

**COUNCIL**  
**17 July 2025**

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**OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**Safeguarding Responsibilities and the Executive Strategy Process**

2. The Head of Adults introduced a report outlining the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and the executive strategy process. A presentation was prepared in advance for the meeting which touched upon both areas, focusing upon the protection of vulnerable adults.
3. The Head of Adults reinforced that Council operates under the statutory framework of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership and that the Council has a responsibility to ensure that all commissioned agencies work in line with such framework and in line with the Care Act 2014.
4. The Executive Strategy Process was described as a multi-agency framework designed to address serious safeguarding concerns, it ensures that safeguarding responses are coordinated, person-centred, and legally compliant.
5. The presentation detailed how the service area carries out a self-audit, identifying both areas of strength and areas of development. Expectations and an improvement plan are outlined after speaking to staff, residents and family members to garner a more holistic perspective on needs.
6. The Head of Adults made reference to the Safeguarding Adults Boards which are required to be established by every Local Authority. The role of a SAB is to develop safeguarding strategies, conduct Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs henceforth), and promote inter-agency cooperation.
7. Further reference was made to the service area's prevention duty, notably undertaking a risk notification pilot which has prevented 330 safeguarding incidents per annum thus far. Additionally, officers touched upon the CPD delivered to staff, which they ensured was evidence-based training.
8. Brief reference was made to the recent CQC inspection carried out within the service area which returned a positive result, and Members shared very positive sentiments towards this and the staff within the service area.
9. During the officer's presentation, there was mentioning of medicine being administered incorrectly. Members questioned whether the multiple cases of this had similar causes, which the officers responded to saying that high levels of staff turnover and thus subsequent lack of training had resulted in an 'as and when' protocol being adopted in

some cases which proved to be an issue. The officers addressed the efforts being made to combat this issue going forward – largely regarding the adoption of more stable management.

10. Members commended officers regarding the service area's constant engagement and dialogue with providers and patients, the connections built with staff, residents and families, all of which having been recognised by the CQC inspection.
11. Members referred to the positive feedback on the Risk Notification Pilot, questioning the level of inquiry's received, the conversion rate, and how the Council compares to neighbouring authorities. Officers responded with positive figures.
12. Finally, I questioned the practice of monitoring closed cases - whether this was over-management and perhaps not the best use of resources. Officers responded by reassuring the committee that this is a very successful practice as it allows the team to identify areas of success and ensure that this is continued going forward.

### **Work Programme 2024/25**

13. We made reference to the Annual Briefing of this Scrutiny Committee which aided in compiling a draft Work Programme.
14. Members opened discussion into any additional items that needed to be incorporated into the Work Programme going forward, specifically the adoption of an item regarding Adults with Learning Disabilities and Adult Day Services. The Democratic Officer and Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, are currently arranging this.
15. The Committee agreed upon the provisional items on the Work Programme as outlined in the draft, in addition to the timeframes for such items to be brought to the Committee and agreed upon the full list of dates for this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/2026.

**Councillor Andrew Anderson**  
**Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee**