

COUNCIL
25 NOVEMBER 2021

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Covid-19 Response

2. The Committee received a verbal update on the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically in relation to care providers. Members heard that there were Covid outbreaks at six Older Peoples Care Homes and two Care Homes for Disabled Adults (Mental Health/Learning Disabilities) care homes at the time of the meeting, whereby 24 residents and 26 staff had either had Covid, or were currently Covid positive and these outbreaks were being managed and contained by the closure of the homes to visitors, and the Homes being advised to undertake Risk Assessments in relation to an admission.
3. There was also an outbreak in one of the Extra Care Schemes. This was being contained within the scheme, with a suspension on group activities such as meals in dining room and activities.
4. With reference to vaccinations, it was reported that 97 per cent of staff in Care Homes had received their first vaccination, and 92 per cent of staff had received their second dose. Members heard that residents were being offered their Covid Boosters, and 442 booster jabs had been administered in Old Person Homes. 628 flu vaccines had also been administered across all care homes but it was anticipated that as homes come out of outbreaks this number will increase.
5. We heard of the continued pressures experienced by Local Domiciliary Care Providers operating under Business Continuity Planning arrangements, and the general staffing issues that are being experienced across the whole of Social Care, nationally and regionally. Members questioned what support was being offered to the staff in Care Homes and were advised that Business Continuity Plans were put in place in the Homes with staff shortages to prioritise workload.

Frailty Pathway System Update

7. The Committee received a presentation to update Members on the Frailty Pathway System. The presentation outlined the four Strategic Plans that had been in place since 2014, namely the Health and Well Being Strategies Priorities for Older People; the Better Care Fund; South Integrated Care Partnership Frailty Pathway; and Ageing Well. Frailty priorities were outlined including strategic outcomes to optimise the quality of care for those people admitted to hospital and the ambition to discharge people as close to home and ensure they had the right support to avoid re-admission.
8. We were advised of the definition of frailty, and the ways in which the Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT) supported people presenting with frailty was highlighted in the presentation, including the wider support to ensure interventions happen at an early stage to avoid admission to hospital. It was also highlighted that enhanced care in Care Homes was also a priority with more direct interventions to promote independence within Care Homes.
9. The presentation provided data to demonstrate the flow and length stay outcomes for patients with frailty at Darlington Memorial Hospital and feedback from patients, and it was also reported that over 2000 referrals had been seen by the Acute Frailty Team between April 2021 and October

2021. We also heard how people were being supported at discharge, including the Trusted Assessment relationships between health and social care within Darlington, and received an outline of the future plans included within the Ageing Well Strategy. Some of the challenges faced were also highlighted, including Covid impact on delivery, and workforce recruitment and retention.

Quality Standards Monitoring Outcomes 2020-2022: Agreement for the provision of Residential Care for Adults and Older People and Older People with Mental Health Problems 2013-2023

10. We received a report to inform us of the outcome of the quality standards assessment for 2020-22 and the level of compliance against the quality standards will determine the fee levels for the current year.
11. It was reported that the current agreement for the provision of Residential Care for Adults and Older People with a Mental Health Problem commenced 1 April 2015, and will remain in place until 31 March 2023 due to an extension of the Agreement agreed by all of the providers. It was also reported that the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in a national lockdown on 23 March 2020, had a significant impact on the Care Home sector and the monitoring visits into Care Homes was postponed and an alternative process was developed.
12. The Committee were informed that there had been an improvement in the number of homes who had achieved an A Grade, with 15 out of 19 achieving an A Grade, compared to 11 out of 19 in 2019. We were informed that no homes achieved less than eight standards which was an improvement on 2019. It was pleasing to hear that overall, all but one of the previous A Graded homes had maintained this grade, and that five homes had improved on previous gradings.

Work Programme

13. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

**Councillor Bob Donoghue
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee**