also made to improvements in relation to the rate of prevalence of smoking among persons aged 18 years and over and the significant improvements in the rates for the successful completion of drug treatment increased for opiate users.

Discussion ensued regarding prevalence of overweight children at reception and Year 6; Members were advised that the figures for Darlington reflected a national trend and Members were informed of a range of activities in place to address obesity in children and young people.

Further discussion ensued regarding vaping; the possible causes for the increase in the under 75 mortality rates from respiratory disease; and the work being undertaken to encourage breastfeeding.

RESOLVED – That the submitted report be noted.

HH14 WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest be included in the previously approved work programme.

Members gave consideration to the proposal to establish a task and finish group to undertake a review of physical accessibility to health care and ancillary care.

Discussion ensued on the current work programme; Members requested that the CAMHS update and Primary Care (to include GP access to appointment) be brought forward to an earlier meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – (a) That a task and finish review group be established to undertake a review of physical accessibility to health care and ancillary care.

(b) That the work programme be updated to reflect discussions.

HH15 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Members were informed that the Board last met on 16 March, 2023 and that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for 7 September, 2023 which would include an update on health inequalities in Darlington and a review of the Terms of Reference for the Board.

RESOLVED – That Members look forward to receiving an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

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**North East and
North Cumbria**

Update on NHS Dentistry provision and Primary Care Dental Access Recovery Plan

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Darlington Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee

1 November 2023

Agenda Item 4

The ICB in North East & North Cumbria now has responsibility for commissioning dental services

- NHS England have delegated responsibility to NENC ICB for commissioning dental services from 1 April 2023
- From 1 July 2023 we have transferred people with the knowledge, expertise and experience of dental commissioning into our team from NHS England

Summary Overview of NHS Dentistry

- NHS Dentistry services MUST operate in accordance with **Nationally set Government Regulation (2006)**
- Under NHS Dentistry national regulation there is **no ‘formal registration’ of patients** with dental practices as part of their NHS Dentistry offer, patients can therefore approach any dental practice offering NHS care for access.
- Dental contracts and provision is **activity and demand led** with the expectation practices deliver courses of treatment with **recall intervals appropriate to clinical need** and manage their available commissioned capacity to best meet both local demand and the clinical needs of patients presenting to their practice.
- The contract regulations set out the contract currency which is measured in **units of dental activity (UDAs)** that are attributable to a **‘banded’ course of treatment prescribed under the regulations.**
- **North East and North Cumbria ICB do not commission private dental services,** however, NHS dental regulations do not prohibit the provision of private dentistry by NHS Dental Practices.
- The prolonged **COVID- 19 pandemic period** required NHS Dental Practices to follow strict Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidance which significantly restricted levels of access to dental care. As a result, **backlog demand for dental care remains high with the urgency and increased complexity of patient clinical presentations** further impacting the ability for the NHS Dental Care system to return back to pre-COVID operational norms.

There are significant challenges to people accessing dentistry in North East & North Cumbria

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- Dental services have struggled to recover from the impact of covid.
- There are significant challenges with recruitment and retention of dentists.
- As a result, some providers unable to deliver full commissioned capacity.
- There is widespread recognition that the national dental contract requires reform.
- The number of contracts handed back in NENC has increased from 3 in all of 2020 to 12 in the first 7 months of 2023 (only 1 contract handed back in Darlington, ie Firthmoor dental practice that closed end March 2023).
- This means local people across the NENC are experiencing problems accessing NHS dentists – areas of particular challenge include Darlington as well as N Cumbria, North Northumberland, parts of Co Durham and Sunderland.

We will tackle the challenges in three phases

Improving access to dentistry will not be a quick fix

We are tackling this in three streams:



Immediate actions to stabilise services



A more strategic approach to workforce and service delivery



Developing an oral health strategy to improve oral health and reduce the pressure on dentistry

Immediate actions undertaken

c£3.8m non-recurrent investment agreed to date for 2023-24 to:

- Increase NHS 111 dental clinical assessment capacity
- Increase out of hours dental treatment services
- Extend access arrangements to provide where possible an additional 27.5k patient treatment slots between July 2023 and end of March 2024 (to supplement the circ 4.3k slots funded in Q1).

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Implemented a local commissioning process to re-provide (where possible) activity when contracts are handed back.

Flexible commissioning arrangement offered to practices to provide a training grant to support the employment of overseas dentists.

Further actions/next steps

- Funding earmarked to progress formal procurements to secure new market interest/NHS dental practices to address gaps in provision where it has not been possible to re-commission UDAs from existing NHS practices (includes a new contract for Darlington).
- Advertise in BDJ to attract overseas dentists and to support them through National Dental Performer List process (required to deliver NHS dental care).
- Work with key stakeholders on further local initiatives to improve workforce recruitment and retention, service delivery sustainability and improved access particularly within CORE20 areas and for disadvantaged groups.
- Work with Healthwatch to update patient and stakeholder comms.
- Work with local system partners to progress development of an oral health strategy to improve oral health and reduce the pressure on dentistry.
- Work with NHS England regional and national teams to influence national Dental System Reform.

Advice/signposting for patients

- Patients are not registered with a dentist in the same way as GP practices – you can therefore contact any NHS dental practice to access care.
- As independent contractors, dental practice are responsible for managing their appointment books and are best placed to advise on the capacity they have available to take on new patients.
- Practices providing NHS treatment are listed on www.nhs.uk. Practices are responsible for keeping the website updated and whilst it may currently indicate they are not taking on new patients, we would advise that patients do contact them to check the latest position on availability of routine appointments.
- Dental practices are being **encouraged to prioritise patients for treatment based on clinical need and urgency**, therefore appointments for some **routine treatments**, such as dental check-ups, may therefore still be delayed. Some practices are operating waiting lists to manage those patients requesting routine NHS dental care.
- If your teeth and gums are healthy – a **check-up, or scale and polish may not be needed every 6 months**.

Advice for patients with an urgent dental treatment need

- If you develop an **urgent dental issue** telephone your regular dental practice (or any NHS practice if you don't have a regular dentist).
- It is important that when you ring the practice, you fully explain the nature of your dental problem so that the urgency of your dental treatment need can be determined.
- If the practice is unable to offer an appointment because their NHS urgent access slots have already been taken up, they will advise you to ring another NHS dental practice, or alternatively you can visit www.111.nhs or call 111.
- The NHS111 health advisor will undertake a clinical triage and where the dental need is deemed to be clinically urgent, an appointment will be made at the nearest in-hours urgent dental care hub, or alternatively depending on the time of the call, into the dental out of hours treatment services.
- If the issue is not deemed urgent, patients will be signposted to another NHS dental practice and/or given self-care advice until an appointment can be offered.
- You should be advised to make contact again if your situation changes/worsens.

Oral health improvement initiatives (1)

Darlington

- Supervised Toothbrushing Activity (June 2023)

Settings	Number of participating settings	Numbers of children brushing
Pre-schools	2	90
Primary Schools	16	942

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- Oral health training provided to Health Visitors on key oral health messages and to encourage early attendance. Oral health packs are distributed to parents at the 8 month visit.
- Implementation of a dental access referral pathway for “Children in Care” and children receiving child protection medicals where an oral health need is identified for children not currently accessing dental care.

Oral health improvement initiatives (2)

Darlington

- Caring for your Smiles programme: in collaboration with Darlington LA team.
 - All care homes in Darlington have completed a NICE NG48 baseline needs assessment.
 - The oral health promotion team are working with care homes to improve information for residents, care plans to improve support with oral health and oral health training for care home staff.
 - The North East (including Darlington) programme was highlighted in the recent 2023 CQC report [Smiling matters: Oral health in care homes - progress report - Care Quality Commission](https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications-reports/2023/04/smiling-matters-oral-health-in-care-homes) ([cqc.org.uk](https://www.cqc.org.uk)) as an example of best practice.
 - Publication in British Dental Journal describing the results of the Darlington Programme
- Oral health training for public health teams and health and social care staff e.g. public health nurses, care delivered at home, and hospices.
- Mouth Care Matters: promoting good oral health in secondary care hospital wards e.g. for elderly care

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HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 NOVEMBER 2023

HOUSING SERVICES REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to consider the draft Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy before approval by Cabinet on 7 November 2023.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes to our Council tenants and we will achieve this by providing a robust, efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service.
3. The Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2023-2028 at **Appendix 1** sets out our responsibilities to our tenants and leaseholders, how we will inspect and survey our properties to ensure they are maintained to a good standard and the arrangements in place for undertaking repairs, when issues arise.
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy and the outcome of this consultation is given at paragraph 16. However, the proposals have received overwhelming support.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members:
 - (a) Consider the report and draft Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing landlords to provide their tenants with quality, cost-effective accommodation.
 - (b) The adoption of a formal Repairs and Maintenance Policy is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no impact on the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities as a result of this report
Health and Wellbeing	Well maintained Council homes will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Council tenants
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	An efficient repairs and maintenance service will have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of our Council homes
Diversity	This policy supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to ensure we are able to provide our tenants with good quality housing
Efficiency	There are no implications
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes to our Council tenants and we will achieve this by providing a robust, efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service.
8. The Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2023-2028 at **Appendix 1** sets out our responsibilities to our tenants and leaseholders and covers the following areas.

Our Responsibilities

9. This section covers the Council's responsibilities for our tenants, including:
 - (a) Maintaining the structure and outside of the property and keeping it in good repair.

- (b) Maintaining the installations for heating, water heating, sewerage and for water, gas and electricity.
 - (c) Decorating the outside of properties when necessary, or as part of a planned maintenance programme.
 - (d) Repairing internal decoration, where we have caused damage when completing a repair.
10. For leaseholders, the Council is responsible for the main structure of the building, the shared areas and any shared services to a building or estate.

Inspections and Surveys

11. This section covers how we will carry out inspections and surveys, before and after repairs or maintenance work is completed, including:
- (a) Any reports of damp or mould.
 - (b) Fence repairs and replacements.
 - (c) Roofing repairs.
 - (d) Major kitchen and bathroom repairs and replacements.
 - (e) Structural damage or issues.
12. This section also covers our legal responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of our tenants, including surveys, checks, assessments and servicing in relation to:
- (a) Gas appliances, such as boilers and fires.
 - (b) Electrical installations and wiring.
 - (c) Passenger lifts and stair lifts (where fitted).
 - (d) Fire risk assessments and fire doors.

Repairs

13. This sections covers the arrangements for undertaking repairs, when issues are reported or arise, including:
- (a) What is classed as a routine repair, urgent repair or emergency repair and our timescales for responding to these.
 - (b) How our tenants can report repairs and the arrangements for reporting out of hours, emergency repairs.

- (c) The surveys and repairs undertaken for empty Council properties, before they are re-let.
- (d) The types of repairs that are rechargeable to tenants.
- (e) Details of the Right to Repair and Right to Improve arrangements.
- (f) The arrangements for planned maintenance and improvement works and adaptations for those tenants who need them.

Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards

14. The RSH are currently consulting on new consumer standards that it is proposing to introduce in 2024. Under these new standards is a section specifically relating to repairs and maintenance, as follows:
- (a) Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.
 - (b) Registered providers must enable repairs and maintenance issues to be reported easily.
 - (c) Registered providers must set timescales for the completion of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements, clearly communicate them to tenants and take appropriate steps to deliver to them.
 - (d) Registered providers must keep tenants informed about repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to their homes with clear and timely communication.
 - (e) Registered providers must understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas.
 - (f) Registered providers must ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of tenants and provides value for money.
15. Our Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy will help us demonstrate how we will achieve these new proposed standards.

Outcome of Consultation

16. Our Tenants Panel were consulted in June 2023 and overall, the Panel supported the proposed Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy. Examples of the Panel's comments were as follows:
- (a) "I think that the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance policy makes a lot of sense. It is easily understandable, and I don't think there is any more explanation needed. It all seems absolutely fine to me."

- (b) "Although the policy is lengthy, it is in line with the rest of the policies that I have read from Darlington Borough Council and reads well. I understood all the points that were made. As always, it seems clear, and the main points have been explained very well. I like how you can see similarities in the policies, very uniformed."
- (c) "Although this is a large document, it has been broken down into manageable sections, which are well explained. Tenants should be able to pick and choose what they need to read. It all seems absolutely fine to me."
- (d) "I do believe that the policy is a little long winded, but I understand to cover everything this is hard to get past. Some of the language may be a little difficult for your everyday tenant, but on a whole I think it is self-explanatory and have no major issues with it."

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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Housing Services Repairs & Maintenance Policy 2023-2028



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Introduction

We are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes. By providing a robust, efficient, and effective repair and maintenance service we hope to build vibrant and resilient communities with safe and healthy homes.

This policy has been designed to be an effective tool to enable an efficient repairs and maintenance service for our housing stock. We will ensure that we take prompt action to carry out repairs, remedy issues and support our tenants, offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout. It is important that we take prompt action and that tenants report issues so we can work quickly together to help resolve problems.

We have a legal requirement to manage repairs and complete any work required. It is also important that we recognise the impact that repairs or damage can have on our tenants and make every effort to ensure this is minimised.

Aims

Our Repairs and Maintenance Policy assists us to provide a tenant focussed service and ensure that we maintain our properties to ensure that they are safe and fit for purpose.

This policy aims to:

- Deliver a consistent, modern, and quality repairs and maintenance service.
- Ensure that all our homes are well maintained, safe and fit for purpose.
- Comply with relevant statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Provide an effective response to repairs and maintenance.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected.
- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.



Our approach

We are committed to delivering an outstanding tenant experience through our approach to repairs. This means that we will continually review working practices, policies, and procedures to ensure that this is achieved for our tenants whenever possible.

We aim to provide a service that is easy to use, causes the least possible disruption to our tenants and demonstrates value for money. To do this we will engage with new technology and working practices to ensure that we are providing the best experience for our tenants according to their needs and communication preferences.

Our Tenants Panel will carry out “mystery shopping” to test the quality of repairs from initial reporting through to repair completion.

Relevant Legislation

As a registered provider of social housing, we adhere to the required standards set out by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in the Consumer Standards.

We will adhere to the standards set out in the Consumer Standards and determine how we meet these.

We will comply with the significant range of legislation and regulation which supports the delivery of repairs and maintenance and the standards that govern the way in which we operate, including (but not limited to):

- Housing Act 1985.
- Housing Act 2004.
- Defective Premises Act 1972.
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations 1998.
- The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Building Regulations Act 1984.
- Defective Premises Act 1972.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, including requirements for Fire Doors and Means of Escape (MOE).
- Housing Health and Safety Rating 2006.
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Building Safety Act 2022.

Links to other internal policies and procedures

This document should also be read in conjunction with:

- Housing Management Policy 2022-2026.
- Repairs Handbook.
- Housing Services Damp, Mould, and Condensation Policy 2023-2027.
- Leaseholder handbook.
- Fire Safety Policy for Sheltered and Extra Care Accommodation.
- Darlington Borough Council Customer Standards.
- Housing Services Tenancy Agreement.
- Housing Services Void Lettable Standards.
- Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure.
- Housing Services Climate Change Strategy. (due 2023/24)
- Housing Services Asset Management Strategy. (due 2023/24)

Scope of the policy

The scope of this policy covers how Housing Services, and our tenants are able to jointly control, manage, reduce repairs and damage to our properties.

This policy relates to all Housing Services owned properties that are tenanted, empty and communal. It also includes emergency / temporary accommodation, and any freehold buildings Housing Services own.

Advice and Information

A copy of this policy and the Repairs Handbook can be downloaded from the website www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance/our-policies

Residents who do not have internet access can visit or phone Housing Services on 01325 405333.

Glossary of Terms

Appointable Repair - A repair that prevents immediate damage to the property

Emergency Repair - Any defects that put the health, safety or security of residents or anyone else at immediate risk.

EPC - Energy Performance Certificates summarise the energy efficiency of a building in line with European Union standards. Ratings range from A-G and the certificate will also contain tips on how to improve the home's energy efficiency rating.

Planned Repair - Non-urgent and can consist of replacement rather than repair. This can be internal/external.

Repair - Making good something that has been damaged or faulty either internally or externally.

Tenant/Resident -

Any tenant or leaseholder of a property managed by Darlington Borough Council Housing Services.

Void Property - A property which has no current tenant living in it.

Void Repairs - Work required in an empty property to ensure that it is safe and fit for purpose for the next tenant.

Responsibilities

Housing Services Responsibilities

Tenant, leaseholder, and landlord responsibilities are clearly laid out within the tenancy or lease agreement, which is issued to each new tenant or leaseholder at the point of sign up or purchase.

For tenanted properties we are responsible for:

- Maintaining the structure and outside of the property and keeping it in good repair.
- Maintaining the installations for heating, water heating, sewerage and for water, gas, and electricity.
- Decorating the outside of all houses and apartments when necessary or as part of a planned maintenance programme unless tenants have done the work themselves with the relevant permissions.
- Repairing internal decoration where we have caused decorative damage when completing a repair.

For leasehold properties we are responsible for:

- The main structure of the building, the shared parts and any shared services to a building or estate.

We will carry out all structural, external, and communal works where appropriate and recharge a share of the cost to the leaseholder in accordance with the terms of their lease and associated legislation.

We are responsible for ensuring the security of any empty properties that we own and may use external screening, alarms, and other security measures to ensure properties are kept secure.

We carry out repairs to fittings that are broken, damaged or no longer fit for purpose, we will not replace when fittings are deemed by us to be serviceable or where we can repair them, replacements are not provided for aesthetic reasons only. For example if we are unable to colour match tiles or kitchen units we will replace with the nearest matching colours.



For more information on responsibilities of repairs please see our Repairs Handbook at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance/our-policies

Tenant and Leaseholder Responsibilities

Tenants and Leaseholders should keep their home in a good condition and report any repairs, which fall within the Landlord's responsibility, in a timely manner in order to avoid small repairs escalating to a point which might affect their health and safety, or which might increase the cost of repair.

If the need for a repair is the result of neglect or damage (accidental or otherwise) on the part of the tenant, the tenant, is responsible for putting this right and paying for it. This includes damage caused by any member of their family, pets, or visitors.

If such a repair presents a health and safety or security risk, or is covered by disrepair legislation, we will carry out the repair for a tenant. The cost of this will be recharged to the tenant.

If the damage has been caused by the criminal act of another, the tenant will need to report the incident to the Police and provide us with a crime reference number, otherwise the tenant may be recharged for the cost of the repair.

Tenants - For more information on responsibilities of repairs please see our Repairs Handbook at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance/our-policies

Leaseholders - For more information on responsibilities of repairs please see your Leaseholder Handbook at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance/our-policies and your lease agreement.

Tenants should ensure that any works they carry out in their home do not cause a health and safety risk, such as damage to a fire door and frame. We will recharge for any damage which we believe is the result of neglect or damage (accidental or otherwise) and which compromises the safety of the property, residents, or neighbours.

Inspections & Surveys

Inspections and surveys can be carried out before a repair or improvement work is carried out, after works are completed or to ensure the safety of installations such as fire doors and gas boilers. We also carry out regular stock condition surveys of our properties.

Inspections and surveys are carried out by Housing Services Officers and Surveyors or our authorised contractors and may require tenants to allow access for these inspections. Where possible we will give reasonable notice of these inspections, usually 24 hours, however in the case of emergencies or health and safety concerns we may not be able to give prior notice.

We may take photographs of a tenant's home as part of any inspection or survey which will be stored securely on our ICT system.

Pre-inspections

A pre-inspection maybe required before a repair appointment can be arranged. This will include circumstances where the scope of the repair is unknown. Following the inspection, the repair will be diagnosed and planned within the appropriate timescales. Pre inspections will be carried out in person or may be via a video call.

The following reports of repairs would require a further inspection (not exhaustive):

- Damp, condensation, or mould.
- Fence repairs/replacement.
- Roofing repairs.
- Major kitchen or bathroom repairs.
- Structural damage or issues.

Post-inspections

To ensure we are delivering a high-quality repairs service, a sample of completed repairs will be inspected regularly. We will also carry out post inspections of any tenant improvements. We will also request feedback from our tenants at post-inspections to look at key areas of learning and improvement.

Regulatory Checks

Ensuring the health and safety of our tenants is an essential part of our repairs and maintenance service and we carry out regulatory checks, assessments, and servicing to (not exhaustive):

- Asbestos Surveys
- Legionella Checks
- Gas appliances (such as boilers and fires but excluding tenant's cookers. For tenants cookers - we will carry out a basic check of the flame picture and check for gas leaks only, we will not repair where faults are found).

- Electrics (excluding tenant's own appliances).
- Stair lifts (where fitted).
- Fire Risk Assessments (to communal areas).

Some of these checks are legally required to be carried out annually such as gas servicing, and we will consider court action where access is not given by a tenant. Court action will be our last resort and we will make all reasonable attempts to gain access before taking legal action.

We also carry out cyclical maintenance and checks to the following (not exhaustive):

- Communal doors.
- Fire doors.
- External painting (where required).
- Internal painting (to communal areas only).

Repairs

Types of Repairs

Dependant on the type of repair that is required we will allocate work as follows, so that we ensure that we provide the best possible service to our tenants.

Routine Repairs – Repairs which will not seriously interfere with the comfort and convenience of the resident, for example:

- Repairs to plasterwork.
- Repairs to doors and windows.
- Repairs to bathroom and kitchen fittings.
- New sanitary fittings (bath, toilet, and wash-hand basin).

Urgent Repairs – Repairs which seriously affect the comfort of the resident or cause potential damage to the property, for example:

- Plumbing and drainage faults.
- Roof leaks.
- Majority of gas repairs.
- Partial loss of heating.
- Damp, mould and condensation.

Emergency – Repairs which, if not attended to, could cause serious damage to the building/property, or pose a high safety risk to the health of the resident, for example:

- Gas Leaks (please report these firstly to the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999)
- Total electrical failure.
- Total heating failure (winter).
- Burst pipes.
- Making the property safe, after storm damage.
- Repairs to essential safety features.

Priorities and target times are set out on our website and within the Repairs Handbook which can be found online at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance/our-policies

Reporting repairs

Tenants can report repairs by any of the following means:

- Online through Darlington Home Online.
- By telephone 24/7, 365 days a year on 01325 405333.
- Email: housing@darlington.gov.uk
- In writing to Housing Services, Rm G02, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT.

We will agree a mutually convenient appointment during normal office hours for any repairs that are reported out of hours but are not considered an emergency.

Out of hours or callout repairs

We will ensure that all emergency callout repairs are attended within appropriate timescales and made safe at first visit, we aim to respond to emergency repairs reported out of hours as quickly as possible to make safe. Any further work will be ordered the next working day and carried out within the appropriate timescales for appointed repairs. The service will be available 365 days of the year outside of normal office hours. Tenants can call 01325 405333 to report emergency out of hours repairs.

We define an emergency repair as:

- Any fault which could lead to death or injury of occupants, visitors or public.
- Any fault which could seriously endanger the health of occupants, visitors or public.
- Any fault which could cause extensive damage to our property or your belongings.
- Major incidents including substantial structural defects, flood, or storm damage.

Examples of emergency repairs that we would attend to out of hours (not exhaustive):

- Collapsed floors or ceilings.
- Toilet will not flush, when there is only one toilet in the property and a tenant cannot flush this themselves.
- Total loss of hot or cold water (where there is no supplier issue).
- Total loss of heating in winter (31st October to 1st May).
- Total loss of electric power (where not caused by supplier issues).
- Renewal of lock when door cannot be secured or accessed (we will recharge for lost or stolen keys).
- Burst pipes or tanks (but not dripping/leaking pipes or dripping taps) where the leak is uncontrollable.
- Blocked drains where waste is leaking into the property.
- Securing a property following vandalism or criminal damage such as broken window or damaged door (please note recharges will apply unless a crime reference number is provided).

We will ensure that the service has access to skilled staff from across all trade areas to ensure that we can respond to all types of emergencies.

We will agree a mutually convenient appointment during core working hours for repairs that are reported out of hours but are not considered an emergency by us. We will consider tenant and household vulnerabilities such as age, disability, health etc when classifying a repair for an out of hours response.

We will consider recharging for any emergency repair if, on attendance, it is found not to be an emergency repair. This could be where a tenant has given us misleading information meaning we have wrongly classified a repair as an emergency.

Access

Tenants must allow us access to their property in order to carry out any work that is needed or to carry out any inspections required by law such as fire door inspections, gas or electrical safety testing. We will give the tenant reasonable notice that we require access, except in the case of emergency.

We will make every effort to arrange access but ultimately, we will consider legal action in cases where we are unable to gain access.

We aim to offer a range of appointments that are convenient for our tenants. We will provide confirmation of the appointment slot so our tenants are clear on when the repair will take place.

We will make necessary adjustments to ensure that we consider any vulnerabilities or additional needs of the tenants when planning access to complete any repairs that are needed.

Void Repairs

When a property becomes vacant, we will ensure it is made secure. We will then assess what work needs to be done, carry out all of the work, clean the property and ensure it is in a lettable condition ready for the next tenant. Our Void Lettable standard gives specific detail on what works we will carry out.

Before a new tenant moves in, we will ensure that all fixtures and fittings are secured and in proper working order and that all required Health and Safety checks are carried out with all relevant certificates provided, including:

- Gas Safety Checks.
- Electrical Tests.
- Smoke detectors.
- EPC.

We will always ensure that any signs of damp, condensation or mould are inspected and dealt with before allowing anyone to move into our properties.

Recharges

Recharges can occur in some instances with repairs. Darlington Borough Council have an agreed rechargeable repair procedure in determining when a recharge should be applied.

Recharges may occur for (not exhaustive):

- Repairs that are a tenant's responsibility.
- Repairs that are caused by damage, negligence or alleged criminal damage (where no crime reference number is provided).
- No access for pre-planned repairs.
- Changes to a property that have not been approved.
- Damage to safety features such as fire doors and frames.
- Repairs to be carried out which are caused by a Police warrant, where access has been refused and if charges are brought against the tenant or household by the Police.
- Tenants who vacate their property leaving items that must be removed, or cleaning is required or other repairs such as overgrown gardens or damage to fixtures.
- Misuse of the callout service.

High Levels of Repairs

Where a tenant has reported a high level of repairs over a period of time, an inspection will be carried out to the property to determine the cause of the repairs. The inspection will identify whether further repairs can be raised and the cause of the high level of repairs.



The Right to Repair

Housing Services tenants have the Right to Repair which means that they can request certain qualifying repairs to be completed within certain timescales. Tenants have the right to have certain urgent repairs done quickly and at no cost to them where the repair may affect health, safety, or security and where the repair has not been completed within a specified timescale.

Under the Right to Repair scheme we must pay tenants compensation if qualifying repairs are not done within set timescale and after a further request to complete the work within the specified timescales has not been completed.

A maximum of £50 compensation can be claimed if any repairs listed below are not completed within the specified time. The actual amount will be calculated at £10, plus a daily rate of £2. In some cases, we may exceed the maximum allowed under this scheme.

Repair Type	Response Time (working days)
Total loss of electric power (where there is no supplier issue)	1
Partial loss of electric power (where there is no supplier issue)	3
Unsafe power of lighting socket or electrical fitting (excludes tenant appliances)	1
Total loss of water supply (where there is no supplier issue)	1
Partial loss of water supply (where there is no supplier issue)	3
Total or partial loss of gas supply (where there is no supplier issue)	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Heating or hot water not working (where there is no supplier issue) (between 31st Oct and 1st May)	1
Heating or hot water not working (where there is no supplier issue) (between 1st May and 31st October)	3
Blocked/leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet	1
Toilet not flushing (only one in property)	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3
Tap cannot be turned	3
Leak from water pipe, tank or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3
Door entry phone not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan not working	7

The Right to Improve

We acknowledge the right of our secure tenants to request permission to make improvements to their home. Introductory tenants do not legally have the right to carry out any improvement works to their home during the introductory period (usually 12 months unless extended).

We will consider each application on a case-by-case basis and permissions will be granted or declined following an inspection and assessment carried out by Housing Services. Any improvements that involve major works or structural alterations would need to be inspected by Housing Services Surveyors.

If a request to improve is refused following an inspection, a full explanation will be provided to the tenant.

Home improvements are subject to approval. Any requests for improvements should be put in writing to a Housing Management Officer, either by email or letter.

Permission must be granted before any improvement works are started. If works commence without getting prior permission, tenants may have to return the property to its original condition or may be recharged if we have to return it to its original state.

Some improvements require planning and building control approval. Any associated costs will be a tenant's responsibility.

Tenants must get approval for the following (not exhaustive):

- Carrying out alterations to the property.
- Putting a greenhouse or shed in the garden.
- Putting a garage on the property.
- Fitting a satellite dish.
- Constructing a parking space or drive.
- Erecting a pigeon cove or aviary.
- Decorating the outside of your house

Secure tenants may be entitled to receive compensation for improvements when their tenancy ends. Secure tenants can make a request for compensation when their tenancy ends by using the Tenants Compensation Form for Improvements which is available at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance

If secure tenants are given permission to carry out work, they must follow any requirements laid down by Housing Services, and by Darlington Borough Council's Planning Department and Building Control Section. They must also obtain any other statutory consents required in connection with the proposed work.

Tenants will need to specify exactly what type of work they wish to carry out, timescales for completion of the work and should provide a detailed plan or drawing showing their proposals, together with the details of their chosen contractor. These should be provided prior to any work is started so we can check their registration is up to date. Following completion of any works all documentation and certificates for work must be provided to us for our records. We will provide asbestos surveys if required.

All improvement works should be completed in full 12 months after the date permission was granted. Once improvement works are completed, tenants are fully responsible for the maintenance and repair of their improvements, we may recharge for any repairs that we are requested to carry out on tenant improvements.

If any of the proposed works include work next to/near or involve gas pipes or heating appliances, the contractor must be Gas Safe registered and tenants must provide us with the contractors details and registration number prior to any work commencing so we can check their registration is up to date. A copy of the Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS), specification of works must also be provided.

If any of the proposed works are to be carried out near/next or involve the electrical cables, consumer unit or electrical circuits the contractor must be NICEIC registered and tenants must provide us with the contractor details and registration number prior to any works being completed so we can check their registration is up to date. They must also provide us with a copy of the Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS), specification of works.

Following completion of any improvement works, a post-inspection will be required by Housing Services to ensure it meets our standards. Should they not meet our standards, tenants will be required to make the appropriate changes as directed by us or permission will be retracted. Tenants must allow access for this post-inspection or approval will be withdrawn and the tenant will be required to reinstate to the original specification.

Planned Maintenance and Improvement Works

Housing Services invests in the properties we manage to maintain the quality of homes. We want our tenants to live in homes that are modern, warm, comfortable and are of a good standard. Work is planned in line with our priorities and includes:

- Replacement programmes: new bathrooms, new kitchens, new boilers, roofing programmes, external doors/windows, and fire doors.
- Environmental programmes: new driveways, railings, fencing.
- Communal upgrades: new door entry systems, fire alarm upgrades and communal heating.
- Energy efficiency improvements

We have a planned programme of work to ensure our properties are being improved. We will write to tenants when their home is due for any improvement works to give a timescale for the works to be completed.

We will also send out further letters to arrange visits to our properties. The work will normally be completed in an agreed timescale with the tenant. However, if a tenants home requires additional works it may take longer. We will always communicate any delays with the tenant as soon as possible.

Access will be required throughout this time, and we will also need access to carry out a final inspection and complete any remedial work.

For more information please see the Repair Handbook at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/our-policies-and-performance/our-policies



Adaptations

We are committed to ensuring that aids and adaptations are accessible to all our tenants. We will do everything possible to ensure that our tenants can live independently in their homes for as long as possible whilst ensuring we make the best use of our housing stock. We aim to ensure that tenants are aware of the range of options if we are unable for any reason to adapt their current home and to deliver a cost-effective service.

We will work in partnership with agencies including Occupational Therapists, NHS, Social Care and Housing Asset Surveyors (not exhaustive) to ensure that we carry out effective, long-term adaptations that meet tenants current and future needs and provide value for money.

It is not always possible for us to adapt a tenant's current or prospective home and we will work closely with them to find suitable, alternative accommodation when this occurs. We will also take an active stance to assist tenants in finding

alternative accommodation when circumstances change, for example when they no longer require adaptations, to ensure we can make the best use of our housing stock and meet regulatory requirements. We will do everything we can to support tenants through the re-housing process.

Applications for adaptations are assessed on a case-by-case basis and we will take the following into account (not exhaustive):

- Availability of other suitable accommodation within the Borough.
- Individual circumstances and local connections.
- Future needs of the tenant.
- Location of the property.
- Type of property.
- Suitability of property for adaptation.
- Accessibility.
- Cost of adaptation.

Leaseholder Improvements

Leaseholders can carry out work to improve their home, but for some improvements they will need prior written permission from Housing Services, in accordance with the terms of their lease.

Leaseholders may also need to get planning permission and building consent for the work, together with any other relevant statutory consents.

Climate Change

As a local authority and social housing landlord we are fully committed to reducing our impact on the environment and our Housing Services Climate Change Strategy will help us to meet Government targets for decarbonising properties.

In order to meet government carbon zero targets by 2050, our programme of improvements to our existing homes will include measures which aim to make them more energy efficient through internal investment and government backed funding streams such as solar panels, internal and external insulation and improved windows and doors.

Staff Qualifications and Training

We are responsible for ensuring that staff will receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities as stated in this policy.

We will ensure any sub-contractors/agency carrying out any works on our behalf will be qualified to the appropriate standards.

We will ensure that all contractors have appropriate identification so tenants can easily confirm they are working for us.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate against any of our tenants, and we want to provide excellent services to all our tenants. This means that for all our policies and strategies we need to consider any specific issues that might be faced by protected groups.

Performance and Monitoring

To assist in our continuous improvement of the repairs and maintenance service we will collate and monitor performance information. We will involve our Tenants Panel and Council Members in monitoring this. We will also ensure that our performance is provided to the Regulator of Social Housing through Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

We will provide information on our performance on our website, our annual report and in our in-house magazine, Housing Connect.



Annual Report 2022/2023

Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee
1st November 2023

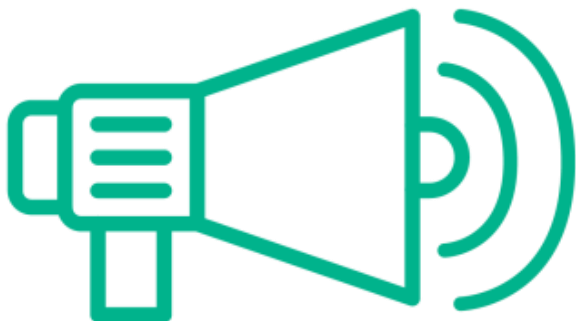
healthwatch
Darlington

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Reaching out

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142 people

shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

523 people

came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Making a difference to care

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We published **2 reports** about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was **Pandemic Experiences** which highlighted the experiences of local people at each stage of the COVID-19 pandemic

Our year in review

Find out how we have engaged and supported people.

Health and care that works for you

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We're lucky to have **16** outstanding volunteers who gave up 65 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received **£76,634** which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ **4 staff** who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2022 to March 2023.

Spring



From running information stands to social media posts, our volunteers helped us provide local communities with essential information.



We gathered your experiences of COVID-19 which highlighted the importance of community centered care.



Our Sensory Impairment Report highlighted the importance of providing Accessible Information to patients and carers



Our local information stands throughout Darlington helped us understand what is important to you in your health and care needs.

Summer

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How we've made a difference throughout the year

These are the biggest projects we worked on from April 2022 to March 2023.

Page 48	Autumn		Our ongoing partnership working with the Integrated Care Partnership is providing a solid basis to improve the wellbeing of our local communities.		We started working with our Tees Valley Healthwatch colleagues to refresh our Youthwatch project across the region.
	Winter		We shared a survey to help us understand local experiences of pharmacy services. 31% of participants told us how the prescription collection service was not meeting their needs.		Due to NHS winter pressures, we encouraged local people to share their experiences of care as part of the 'Because We All Care' joint campaign run by Healthwatch and the Care Quality Commission.

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Vaccination programme

Our pandemic experiences report based on public feedback, provided our local Integrated Care Board with valuable insights to plan for Phase 5 of the COVID vaccination programme.



NHS Long Term Plan

Healthwatch Darlington coordinated feedback across the 13 northern local Healthwatch teams. One of the key findings in Darlington was the importance for carers to be supported, involved and listened to.



Care Homes

We shared recommendations from our visits to local Care Homes and received positive responses from those who run and commission them.



Transforming mental health services

We helped our local mental health hospital trust understand the needs of our communities and commit to working collaboratively to overcome barriers faced in accessing mental health support.



Sharing your health records

Healthwatch Darlington coordinated feedback from 13 local Healthwatch concerning the Great North Care Record. This regional feedback helped decision makers understand what is important to those whose data would be shared.

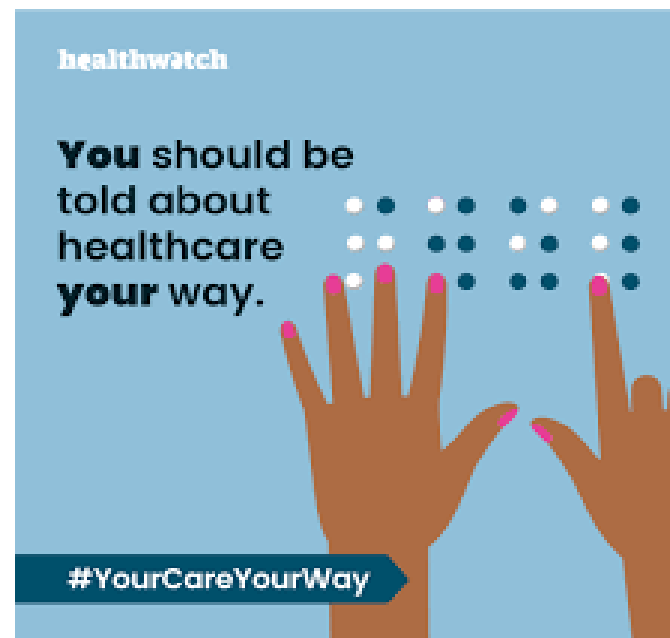


Listening to your experiences

Sensory impairment and access to health and care services

As a follow up to our Digital Inclusion Report in June 2021 and our involvement in the current Healthwatch England campaign to promote the Accessible Information Standard, we wanted to understand how residents of Darlington who had sensory impairment were impacted when accessing health and care services.

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What difference did we make?

- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust committed to review their compliance to the Accessible Information Standard and to develop an action plan based upon the report findings.
- Tees Valley NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (now North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board) committed to supporting their colleagues throughout the NHS to ensure they are meeting the criteria within the NHS.

Positive changes as a result of your pandemic experiences

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire healthcare system was forced to rethink how they could make services accessible to service users whilst keeping our communities safe. Covid did not just affect individuals, it affected everyone, and many challenges had to be faced.

What difference did we make?

Tees Valley NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (now North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board), told us the insights of local people within the report has provided them with valuable information and will allow them to support the residents of Darlington regarding future vaccination programmes and help them plan for future campaigns. They also committed to sharing the findings with the Tees Valley Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance to help inform their ongoing work.



"This reports findings in relation to experiences of mental health services throughout the pandemic will support our ongoing work across the region as part of the Tees Valley Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance."

Director of Finance, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board



Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life

It is important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Our pandemic report brought to life people's experiences during and after the pandemic. The awareness of concerns expressed has helped the local NHS to plan future campaigns as well as Phase 5 of the Vaccination Programme from September.

These insights are very valuable to the NHS and have allowed them to support the residents of Darlington to be informed about receiving a vaccination.





Getting services to involve the public

Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley's (TEWV) NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust used the insight contained within our report to support delivery of a new mental health community-based offer aligned with primary care networks, voluntary sector organisations and local community groups.

We continue to monitor the delivery and commitment given by TEWV to work collaboratively to overcome the barriers faced by our local communities in accessing and receiving mental health support.



Improving care over time

Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Healthwatch Darlington will continue listening to people about how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting people living and working in our Borough, engaging with those communities hardest hit.

We will share what our local health and care services are doing to support our communities during this time.

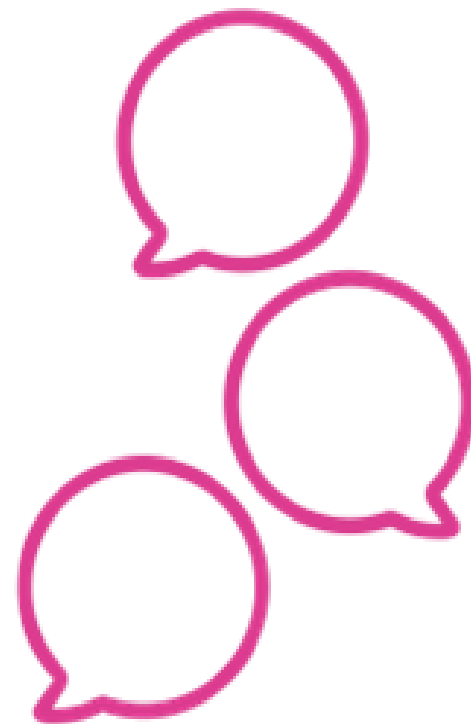
Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Focussing on supporting those with sensory impairments and receiving accessible care
- Highlighting the experiences of those who found it difficult to access health and care services during the pandemic
- Working with the Integrated Care Board to help them understand the needs of our local communities.

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Darlington Organisations Together Network

The lack of a Darlington Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) infrastructure organisation has resulted in many local VCSE groups relying on us to distribute and raise awareness of their services. So much so that our Darlington Organisations Together (DOT) network has become very popular with the smaller VCSE organisations.

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“We really enjoy attending the DOT network, it’s friendly, informative and a great way to find out what else is going on in Darlington. Healthwatch Darlington’s weekly newsletter also keeps us updated in between meetings and we know we can send them all our news, events and updates for publishing each week for free!”



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need.

Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

Volunteers

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are the heart of Healthwatch Darlington Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote their local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Shared up-to-date information on health and care services, and health and care events of interest to local people

Finance

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

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Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£76,634	Expenditure on pay	£69,727
Additional income	£20,624	Office expenditure	£10,292
Total income	£97,258	Total expenditure	£80,019

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£8,145 funding** NECS children's services
- **£5,000 funding** CCG Community Council
- **£2,479 funding** Healthwatch England website and management system
- **£4,500 funding** ICS participants
- **£500 sale** of furniture

Future Priorities

Top three priorities for 2023-24

1. **Mental Health** – Continue to influence local strategies by following up on our recommendations and evidencing impact.
2. **GP and Dental Services** – Continue to monitor the experiences of people accessing services and the impact of extra funding and commissioning changes.
3. **NHS Pressures** – Monitor the impact that workforce issues and industrial action are having on people accessing services.

For more information

Healthwatch Darlington

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22 St Cuthbert's Way

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YouTube: <https://youtube.com/channel/UC-mVUiDs78wgqkzKpLtPCVw>

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Together

healthwatch
Darlington

**we're making health
and social care better**

Annual Report 2022–23



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"In the last ten years, the health and social care landscape has changed dramatically, but the dedication of local Healthwatch hasn't. Your local Healthwatch has worked tirelessly to make sure the views of local people are heard, and NHS and social care leaders use your feedback to make care better."

Louise Ansari, Healthwatch National Director

Message from our Chair

Welcome to our annual report for 2022 to 2023. Last year I said that it was a challenging year and we have still had our challenges, but these are different. The pandemic hasn't completely gone away, and people are still getting Covid, but the impact on the hospital service and on society in general is different.

During 2022/23 we published our report on the pandemic. One of the things that we discovered and highlighted in the report is that the pandemic accelerated the move to online working and digital working.

We recognised that this could lead to people being left behind because of what has come to be called 'digital exclusion'. Also, of course, the pandemic has caused persistent symptoms in some people – Long Covid – and has also impacted on mental health.



Robert Upshall
Healthwatch
Darlington Chair

These are new challenges and there has been an adverse effect on the ability of Secondary care to deal with people waiting for treatment.

Another focus of our attention has been dentistry and was the subject of a report published by us in February 2022, but the problems continue. The current situation in dentistry isn't satisfactory for either patients or dentists. Last year the Integrated Care Board that covers all the North East and North Cumbria for the NHS became a statutory body which means it now has some teeth. It has been highlighted by Healthwatch throughout our region that there is a serious problem with dentistry. We will continue to monitor any measures that might bring some improvements in the patient experience of dentistry.

Healthwatch Darlington has been working increasingly closely with other Healthwatch to mirror the developments in the new way that the NHS is being administered in our region. Christopher Akers-Belcher, who is the coordinator for the 14 Healthwatch in our region, hosted an event celebrating 10 years of Healthwatch and this is referred to at length in our report.

Finances have always been a struggle for us, and they continue to be so, but as a Board we have been very careful in how we spend the charity's money and consequently we believe that we have kept Healthwatch Darlington on a sustainable footing.

As well as continuing to do the 'bread and butter' work of collecting public feedback; influencing the decision makers of local health and care services; and signposting people towards the services that are most likely to meet their need, we are also carrying out project work both for the Integrated Care Board and other health and social care organisations. This ensures they are more responsive and equitable to the people of Darlington.

About us

Healthwatch Darlington is your local health and social care champion.

We make sure NHS leaders and decision makers hear your voice and use your feedback to improve care. We can also help you to find reliable and trustworthy information and advice.



Our vision

A world where we can all get the health and care we need.



Our mission

To make sure people's experiences help make health and care better.

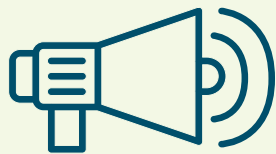


Our values are:

- **Listening** to people and making sure their voices are heard.
- **Including** everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
- **Analysing** different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
- **Acting** on feedback and driving change.
- **Partnering** with care providers, Government, and the voluntary sector – serving as the public's independent advocate.

Year in review

Reaching out



142 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.

523 people came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the cost-of-living crisis.

18,500 people opened and read our weekly e-newsletter

168,000 people saw our posts on our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages.

Making a difference to care

We published

2 reports

reports about the improvements people would like to see to health and social care services.

Our most popular report was

Pandemic Experiences

which highlighted the experiences of local people at each stage of the COVID-19 pandemic



Health and care that works for you



We're lucky to have

16

outstanding volunteers who gave up 65 days to make care better for our community.

We're funded by our local authority. In 2022-23 we received

£76,634

which is the same as the previous year.

We currently employ

4 staff

who help us carry out our work.

How we've made a difference this year

Spring	 <p>From running information stands to social media posts, our volunteers helped us provide local communities with essential information.</p>	 <p>We gathered your experiences of COVID-19 which highlighted the importance of community centered care.</p>
Summer	 <p>Our Sensory Impairment Report highlighted the importance of providing Accessible Information to patients and carers</p>	 <p>Our local information stands throughout Darlington helped us understand what is important to you in your health and care needs.</p>
Autumn	 <p>Our ongoing partnership working with the Integrated Care Partnership is providing a solid basis to improve the wellbeing of our local communities.</p>	 <p>We started working with our Tees Valley Healthwatch colleagues to refresh our Youthwatch project across the region.</p>
Winter	 <p>We shared a survey to help us understand local experiences of pharmacy services. 31% of participants told us how the prescription collection service was not meeting their needs.</p>	 <p>Due to NHS winter pressures, we encouraged local people to share their experiences of care as part of the 'Because We All Care' joint campaign run by Healthwatch and the Care Quality Commission.</p>

10 years of improving care

This year marks a special milestone for Healthwatch. Over the last ten years, people have shared their experiences, good and bad, to help improve health and social care. A big thank you to all our Healthwatch Heroes that have stepped up and inspired change. Here are a few of our highlights:

How have we made care better, together?

Vaccination programme

Our pandemic experiences report based on public feedback, provided our local Integrated Care Board with valuable insights to plan for Phase 5 of the COVID vaccination programme.



Transforming mental health services

We helped our local mental health hospital trust understand the needs of our communities and commit to working collaboratively to overcome barriers faced in accessing mental health support.

NHS Long Term Plan

Healthwatch Darlington coordinated feedback across the 13 northern local Healthwatch teams. One of the key findings in Darlington was the importance for carers to be supported, involved and listened to.



Sharing your health records

Healthwatch Darlington coordinated feedback from 13 local Healthwatch concerning the Great North Care Record. This regional feedback helped decision makers understand what is important to those whose data would be shared.

Care Homes

We shared recommendations from our visits to local Care Homes and received positive responses from those who run and commission them.



10 years of improving care

On Wednesday 8th March 2023 fourteen local Healthwatch from across the North East & North Cumbria (NENC) came together to celebrate its 10th birthday at the Riverside Stadium in Middlesbrough. The fourteen Healthwatch work collectively across the NENC Integrated Care System (NENC ICS) region to add value and service user voice to the changing health and care landscape.

Staff past and present, board members, volunteers and partner organisations came together to share in the success that Healthwatch has achieved to date.

Since the commencement of Healthwatch there has been a strong commitment to ensure that the voice of service users and the public remains embedded in the decision-making process of health and care services, championing the views of those that access services to ensure service delivery and changes made promote the best wellbeing outcomes for individuals, carers and families.

With the introduction of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) it is recognised that only through partnership working, meaningful engagement and combined resources will we make a positive difference to the health, wellbeing, and care of the communities we represent.

The event provided an opportunity for reflection of the journey of Healthwatch so far. The trials and tribulations, the growth, the changes and more importantly the successes that demonstrated the passion that remains with us on our journey to change.



The day was hosted by Christopher Akers-Belcher – Chief Executive of Healthwatch Hartlepool. Christopher is also the Regional Coordinator for the North East & North Cumbria Healthwatch Network.

10 years of improving care

Throughout the day guest speakers spoke of their own experience and involvement with Healthwatch and shared their vision and hopes for the future.

Jennifer Clark and Delana Lawson from Healthwatch England presented detail of our vision, mission and values, providing reference to our changing world with its challenges and opportunities and building on our success with three key objectives:

1. To support more people who face the worst outcomes to speak-up about their care and access the advice they need.
2. To ensure care decision-makers act on public feedback and involve communities in decisions that affect them.
3. To be a more effective organisation and build a stronger Healthwatch movement.

“What an incredible way to mark 10 years of Healthwatch in the region. It was a privilege to be invited to join in. I am as ever blown away by the passion, dedication, and talent of Healthwatch volunteers, boards and staff members. People working within limited resources to create real changes in people’s lives. This Healthwatch region has moved deftly towards becoming a truly effective collaborative in a way other regions have struggled to do. It was clear to me how Healthwatch is valued by the ICB, providers and partners. Personally, this is my home region, where I started my own Healthwatch journey, and I couldn’t be prouder of how far you have all come in the last decade. I look forward to seeing what the next decade brings.”

Jenny Clark

Deputy Head of Engagement and Sustainability, Healthwatch England

“Thank you so much North East. What a fabulous day, well done to you all. You have set the standard for celebrations and collaboration nationally.

I heard some interesting conversations throughout the day and during the networking session and am looking forward to the implementation of ideas we should take forward as a region.”

Delana Lawson

Quality Assurance & Regional Manager (North East, Yorkshire & Humberside)
Healthwatch England

“I’d like to thank the various Healthwatch organisations across Tees Valley for inviting me to the 10th anniversary event. I’d particularly like to say thank you for the opportunity to talk about the collaborative work that we have undertaken to ensure the patient voice is at the heart of the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme that is now underway. I am looking forward to the continued input of Healthwatch as we progress with the agreed changes in our local communities, and I very much welcome their continued support to understand and address the key health inequalities that impact upon access, effectiveness, and experience of our mental health services.”

Dominic Gardner

Care Group Director MHSOP / AMH, Durham Tees Valley Care Group
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

10 years of improving care

We were delighted that **Claire Riley** from the NENC ICS was able to attend the event and share with us her ambition for the future of health and care services.

With the ICS transformation underway Claire spoke of her desire to ensure insight and feedback from the public was used at both a national and local level. Claire welcomed the opportunity she has had to work alongside Healthwatch and is looking forward to continued collaboration that will support system wide planning and service delivery.

Claire acknowledged there will be challenges and 'hard conversations' along the way and that positive system change will only be achieved through meaningful partnership working. Claire welcomed the opportunity to answer questions raised and provided honest feedback on the challenges ahead, with a determination to ensure positive outcomes for health and care services.

"Thank you for inviting me to join the Healthwatch 10-year celebration. It is important to celebrate the great work of Healthwatch teams and the impact this has had on patients, carers and the public. Now we have the opportunity to learn from this work and ensure the voices of our communities are at the heart of health and care services."

Claire Riley

Executive Director of Corporate Governance, communications and involvement,
North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System





Listening to your experiences

Services can't make improvements without hearing your views. That's why over the last year we have made listening to feedback from all areas of the community a priority. This allows us to understand the full picture, and feed this back to services and help them improve.

Sensory impairment and access to health and care services

By law, all publicly funded health and care providers must fully comply with the Accessible Information Standard (AIS) which requires services to meet the information & communication needs of people with a learning disability or sensory impairment

As a follow up to our Digital Inclusion Report in June 2021 and our involvement in the current Healthwatch England campaign to promote the Accessible Information Standard, we wanted to understand how residents of Darlington who had sensory impairment were impacted when accessing health and care services.

The experiences of those who shared their views with us were mixed. Whilst we welcome the services who have protocols in place to accommodate those with a sensory impairment, it is disappointing that the picture is not consistent.

Healthwatch Darlington urges all health and care providers to comply with their legal obligations, and made the following recommendations:



- Darlington Primary Care Network to provide an update on its review of the findings and recommendations of our Digital Inclusion Report.
- All health and care services supporting residents of Darlington to provide a consistent service by adopting the Accessible Information Standard (AIS).
- Health and care services to promote the principles of the AIS in their communications and health and care venues.

What difference will this make?

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust committed to review their compliance to the Accessible Information Standard and to develop an action plan based upon the report findings.

Tees Valley NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (now North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board) committed to supporting their colleagues throughout the NHS to ensure they are meeting the criteria within the NHS.



“Adoption and adherence to the Accessible Information Standard would resolve concerns experienced by those who completed our survey and many others who use health and care services in Darlington.”

Michelle Thompson BEM, Chief Executive Officer, Healthwatch Darlington

Positive changes as a result of your pandemic experiences

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire healthcare system was forced to rethink how they could make services accessible to service users whilst keeping our communities safe. Covid did not just affect individuals, it affected everyone, and many challenges had to be faced.

Our report highlighted the close relationships fostered with many different partners such as local authorities, primary care, public health and voluntary and community sector organisations should not be lost, but used to improve services for our communities right across the North East and North Cumbria.

Our recommendations:

1. Accessibility of existing services and keeping the public up to date with any changes needed through good communication.
2. Digital inclusion – that no one is left out because they cannot or do not access online services, or systems that require digital process.
3. The ability of carers and loved ones to be present at health and care appointments to provide emotional and practical support to patients.
4. The right to choose face to face or online consultations.
5. Acknowledgement and solutions of communication barriers, such as wearing masks, when talking to those requiring health and care services.
6. Support for 'Long COVID'.
7. Support for mental health.

What difference will this make?

Tees Valley NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (now North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board), told us the insights of local people within the report has provided them with valuable information and will allow them to support the residents of Darlington regarding future vaccination programmes and help them plan for future campaigns.

They also committed to sharing the findings with the Tees Valley Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance to help inform their ongoing work.

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust welcomed the findings within the report and thanked all involved for their feedback.



“This reports findings in relation to experiences of mental health services throughout the pandemic will support our ongoing work across the region as part of the Tees Valley Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance.”

Director of Finance, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Three ways we have made a difference for the community

Throughout our work we gather information about health inequalities by speaking to people whose experiences aren't often heard.

Creating empathy by bringing experiences to life



It is important for services to see the bigger picture. Hearing personal experiences and the impact on people's lives provides them with a better understanding of the problems.

Our pandemic report brought to life people's experiences during and after the pandemic. The awareness of concerns expressed has helped the local NHS to plan future campaigns as well as Phase 5 of the Vaccination Programme from September.

These insights are very valuable to the NHS and have allowed them to support the residents of Darlington to be informed about receiving a vaccination.

Getting services to involve the public



Services need to understand the benefits of involving local people to help improve care for everyone.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valley's (TEWV) NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust used the insight contained within our report to support delivery of a new mental health community-based offer aligned with primary care networks, voluntary sector organisations and local community groups.

We continue to monitor the delivery and commitment given by TEWV to work collaboratively to overcome the barriers faced by our local communities in accessing and receiving mental health support.

Improving care over time



Change takes time. We often work behind the scenes with services to consistently raise issues and bring about change.

Healthwatch Darlington will continue listening to people about how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting people living and working in our Borough, engaging with those communities hardest hit.

We will share what our local health and care services are doing to support our communities during this time.



Hearing from all communities

Over the past year we have worked hard to make sure we hear from everyone within our local area. We consider it important to reach out to the communities we hear from less frequently, to gather their feedback and make sure their voice is heard and services meet their needs.

This year we have reached different communities by:

- Focussing on supporting those with sensory impairments and receiving accessible care
- Highlighting the experiences of those who found it difficult to access health and care services during the pandemic
- Working with the Integrated Care Board to help them understand the needs of our local communities.

Darlington Organisations Together Network

The lack of a Darlington Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) infrastructure organisation has resulted in many local VCSE groups relying on us to distribute and raise awareness of their services. So much so that our Darlington Organisations Together (DOT) network has become very popular with the smaller VCSE organisations.

DOT provides a forum to generate opportunities to work together and promote and showcase all their work and news via our popular weekly e-newsletter which has over 800 subscribers. We have opened up conversations and encouraged collaboration in a totally unbiased approach.

In addition, we have collated a wealth of knowledge needed to direct people to the VCSE organisations across Darlington as well as public sector organisations. Our e-newsletter and face to face information community hubs helps to distribute this information to both individuals and organisations across the Borough. We are able to help local people receive the information and advice they need to make the right decisions for themselves and those they care for, and to obtain the support they deserve.

Putting people at the heart of decision making in Darlington is what we strive to achieve on an ongoing basis and is one of our statutory duties. With the excellent relationships we enjoy with our vibrant VCSE sector we have seen first-hand how putting people at the heart of collaboration requires an investment of time and money, but the potential results make it worthwhile.

Enabling organisations to meet and start working together has resulted in plans to tackle unemployment in families, mental health services, social prescribing, young carers and many more community services that cannot be solved by services that work in isolation.

We have seen first-hand how partnering with other organisations, sharing people, expertise and operational models can significantly increase social impact, whilst reducing inefficiencies and unnecessary duplication across the sector.

Such an approach has been especially relevant for communities who might otherwise find it difficult to access information or influence provider decision making, including ethnic minority groups; people with disabilities; the LGBTQ+ community; children and young people and our ageing population.

We have supported work with the NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) leads and health and care system leaders to actively engage with VCSE organisations by increasing their knowledge and understanding of the VCSE sector and brokering relationships.



"We really enjoy attending the DOT network, it's friendly, informative and a great way to find out what else is going on in Darlington. Healthwatch Darlington's weekly newsletter also keeps us updated in between meetings and we know we can send them all our news, events and updates for publishing each week for free!"



Advice and information

If you feel lost and don't know where to turn, Healthwatch is here for you. In times of worry or stress, we can provide confidential support and free information to help you understand your options and get the help you need. Whether it's finding an NHS dentist, how to make a complaint or choosing a good care home for a loved one – you can count on us.

This year we've helped people by:

- Providing up to date information people can trust
- Helping people access the services they need
- Helping people access NHS dentistry
- Supporting people to look after their health during the cost of living crisis

Help to find dental care in Darlington

We had 41 people contact us for advice and information on dental services. You told us that many practices were not taking on new patients, and that some had waiting lists of up to five years.

The impact of delayed treatment has resulted in people living with considerable pain, developing medical resistance and dental conditions worsening.



"I can't find an NHS dentist – and I can't afford to go private."

We met with our local MP, Peter Gibson, and discussed ways he could support local people and raise questions in Parliament regarding new dentistry reforms.



"Thank you for listening to me and for the information you provided."

We continue to promote the work we undertook last year in our dentistry report and supporting local people in their struggles to find dental care. You can find our Myth Buster online here: [Dentistry Myth Buster](#)

Helping residents access local GP services

We had 24 people contact us about their GP Practice.

Some of you wanted to tell us about positive experiences you had with your GP practice, including how well they worked with local hospital services around referrals.

Other experiences were not so good. You let us know about:

- Lack of support for LGBT groups including incorrect gender markers.
- Lack of communication between the GP practice and the local pharmacy
- Lack of communication between the GP practice and hospital services
- Waiting lists to see a GP

Let us know your experience of local GP services.

We can help direct you to the right service or help you understand how to make a complaint.

Whatever your experience, the more people share their ideas, experiences and concerns, the more services can understand what works and what doesn't.



Volunteering

We're supported by a team of amazing volunteers who are at the heart of what we do. Thanks to their efforts in the community, we're able to understand what is working and what needs improving.

This year our volunteers:

- Visited communities to promote their local Healthwatch and what we have to offer
- Collected experiences and supported their communities to share their views
- Shared up-to-date information on health and care services, and health and care events of interest to local people

Jamie

"Volunteering for me is all about making a difference. Knowing that I am contributing to making a positive difference in the community gives me a sense of accomplishment to know I am helping others. It is wonderful to meet members of the public and hear their stories. It makes volunteering feel worthwhile when I can help them with a problem."



Robert

"I joined Healthwatch shortly after its inception. I had recently retired from being an NHS GP and was looking for something to occupy me that was related to healthcare and Healthwatch fitted the bill. Being a board member of Healthwatch keeps me in touch with how healthcare is working for people and acting as a Governor of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, appointed by Healthwatch Darlington, is particularly fascinating."



Edgar

"Volunteering for Healthwatch is a great way to interact, help others, give back to the community, work for worthwhile causes and overall helping someone with their health, mentally and physically."

It is a good way to meet new people that can improve social skills."



Do you feel inspired?

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers, so please get in touch today.



www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk



01325 380145



info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk

Finance and future priorities

To help us carry out our work we receive funding from our local authority under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Our income and expenditure

Income		Expenditure	
Annual grant from Government	£76,634	Expenditure on pay	£69,727
Additional income	£20,624	Office expenditure	£10,292
Total income	£97,258	Total expenditure	£80,019

Additional income is broken down by:

- **£8,145 funding** NECS children's services
- **£5,000 funding** CCG Community Council
- **£2,479 funding** Healthwatch England website and management system
- **£4,500 funding** ICS participants
- **£500 sale** of furniture

Next steps

In the ten years since Healthwatch was launched, we've demonstrated the power of public feedback in helping the health and care system understand what is working, spot issues and think about how things can be better in the future.

Services are currently facing unprecedented challenges and tackling the backlog needs to be a key priority for the NHS to ensure everyone gets the care they need. Over the next year we will continue our role in collecting feedback from everyone in our local community and giving them a voice to help shape improvements to services.

We will also continue our work to tackling inequalities that exist and work to reduce the barriers you face when accessing care, regardless whether that is because of where you live, income or race.

Top three priorities for 2023–24

1. **Mental Health** – Continue to influence local strategies by following up on our recommendations and evidencing impact.
2. **GP and Dental Services** – Continue to monitor the experiences of people accessing services and the impact of extra funding and commissioning changes.
3. **NHS Pressures** – Monitor the impact that workforce issues and industrial action are having on people accessing services.



Statutory statements

Healthwatch Darlington, Sterling House, 22 St Cuthbert's Way, Darlington. DL1 1GB.

Healthwatch Darlington uses the Healthwatch Trademark when undertaking our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

The way we work

Involvement of volunteers and lay people in our governance and decision-making

Our Healthwatch Board consists of five members who work on a voluntary basis to provide direction, oversight and scrutiny to our activities. Our Board ensures that decisions about priority areas of work reflect the concerns and interests of our diverse local community. Throughout 2022/23 the Board met 12 times and made decisions regarding where we would focus our valuable time and resources to support our local communities.

We ensure wider public involvement in deciding our work priorities.

Methods and systems used across the year to obtain people's experiences

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of using services.

During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, email, provided a webform on our website and through social media, as well as attending meetings of community groups and forums.

We ensure that this annual report is made available to as many members of the public and partner organisations as possible. We will publish it on our website.

Responses to recommendations

All providers responded to requests for information or recommendations. There were no issues or recommendations escalated by us to Healthwatch England Committee, so no resulting reviews or investigations.

The way we work

Taking people's experiences to decision makers

We ensure that people who can make decisions about services hear about the insight and experiences that have been shared with us.

We take insight and experiences to decision makers in the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board. (ICB)

While we have worked together informally for many years, recent funding from the ICB has enabled the Network to formalise working arrangements through our Operational Protocol, so that it can systematically represent the views of service users, families and carers with partners across the Integrated Care System (ICS).

Local intelligence is collated across each of the four sub-regional areas and shared at Area Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) meetings.

At regional level, the Healthwatch Regional Coordinator represents service-user voices from across the region at the NENC ICP strategic meeting, Quality & Safety Committee, Primary Care Strategy & Delivery sub-committee, Healthy & Fairness Advisory Group, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion meetings and System Quality Group meetings.

The network of local Healthwatch has also been commissioned to undertake additional research to ensure local opinions are represented in the ICB's work priorities, including focus groups for the Waiting Well, and consultation around the development of the ICB strategy.

We also share our data with Healthwatch England to help address health and care issues at a national level.

Healthwatch representatives

Healthwatch Darlington is represented on the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) by **Michelle Thompson B.E.M., Chief Executive Officer**. Michelle is also the Vice Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

During 2022/23 our representative has effectively carried out this role by participating in the decisions made by the HWBB and supporting the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise those very decisions, by providing information and local intelligence.

Healthwatch Darlington is represented on the South Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System by **Toni McHale** and **Christopher Akers-Belcher**.

The Regional ICP is attended by **Christopher Akers-Belcher**, Healthwatch Regional Integrated Care Board (ICB) Coordinator. The ICB Participant for the network is **David Thompson**, Chair of Healthwatch Northumberland.



Healthwatch Darlington

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YouTube: <https://youtube.com/channel/UC-mVUIDs78wgqkzKpLtPCVw>

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HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 NOVEMBER 2023

WORK PROGRAMME

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2023/24 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be added to the previously approved work programme.

Summary

2. Members are requested to consider the attached work programme (**Appendix 1**) for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year which has been prepared based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee.
3. A request has been received (**Appendix 2**) from a Member requesting that this Scrutiny Committee undertake a piece of work with the aim of achieving better health outcomes and reduction in council expenditure through comprehensive awareness and participation initiatives offering key ways to decrease the negative far-reaching contribution of chronic inflammation.
4. In accordance with the agreed procedure (**Appendix 3**), the request was forwarded to the Interim Director of Public Health for a view on its merits, using the identified criteria.
5. The response of the Interim Director of Public Health is attached (**Appendix 2**).

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that:-
 - a) Members note the current status of the Work Programme and consider any additional areas of work they would like to include.
 - b) In accordance with the agreed procedure, taking into account the views of the Interim Director of Public Health, this Scrutiny Committee is asked to make a decision about whether the item on chronic inflammation should be added to its work programme.
 - c) If Members agree to b) above, this work should be undertaken via a Task and Finish Review with the membership being confirmed outside of this meeting with Democratic Services.

Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Author : Hannah Miller 5801

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
7. The Council Plan sets the vision and strategic direction for the Council through to May 2023, with its overarching focus being 'Delivering success for Darlington'.
8. In approving the Council Plan, Members agreed to a vision for Darlington which is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.
9. The visions for the Health and Housing portfolio is:-

 'a borough where people enjoy productive, healthy lives. They will have access to excellent leisure facilities and recognising the importance of having a home, there will be access to quality social housing.'
10. It is intended to commence work on developing a new Council Plan later in 2023.

Forward Plan and Additional Items

11. Once the Work Programme has been agreed by this Scrutiny Committee, any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims.
12. A copy of the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 4** for information.

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HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy	1 November 2023	Anthony Sandys		
Dental Services	1 November 2023 Last considered Special 15 March 2023	Pauline Fletcher, NHS England		To update Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.
Healthwatch Darlington - The Annual Report of Healthwatch Darlington	1 November 2023 Last considered 2 November 2022	Michelle Thompson, HWD		To scrutinise and monitor the service provided by Healthwatch – Annual
Primary Care (to include GP Access to appointments)	3 January 2024 Last considered 8 February 2023	Emma Joyeux, ICB		To scrutinise development around Primary Care Network and GP work
Housing Services Asset Management Strategy	3 January 2024	Anthony Sandys		
Housing Services Climate Change Strategy (Report and Presentation)	3 January 2024	Anthony Sandys		

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Performance Management and Regulation/ Management of Change Regular Performance Reports to be Programmed	3 January 2024 Year End August 2024	Relevant AD	Full PMF suite of indicators	To receive biannual monitoring reports and undertake any further detailed work into particular outcomes if necessary
Housing Revenue Account	January 2024 - To be agreed	Anthony Sandys		
Medium Term Financial Plan	3 January 2024	Brett Nielsen		To scrutinise those areas of the MTFP within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.
Quality Accounts Update	Special Dec/Jan To be agreed Year End Special May 2024	TEWV/CDDFT		
Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Update	28 February 2024 Last considered 14 December 2022	Anthony Sandys		To look at progress following the implementation of the strategy. Update on current position within Darlington
Better Care Fund	1 November 2023 Last considered 2 November 2022	Paul Neil		To receive an update on the position of the Better Care Fund for Darlington. To receive an update on the programme review.

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
CAMHS update	28 February 2024 Last considered 14 December 2022	James Graham		
Breast Symptomatic Services	28 February 2024	Martin Short, ICB		
Community Mental Health Transformation	24 April 2024 Last considered 14 December 2022	Allison Housam/Shاون Mayo/John Stamp TEWV		To receive a briefing and undertake any further detailed work if necessary.
Healthy Weight Plan and Physical Activity Plan	24 April 2024	Ken Ross/Lisa Soderman		
Suicide Prevention	To be agreed	Ken Ross		
Strategic Housing Needs Assessment	To be agreed	Anthony Sandys		
Darlington Health Profile	To be agreed Last considered 2 November 2022	Penny Spring		Annual report
Director of Public Health Annual Report	Last considered 30 August 2023	Penny Spring		Annual report
Customer Engagement Strategy 2021- 2024 Update (Presentation)	Last considered 30 August 2023	Anthony Sandys		To provide annual progress reports to Scrutiny. To look at work being done within communities and how the Customer Panel engage with new communities.

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Health and Safety Compliance in Council Housing	Last considered 30 August 2023	Anthony Sandys		To provide annual updates to Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.
Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy – Update (Presentation)	Last considered 30 August 2023	Anthony Sandys		To provide annual updates to Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.

MEMBERS BRIEFINGS

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Integrated Care System (ICS)	23 August 2023	Martin Short, ICB		To receive an update on the ICS
Drug and Alcohol Service Contract – We Are With You	14 September 2023 Last considered 2 November 2022	Mark Harrison/Jon Murray		To update Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.

TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Physical Accessibility to health care and ancillary care	Scoping meeting TBC	Ken Ross/TBC		

JOINT COMMITTEE WORKING – ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Loneliness and Connected Communities Adults Scrutiny to Lead	Scoping meeting 28 January 2020 Meeting on 5 October 2020 Meeting on 15 December 2020			

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QUAD OF AIMS (MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY)

PROCESS FOR ADDING AN ITEM TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WORK PROGRAMME

SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS

NOTE – This document should only be completed if there is a clearly defined and significant outcome from any potential further work. This document should **not** be completed as a request for or understanding of information.

REASON FOR REQUEST?	RESOURCE (WHAT OFFICER SUPPORT WOULD YOU REQUIRE?)
To achieve better health outcomes and reduction in council expenditure through comprehensive awareness and participation initiatives offering key ways to decrease the negative far-reaching contribution of chronic inflammation, which is by far one of the main causes in a vast number of illnesses, of mind and body.	Miriam Davidson, Director of Public Health Ken Ross, Public Health Specialist Any officers with responsibility for emphasising early preventative measures rather than addressing late outcomes in health and wellbeing management. Admin support from Democratic Services
PROCESS (HOW CAN SCRUTINY ACHIEVE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?)	HOW WILL THE OUTCOME MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
By fostering a clear focus on prevention of illness in all areas of its reach within health provision and by encouraging setting up of awareness and participation initiatives throughout Darlington and surroundings through close collaboration with the NHS, Health Watch and associated organisations.	The potential positive outcome is substantial over time: A reduction of admission to hospitals; A reduction of need in adult and children's social care; A reduction of severity of symptoms; An advancement in health equality; Motivation and engagement of participants to play an active role in their own

	health outcomes; A significant lowering of expenditure on health care provision
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Signed Councillor Kate Mammolotti

Date 20 August 2023

SECTION 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTORS/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
(NOTE – There is an expectation that Officers will discuss the request with the Member)

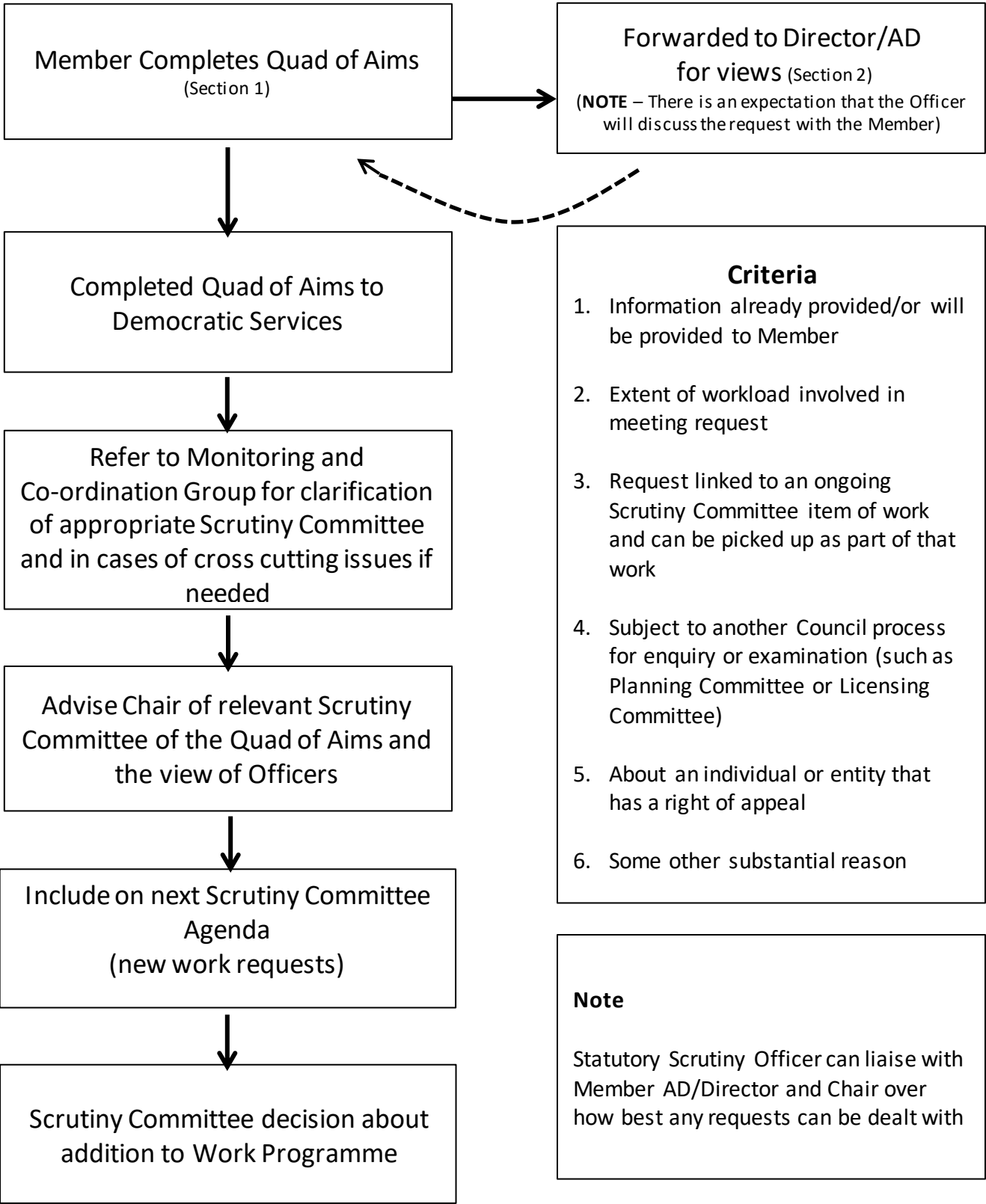
	Criteria
<p>1. (a) Is the information available elsewhere? Yes</p> <p>If yes, please indicate where the information can be found (attach if possible and return with this document to Democratic Services)</p> <p>There is information about the range of inflammatory diseases and conditions along with the contributory factors available through local and national statistics and data and is included in the Darlington Health Profile which is reported to Scrutiny annually.</p> <p>(b) Have you already provided the information to the Member or will you shortly be doing so?</p> <p>This specific information has not yet been provided to the member however a meeting will be arranged to go through this data and information in more detail.</p>	<p>1. Information already provided/or will be provided to Member</p> <p>2. Extent of workload involved in meeting request</p> <p>3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work</p>
<p>2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff?</p> <p>This will somewhat complement work already underway around the development of the Public Health Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy.</p>	<p>4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)</p>
<p>3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that?</p> <p>It could potentially be picked up as part of the response to the Darlington Health Profile such as a task and finish group looking at the specific inflammatory diseases, once agreement has been reached about which inflammatory diseases are</p>	<p>5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal</p> <p>6. Some other substantial reason</p>

<p>within scope.</p> <p>4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway?</p> <p>Not specifically although the Health and Wellbeing Strategy/Plan being developed by the Health and Wellbeing Board will have a focus on Health Inequalities and may include some of the inflammatory diseases and conditions and the inequalities in terms of contributory factors, access to care and outcomes due to these conditions</p> <p>5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal?</p> <p>Not applicable</p> <p>6. Is there any substantial reason (other than the above) why you feel it should not be included on the work programme?</p> <p>No however needs more definition of inflammation as there are a broad range of diseases which are inflammatory.</p>	
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Signed Ken Ross/Miriam Davidson **Position** Public Health Specialist/Interim Director of Public Health **Date** 21 September 2023

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PROCESS FOR ADDING AN ITEM TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE’S
PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WORK PROGRAMME



PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

QUAD OF AIMS (MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY)

SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS

NOTE – This document should only be completed if there is a clearly defined and significant outcome from any potential further work. This document should **not** be completed as a request for or understanding of information.

REASON FOR REQUEST?	RESOURCE (WHAT OFFICER SUPPORT WOULD YOU REQUIRE?)
PROCESS (HOW CAN SCRUTINY ACHIEVE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?)	HOW WILL THE OUTCOME MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Signed Councillor

Date

SECTION 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTORS/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
(NOTE – There is an expectation that Officers will discuss the request with the Member)

<p>1. (a) Is the information available elsewhere? Yes No</p> <p>If yes, please indicate where the information can be found (attach if possible and return with this document to Democratic Services)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(b) Have you already provided the information to the Member or will you shortly be doing so?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>6. Is there any substantial reason (other than the above) why you feel it should not be included on the work programme?</p> <p>.....</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Criteria</p> <p>1. Information already provided/or will be provided to Member</p> <p>2. Extent of workload involved in meeting request</p> <p>3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work</p> <p>4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)</p> <p>5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal</p> <p>6. Some other substantial reason</p>
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Signed **Position** **Date**

PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

FORWARD PLAN
FOR THE PERIOD: 4 OCTOBER 2023 – 29 FEBRUARY 2024

Title	Decision Maker and Date
Auditors Annual Audit Letter 2020/21	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 - Fixed Penalty Notices	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Consultation on Renewal of Dog Public Space Protection Order	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Council Tax Changes to Empty Property Premiums from 2024	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Council Tax Support - Scheme Approval 2024/25	Council 30 Nov 2023 Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Delivery of New Homes at Neasham Road	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Procurement Plan Update	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter Two 2023/24	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Quarter Two	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Schedule of Transactions	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Special Free School at West Park, Darlington	Cabinet 7 Nov 2023
Complaints to Local Government Ombudsman	Cabinet 5 Dec 2023
Housing Revenue Account - Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28	Council 25 Jan 2024 Cabinet 5 Dec 2023
Land at Faverdale - Burtree Garden Village - Proposed Infrastructure Development Agreement	Cabinet 5 Dec 2023
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Council 25 Jan 2024 Cabinet 5 Dec 2023
Mid-Year Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management 2023/24	Council 25 Jan 2024 Cabinet 5 Dec 2023

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

Council Tax and Business Rates Debt Recovery Strategy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Housing Services Asset Management Strategy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Housing Services Climate Change Strategy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Maintained Schools Capital Programme - Summer 2024	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Revised Climate Change Action Plan	Council 25 Jan 2024 Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Calendar of Council and Committee Meetings 2024/25	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Housing Revenue Account - Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2026/28	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024/25 to 2027/28	Council 21 Mar 2024 Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Schools Admissions 2025/26	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Asset Management Plan	Cabinet

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

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