

**PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the People Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 24 March 2025.

**PRESENT:** Councillors E Clynych (Chair), D Jackson, T Mohan, S Platt, S Tranter, G Wilson and L Young

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** S McKenna and B Murphy (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley)

**OFFICERS:** J Dixon, L Grabham, R Jenkins and C Jones

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors J Banks, M McClintock and Z Uddin

24/64 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the fire evacuation procedures.

24/65 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Item / Nature of Business
Cllr E Clynych	Non-Pecuniary	Employed within education setting.
Cllr D Jackson	Non-Pecuniary	School Governor.
Cllr S Tranter	Non-Pecuniary	Employed within education setting.
Cllr L Young	Non-Pecuniary	Employed within education setting.

24/66 **MINUTES - PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL - 17 FEBRUARY 2025**

The minutes of the People Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 17 February 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 4.13.2 – ORDER OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 4.57, the Scrutiny Panel agreed to vary the order of business to deal with the Agenda Items in the following order: 6, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

24/67 **TEES, ESK AND WEAR VALLEYS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST (TEWV) - CQC INSPECTION - REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

The Chief Nurse and Urgent Care Manager, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV), were in attendance to present the TEWV CQC Inspection Report of the Trust's AMH Crisis, Acute Liaison and Health Based Places of Safety Services.

A targeted inspection commenced on 11 June 2024 and included on-site inspections of clinical teams, discussions with people who use services and their families/ carers and online Focus Groups with Trust Partners (including Commissioners, Local Authorities, GPs and the British Transport Police).

The CQC Inspection Report was published 6 February 2025, achieving an overall rating of 'Good'. It was noted that 181 Improvement actions were complete, with 9 actions in progress (within target) and 1 recommendation in progress (behind target). The recommendation behind target related to the Trust's Harm Minimisation Policy and Members were assured that the Policy had been revised – now entitled 'Safety and Risk Management Policy' – and that a full training plan in respect of the Policy had been developed. The only part of the action that remained outstanding was to ensure that training was embedded throughout the Trust.

The presentation included details on:

- Key Findings of the Inspection
- Analysis of the Inspection Findings
- Improvement Actions
- Next Steps

An Improvement Plan was being collaboratively developed to address improvement actions resulting from the inspection.

A Member raised a query around oversight of the improvement plan and it was confirmed that monitoring would be undertaken by the Executive Directors Group and the Trust's Quality Assurance Committee.

The Chair thanked the TEWV representatives for their attendance and presentation.

**AGREED that the information, as presented, be noted.**

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## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE - CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) INSPECTION**

The Interim Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration was joined by the Mayor to present the outcome of the recent CQC inspection of the Council's Adult Social Care Service. It was clarified that the inspection related solely to Adult Social Care provision by Middlesbrough Council (not care homes).

Members were advised that this was the first inspection by the CQC of Adult Social Care at the Council, therefore there was no previous benchmark position. The following inspection timeline was presented:

- LAIR (Local Authority Inspection Return) submitted 11 June 2024
- Onsite inspection took place at the end of October 2024
- Draft report received 11 December 2024
- Final report received 21 February 2025

The overall CQC rating was 62% 'Requires Improvement' and was assessed across nine quality standards. Members noted that the score was 1% point from a 'Good' rating.

Evidence was gathered in the following four key areas:

- Peoples Experience
- Feedback from Staff & Leaders
- Feedback from Partners
- Processes

The following areas for improvement were noted:

- Significant waiting times impacting on peoples' outcomes, including for those waiting for a planned review.
- Unpaid carers; large waiting lists, lack of communication.
- Housing availability; particularly for those presenting as homeless / and people who required accessible adapted accommodation.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion not embedded at a strategic level.
- No defined plan around "co-production".
- Lack of assurance at CEO level with regard to obligation's relating to the Care Act and safeguarding
- Lack of ownership corporately with regard to ASC – though signs this was changing.
- Scrutiny & Data – data development in early stages, there was a need to create processes to share with frontline staff. Gaps in data were noted.

The following next steps were presented to the Panel:

- Expand workforce recruitment efforts, reducing reliance on agency staff and increasing staff retention.
- Launch a refreshed EDI strategy, incorporating structured self-assessment tools such as 'Diverse by Design'.
- Develop a clear coproduction strategy, ensuring people with lived experience had a

voice in service design.

- Enhance data-sharing practices, making performance insights accessible to frontline staff.
- Improve scrutiny and accountability mechanisms, ensuring that adult social care was prioritised at the highest levels of leadership.
- Focus on prevention and early intervention, reducing long-term demand for intensive social care services and consideration of neighbourhood working.

The Interim Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration suggested to the People Scrutiny Panel that a regular item be added to its agenda for the Committee to ensure ongoing discussion of the actions/key milestones within the improvement plan.

**AGREED as follows:**

1. **That the information, as presented, be noted.**
2. **That a regular item be added to the People Scrutiny Panel's agenda to monitor the improvement plan.**

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**HOMELESSNESS - FURTHER EVIDENCE**

The Access and Change Together (ACT) Lead delivered a presentation in relation to the Panel's investigation into Homelessness.

The presentation included information around each Term of Reference previously identified by the Panel, as follows:

1. To identify the current levels of homelessness in Middlesbrough.

The number of homelessness assessments and duties, from 2020 to the present were delivered. This showed a year-on-year rise, with the most recent figure of 1185 assessments and duties recorded for Q1-Q3, 2024-2025.

Rough sleeper figures were also presented, with the most recent figure of 40 across the month of February 2025 being discussed.

2. To understand the relevant section(s) of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 in respect of Relief Duty and the Council's responsibilities.

Members were briefed on the Prevention and Relief Duties brought in by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 which added to existing duties from Housing Act 1996.

Specific reference was made to Sections 195 and 189B the Housing Act 1996. Section 195 of the Act related to the 'prevention duty'. This placed a duty on Housing Authorities to work with people under threat of homelessness within 56 days to help prevent them from becoming homeless. Section 189B of the 1996 Act, the 'relief duty' required Housing Authorities to help people who were homeless to secure accommodation.

Detailed information in relation to the Council's responsibilities under these Sections of the Act, and other applicable legislation, was contained in the presentation and included information on timeframes in which the Council must discharge specific duties.

3. To consider the Council's use of temporary accommodation in the reduction of homelessness. Consideration to be given to the impact on families, their health and wellbeing.

A snapshot number of households in temporary accommodation was presented, with the most recent figure of 117 households shown as of February 2025

Members noted that interim accommodation was only offered if the Local Authority had a reason to believe an applicant was homeless, eligible for assistance and had a priority need for rehousing. The LA would carry out enquiries and look at what duty was owed. If a main duty was owed, the applicant would be then offered temporary accommodation, which would be their accommodation until the homelessness duty was discharged.

Middlesbrough Council had a temporary accommodation policy which took into account the

needs of the family, including children's education, wellbeing and involvement with services.

Members were briefed on Middlesbrough's Temporary Accommodation Commissioning Framework which came into place in early 2024, as follows:

- Set nightly rates were paid.
  - Framework was opened periodically to attract new providers to the market.
  - Requested range of property types and locations (ideally Middlesbrough) to suit different household types and needs including accessibility.
  - The framework had helped significantly reduce hotel use.
4. To consider Local Authority and multi-agency approaches to tackling the issue of homelessness and the resource implications around this.

Current multi-agency approaches were discussed, which included:

- Rough Sleeping: Partnership working with housing organisations and charities was discussed. The Rough Sleeper Action Group was held monthly with a range of organisations including Cleveland Police, Probation, Adult Social Care, Accommodation providers, Substance Use and other Local Authorities.
- Young People and Care Leavers: Protocols for Homeless 16/17-year-olds and Care Leavers were underway. Members were provided with the protocols, for information.
- Children: Weekly practice clinic with Early Help & Stronger Families colleagues and attendance at MACH meetings.
- Domestic Abuse: Partnership working with Domestic Abuse services around homelessness prevention where appropriate - Looking into legal orders, Sanctuary Scheme etc.
- Adults – Attendance at safeguarding meetings for clients and attendance at High-Risk Adults Panel (HRAP) and MAPPA
- Escalation Panel - Introduced in February 2025 and aimed to address cases which required support from senior managers to resolve.

Members raised queries around the following:

- Domestic abuse support and options for victims to remain in their homes. Members were advised that support was always victim-led and that only those wishing to seek legal orders to remain in properties would be supported to do so.
- Adapted properties for young people and waiting lists. Members were advised that liaison with housing providers on this issue was ongoing and that adapted properties remain more difficult to source.

**AGREED that the information, as presented, be noted.**

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## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE**

The Chair provided an update on items discussed at the recent Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 19 March 2025, as follows:

- Scrutiny Structures 2024/2025.
- LGA Peer Review and CQC Inspection Update.
- Executive Forward Plan.

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## **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING - 14 APRIL 2025 AT 4.30 P.M.**

The next meeting of the People Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for Monday, 14 April 2025 at 4.30 p.m. in the Mandela Room, Town Hall.

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## **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

The Chair advised that the Panel's draft final report, 'Children Missing Education (CME)' would be circulated to members, week commencing 31 March 2025. Members were asked to consider potential recommendations for the report, which would be discussed and agreed at the next meeting on 14 April 2025.