

**COUNCIL**  
**26 SEPTEMBER 2019**

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**OVERVIEW OF ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

**Housing Allocation Policy**

2. We received a report inviting Members to consider the proposed changes to the Common Allocations Policy for the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership.
3. Members were informed that the current policy had been updated to enable the Council to meet its commitments in respect of the Tees Valley Lettings Partnership, and to ensure consistency of policy across the sub-region, providing clarity and transparency for applicants. The updates also ensure that the policy is aligned with the legislative requirements of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and reflects stakeholder feedback provided during the consultation process.
4. Whilst noting the removal of the additional preference to those under-occupying their property, it was reassuring to learn that support and alternative options are offered at each stage of contact. Members were also pleased to learn that those subjected to domestic violence are treated as a priority. Members also discussed the prioritisation of Forces personnel, the support offered to Prison Leavers, and the response to the consultation exercise from Darlington residents.

**Quality Standards Monitoring Outcomes 2019-2020 (Year 7): Agreement for the Provision of Residential Care for Adults and Older People and Older People with Mental Health Problems 2013-2021**

5. The Committee received a report informing of the outcome of the annual Quality Standards visits for 2019-2020. We learned that there had been an overall increase in compliance this year in respect of homes achieving an A Grade, however it was disheartening to discover that five previously 'C Graded' homes had failed to improve their grading.
6. Members enquired about the work being conducted to support those homes which consistently scored lower than others, and the involvement of Regional Managers and Home Owners in driving improvements. Concerns were raised in relation to contingency planning for Brexit, both in terms of medication management and the recruitment of staff, and we heard that one of the greatest concerns surrounded non-clinical consumables, however it was noted that many care homes have limited space to stockpile appropriate products.
7. We noted a steady reduction in the number of care homes who subscribed to the Agreement, and we were informed that one care home opted out as they wished to introduce third party 'top-ups', whereas another had now re-opened as a specialist brain injury unit. Members heard that some smaller homes no longer subscribed to the agreement as a business decision.

## **Work Programme**

8. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2019/20, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included. Members agreed to schedule a number of visits to care homes over the coming weeks.

**Councillor Anne-Marie Curry**  
**Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee**