

COUNCIL
30 NOVEMBER 2023

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.

Social Care Reforms - Update

2. We received a report which provided Members with an update on the Social Care reforms introduced as part of the Health and Social Care Act 2022. The report outlined that the Act included a series of measures including the return of Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment of Council Adults' services, default powers for the Secretary of State in relation to Adult Social Care, the implementation of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Integrated Care Partnerships, a cap on care costs (paused until 2025), mandatory learning disability and autism training, and professional regulation. It summarised the key areas of impact, informed Members of the Council's current position in relation to the Health and Care Act 2022, detailed a number of service objectives to enable delivery, and outlined the Transformation Delivery Plan 2023-2026.
3. The Committee entered into discussion on how the cap on social care costs would impact on service delivery, how the baseline success of the Transformation Delivery Plan would be measured and we explored the current situation in relation to the rise in Covid-19 cases and service delivery.

Adult Social Care – Budget Overview

4. The Assistant Director, Adult Services, delivered a presentation which provided Members with an overview of the Adult Social Care Budget and Outturn for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The presentation gave a breakdown of total budget, outturn and variance for each service area across both financial years.
5. Discussion ensued on the use of Direct Payments and how funding was used to improve lives for adults, and the Assistant Director, Adults Services, advised that a strength-based approach was adopted, with a focus provided on what the individual could do for themselves, and support given to enable an individual to live as independently as possible, whilst acknowledging risks. A further discussion subsequently ensued on the need for more supported living flats.
6. Focus turned to the overlap that existed, and the transitional arrangements in place, between Adults Services and Children's Services with regard to the provision for younger adults.
7. Concerns were raised in relation to the approximate £3M debt that was being carried forward, and Members were keen to know whether the Covid pandemic had contributed to the accrual of this figure. It was acknowledged that the debt had increased and

that items such as the restriction on our ability to place a legal charge against a property, decisions regarding deputyship and court of protection had impacted. The debt figure does not take account of debt awaiting the sale of properties, payment plans or awaiting deferred agreement.

Performance Indicators End of Year Report 2022-23

8. The Committee received a report which provided Members with performance data against Key Performance Indicators for 2022-23, in line with an indicator set and Scrutiny Committee distribution agreed by the Monitoring and Coordination Group on 4 June 2018, and subsequently agreed by Scrutiny Committee Chairs. Twelve indicators are reported to this Committee, ten on a six monthly basis and two annually.
9. It was reported that, of the ten indicators reported at six months, one of the indicators showed performance better than at this time last year; four indicators showed performance which had declined in comparison with the same period last year, yet was still continuing to be monitored and managed; two indicators showed performance that was the same as at this time last year, and that three indicators were not comparable, as were reviewed at a point in time.
10. The two indicators recorded annually (ASC054 - The proportion of people who use Adult Care services who find it easy to find information about services – and ASC055 - The proportion of people who are carers who find it easy to find information about services) were not included within the report as the 2021-22 results of the survey had appeared in the Mid-Year Scrutiny Report.
11. Members entered into discussion on the increase in the number of recorded safeguarding concerns, the reasons for this, and the number of strategy meetings undertaken. We were also keen to understand more about Direct Payments, and how this could be better promoted, with possible links to GP practices and Social Prescribers. Members scrutinised the Key Performance Indicators in relation to residential and nursing care and were keen to explore the projected cost increases in future years.
12. Discussion ensued on the decline in the proportion of adults with a learning disability who reside at home, and the proportion of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment, and we examined the reasons around these reductions, with the Committee keen to know whether lessons could be learnt from exemplars in this area, such as Hartlepool Borough Council.

Quality Standards Monitoring Outcomes 2023-2024 - Agreement for the Provision of Residential Care for Adults and Older People with Mental Health Problems 2013-2024

13. A report was submitted to inform Members of the outcome of the quality standards assessment for 2023-2024, and it was stated that the level of compliance against the quality standards would determine the fee levels for the current year.
14. It was pleasing to note that the results of the quality standards for 2023-2024 demonstrated an increase in the number of homes which had achieved an A Grade, with

16/19 (84%) achieving an A Grade compared to 13/19 (68%) in 2022, and that no homes achieved eight standards or less.

15. Members noted that the environmental standards were quite dated and expressed the wish to see higher standards in future, however were pleased to learn that the quality standards were being reviewed. Members were keen to understand more about the training and actions plans implemented where shortfalls existed.

Councillor Helen Crumbie
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee