

**ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
6 JANUARY 2026**

DARLINGTON ASSOCIATION ON DISABILITY (DAD)

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) service commissioned by the Council.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council has commissioned services with DAD since 2018.
3. DAD currently provide the following services:
 - a) **Consolidated Advocacy Service:** Advocacy helps to ensure that people's voices, wishes, and preferences are heard. In addition, that their rights are upheld, their needs are met, particularly when they have difficulty in speaking up for themselves or are concerned that they are not being heard. These include Care Act (2014), IMCA (Independent Mental Capacity Advocate), IMHA (Independent Mental Health Advocate), General Advocacy (e.g. assistance with Assessments), 1.2 rule representative as appointed by the Court of Protection and RPR (Relevant Person's Representatives) which supports people subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) authorisation. In 2024/25, DAD supported 1653 people.
 - b) **Direct Payments Support Service:** Provides eligible individuals (who are able to arrange and pay for their own care arrangements) support to manage their Direct Payment accounts, including Payroll, Recruitment, support & information etc. DAD supported approximately 489 people 2024/25. This service commenced on 10 April 2022.
 - c) **Independent Living Hub:** provide personalised packages of independent living support linked to statutory assessment, currently supporting 12 people through individual "spot" purchase arrangements.
 - d) **Short Break Stays Framework** including Independent Living Hub and DASH Play scheme which is commissioned on a sessional rate and is accessed by the individual linked to statutory assessed need. This includes daytime short breaks in school holidays. This framework arrangement started on February 2020. The DASH scheme currently works with 49 children and 10 adults. DAD is the only provider for this type of activity.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that :-
- (a) Note the contents within the report.
 - (b) A presentation is delivered by Lauren Robinson, Chief Executive of DAD at Scrutiny Committee.

Joss Harbron
Assistant Director of Adult Social Care

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Joss Harbron: 5278

Council Plan	The report and the activity is aligned to the Council Plan priorities.
Addressing inequalities	This report has specific impact on protected groups and the services supports people with disabilities and experiencing inequalities.
Tackling Climate Change	This report has considered climate impact and change. All consideration was undertaken with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources where possible.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Key aims with Adult Services is to deliver efficient, effective and person-centred care which supports a strength-based approach aligned to the requirements of the Care Act and includes effective use of resources. Services commissioned by Adult Services are expected to meet the requirements.
Health and Wellbeing	The service outlined in this report will continue the Council's drive to deliver services and support that enhance people's life chances and opportunities to thrive.
S17 Crime and Disorder	N/A
Wards Affected	All Darlington Wards.
Groups Affected	All adults with social care needs in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not impact on the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This report is an update.
Urgent Decision	N/A
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed projects have no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.