

COUNCIL
30 JANUARY 2025

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Adults Portfolio.

Operational Services

Care Quality Commission

2. The Local Authority Information Return was forwarded on 12 July 2024, and on-site inspection date is arranged for week commencing on 20 January 2025. 10 people's cases were selected by the CQC for Case Tracking and the CQC will make direct contact with them between now and their on-site visit. The senior leadership team presentation to CQC was delivered to CQC on 11 December 2024. Staff focus groups have been identified for panel discussions with CQC and preparation sessions are planned with identified Practitioners, these sessions are being supported by Head of Adults and Principal Social Worker. It is anticipated further information and data will need to be provided ahead of the on-site inspection date. Agencies, and internal/external partners are likely to be contacted prior to the on-site inspection and the Carers Resource have already held a discussion with CQC. As Cabinet Member for Adults, I will be meeting with CQC as part of the inspection process, as will Councillor Lorraine Tostevin, Councillor Kate Mammolotti as shadow portfolio holders, and Councillor Andrew Anderson as Chair of the Adults Scrutiny Committee.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

3. Adult Social Care have experienced a significant increase in demand for major works and a new process has been implemented to manage the demand and flow. A risk assessment identifies those at highest risk and urgency which may result in delays for progression for those assessed at moderate or low need. The agreed approach is consistent across adults and children's social care and the data system aligned to enable this governance approach. Communications have been uploaded on the website to manage expectations. All those waiting who have been identified as high risk and impact have been progressed at this time. We remain in communication with the individuals impacted by this delay. We are awaiting announcement of the Better Care Fund Grant allocation for DFG.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

4. DoLS referrals have remained stable and agency allocations continue to be reduced. Adult Social Care continue to look at opportunities to ensure legal updates to enable allocation within teams following Best Interest Assessor (BIA) refresher training and shadowing.

Safeguarding (SG)

5. Referrals remain stable with lower numbers of Safeguarding concerns however complexity remains increased.
6. The Risk Notification pilot continues to impact positively reducing the number of Safeguarding referrals where the s42 criteria hasn't been met by 200 since 1 April 2024. We have increased the pilot to include x6 residential care providers and x1 domiciliary care provider. Ongoing opportunities are observed to increase providers within this pilot.

Executive Strategy Process

7. We have 2 care homes currently in Executive strategy. One home is making good progress towards their action plan with joint working between Public Health, Commissioning and contacting, Integrated Health Board and Adult Social Care. Admissions are now supported to the care home and closely monitored to ensure oversight and governance. The second home has only recently entered the process (11 December 2024). We continue to review all people currently living at the home to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Adult Social Care Teams

8. Following significant pressures within the acute health settings referrals have increased. These are predominately community crisis and hospital discharge referrals. Community referrals into RIACT evidenced a 100% increase in quarter 1 and 2 and hospital discharge referrals 9%. We are anticipating a significant increase during the next few months due to the winter pressures. The teams work flexibly to manage demand and the BCF is being utilised to provide additional capacity where required.
9. We have observed an increase in discharges supported with x2 carers which impacts on capacity in reablement, RAPID and the wider care market. Short Break Stay beds remain at a stable number and have not increased despite these pressures. The approach remains that we continue to support home first as much as possible.

Commissioning and Contracts

10. The Durham County Carers Support (DCCS) Volunteers is a local charity that supports unpaid family carers in County Durham and Darlington. The charity was nationally recognised for its outstanding work with carers and was awarded the prestigious King's Award for Voluntary Service. The DCCS was also a key member of Darlington's Carers Strategy Steering Group which worked closely with the Council in developing "Darlington's Commitment to Carers' strategy (2023-2028).
11. Early in the year, the Council embarked upon a re-procurement exercise for its Home Care and Supported Living Contract. The re-procurement included home care services and specialist supported living arrangements. It is anticipated that the new arrangements will come into effect and fully operational by 3 February 2025.
12. Commissioning continues to work closely with Adult Services colleagues, CDDFT (County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust), NECS (North of England Care System Support), Darlington Primary Care Network (PCN) and local care providers to jointly

develop resilience in care provision during this winter. This is to prepare for and address the challenges of increased pressures in the health and social care system during the winter period.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

13. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners met on 11 November 2024. There are no safeguarding adult updates to provide from that meeting as the agenda was child focussed.
14. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Group met on 19 November 2024, and it received the annual report from the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board which outlined their statutory safeguarding responsibilities and how they are discharged across the north and south of the region. Adult Social Care provided an overview of the transformation practice changes that have taken place within Adult Social Care over the past year which were well received by partners.
15. An update was provided by Durham Constabulary on Right Care, Right Person which highlighted there is good engagement with partner agencies. All incidents are dealt with by call handlers who have been trained to ask appropriate questions to understand why police attendance is required. If a police response is not required, it may be signposted to another agency. An escalation policy has been implemented for those practitioners who feel a police response is the best.
16. Following a revision of Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance in 2023, there will be changes made to strengthen Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements. There are no changes proposed to the Integrated Adults and Children's Partnership structure as it is recognised this is effective and having joint arrangements has strengthened partnership working, details will be published later this month.

Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults