

COUNCIL
21 MARCH 2024

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.

Care Homes in Executive Strategy Measures / Arrangements

2. We received an update from the Service Manager, Safeguarding and ACT, on Care Homes in Executive Strategy Measures. Members were advised on the Executive Strategy process, the specific providers and services that had come out of Executive Strategy, the current providers and services within Executive Strategy, and the preventative steps being taken.
3. The Committee entered into discussion on the staffing levels in care homes and the arrangements in place to ensure that appropriate levels are maintained. We were keen to learn more about staff training, whether training logs could be requested, who is able to access this training, the training available for unpaid carers and how unpaid carers can access this. Members also acknowledged the upskilling and collaborative work that had been undertaken throughout this period.
4. We also examined the financial implications of those residents of Darlington who are presently residing in homes in another authority area, whether there was any financial redress from those authorities taking places in the Darlington area, and enquired whether Darlington Borough Council could reserve block placements with its providers to safeguard placements for Darlington residents.

Performance Indicators Quarter 2 – 2023/2024

5. The Committee received a report which provided Members with performance data against key performance indicators for 2023/24. The performance information provided was 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.
6. Members were advised that the indicators were aligned with key priorities and the majority are used to monitor the Council Plan. Twelve indicators are reported to this committee, ten on a six-monthly basis and two on an annual basis.
7. Eight of the twelve indicators were reported on at the end of Quarter 2 2023/24, of which two indicators were showing performance better than the same period as of last year. Two indicators demonstrated that performance had declined in comparison to the same period as last year, however, it was noted that these were still being monitored and managed. One indicator remained the same as last year, and three indicators were not comparable and would be reviewed at a point in time.

8. Concerns were expressed as to whether the information provided indicated that residents were being discharged from hospital too soon, and discussion ensued on the conflicting national and local pressures involved. Members noted the increase in younger adults (aged 18-64) presenting with increased complex needs, and ascertained whether this was an ongoing trend.
9. Members scrutinised the support available for families and unpaid carers looking after people within a domiciliary setting, and Members were keen that the Carers Strategy was shared with carers. Discussion ensued on why Darlington has the third highest proportion of people using social care services, and the reasons around this.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership – Annual Report

10. The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, provided a report to enable the Committee to receive and comment upon the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP) for the period of 2022/23. It was highlighted that Local Safeguarding Partnerships are required to produce an Annual Report to account for that Partnership's achievements over the previous year and assess the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area. The report received summarised and reflected on the work of the Partnership over the 2022/23 period.
11. Unfortunately, the Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership was unable to attend the meeting and so Members agreed to forward any questions on the report to the Chair accordingly.

Councillor Helen Crumbie
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee