

PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025

Present: Cllrs Toni Coombs (Chair), Jane Somper (Vice-Chair), Bridget Bolwell, Sally Holland, Carole Jones, Chris Kippax, Andy Todd and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs Barry Goringe and Robin Legg

Also present: Cllr Shane Bartlett and Cllr Steve Robinson

Also present remotely: Cllr Ryan Hope

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Paula Golding (Corporate Director for Care and Protection), Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Liz Crocker (Head of Strategy), Chris Heighway (Performance and Analytics Team Manager), Harriet Hallett (Business Intelligence Manager (Adults)), Karen Maher (Service Manager - S117 Hub), Sarah Sewell (Head of Service - Commissioning for Older People and Home First), Amy-Jane White (Quality Assurance and Programme Lead) and Katie Honour (Change Management Lead)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

Jonathan Price (Executive Director of People - Adults and Housing)

34. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting 22 september 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

37. Councillor Questions

There were no councillor questions.

38. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

39. **Adults and Housing Deep Dive into Waiting Lists**

The item was introduced by the Executive Director for Adults, Health and Housing and thanked the committee for receiving these items. The presentation from the Corporate Director for Adult Social Care provided additional contextual information the most up to date figures and highlighted areas of focus from the report provided.

The discussion between members and officers covered several key areas;

- The duration of waits for those people who are on waiting lists and the classification of wait times and the improvements made in reducing numbers of people on the waiting lists and the duration of the waits.
- Locality nuance around population demographics and the performance of each locality service.
- Detail around the types of referrals that are addressed at access without care assessments.
- The importance of community support to aid in the reduction of waiting lists and meeting needs through non-commissioned care.
- The inter connectedness between adult social care and health and the statutory responsibilities of the local authority under the Care Act and the Mental Health act.
- The levels of staffing and the impact of vacancies on delivery with emphasis on how service redesign work will impact the future of roles.
- The level of demand which is increasing and the relation between demands and contact numbers increases.
- The development of service delivery to manage and reduce waiting times through different working practices such as the change from a specialised centralist approach to a hub and spoke design for safeguarding.
- Data cleansing and the importance of accurate information in delivering services and the impact on individuals in receipt of care and support.
- Reasons for the increase in average wait times were due to the number of safeguarding referrals being received as well as a legacy from Covid.

Recommendation

The committee provided scrutiny and provide feedback in relation to Waiting Lists.

40. **Adults and Housing Deep Dive into Carers**

The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care presented an introduction to the report drawing in additional information and highlighting key areas of the report to be considered about the context of carers in Dorset.

The subsequent discussion of committee covered off several key areas

- Child carers and the support for children and making sure that the right support and advice is in place and concerns on the potential expectations of caring placed upon children.
- The placement of the service within birth to settled adulthood and the provision of training to workers in recognition of child carers

- The increase of carers accessing advocacy services and its relation to the increase visibility of service provision
- The change of provision and the actions taken to mitigate impact on individuals managing risk.

Additional questions were provided in writing to Children's Services to respond in writing focusing on the support in education settings for recognising and supporting child carers.

Recommendation

The Committee scrutinised and provided feedback in relation to carers and considered the potential of revisiting this report as part of a 6-month service review.

41. FutureCare Programme - Mid-Programme Review

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care provided some background context to the Future Care programme. The Workstream Lead - Future Care introduced the item and shared a detailed summary of the work completed so far and the impact of the approach.

After the presentation there was a discussion that covered of the following areas;

- The programme reset and the impact of changes delivered so far
- The change backdrop in the health sector and the cultural shift across partners to deliver the impact of the programme
- The constant challenge to provide services within a sector with cultural differences. The community bed flow is critical to service improvement and reducing discharge delay.
- The framework approach and how it works.
- The workflow and the visibility of capacity to ensure best use of resources
- The role of community hospitals are within the bed based intermediate care allocation part of the programme and the number of community beds in Dorset.
- The frequency of readmissions back into hospital particularly when discharged to home. Committee concerned about how re-admission can be prevented, and the need to understand the demographics and vulnerabilities. The Committee need to be assured that the investment ensures a real stop change and not just a short term solution.
- The different aspects of the programme and the dependant nature of the phases of work.
- The price of beds and the placement of individuals based upon their specific needs.
- The trend towards higher complexity and needs as part of the rationale for reablement centres.
- The discharge process from Acute hospital to community hospital, reablement bed or home settings and the way they are recorded,

- The cross-area settings in the North of the county and how that is working with out of county hospital stays is accommodated within the Transfer of Care approach
- Consideration around user experience – how was this to be gathered and taken into account

The Chairman summarised the discussion recognising the complexity of the system and the budget constraints highlighting the action to be taken to prevent overspend and invited a further update of progress.

Recommendation-

The Committee reviewed the progress that the programme continues to make in respect of improved outcomes for people and the delivery of financial benefits to the Dorset Integrated Care System, but also recognised that more work is required to reduce the further reduce the average length of stay for people in hospital ready to leave hospital with further support

42. Cost of Living Challenge Update

The item was introduced by the portfolio holder for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement and the backdrop that has led to this work. The details and key considerations from the report were set out by the Business Partner for Communities & Partnerships.

Following the presentation the discussion covered off the following areas.

- The different sources of funding including Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) and the Household Support Fund (HSF) and how they interconnect.
- The prevention focus of the new fund and detail of situations that are likely to be covered in accessing funding.
- The community transport funding available and the system to address issues.
- A 3-year figure for the household support fund will be provided in December 2025/January 2026.
- Ensuring that all areas across Dorset are covered by services and access was not restricted by an individuals' location.
- The role of awareness and publicity in the delivery of prevention-based work.
- Citizen's Advice funding model and their access to funding.
- The discretionary housing payment is applied for a 3-6 month period generally to rebalance and move out of crisis.
- The devolved responsibilities of town and parish councils.

Information was provided after the meeting to the People and Health Scrutiny committee to show the frequency of multiple allocations of housing payments.

Recommendations

1.The Committee reviewed and commented on the progress of the £1.2 million investment in preventative and reactive spend.

2. The Committee noted that government has announced the Household Support Fund will be phased out at the end of the current spending cycle. From April 2026, the Household Support Fund was to be replaced by a new, long-term initiative called the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF).

3. The Committee request that Community Transport to be considered at Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

At 12:51 the vote to extend the meeting was proposed by the Chairman and unanimously agreed.

43. Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report

The Committee welcomed the attendance of the Independent Chair

Independent Chair of Safeguarding Adults Board provided an initial context around the report provided and the committee shared some early observations from a discussion that happened with a subgroup of the Committee. A summary of the highlights was provided by the members of the subgroup and the effectiveness of the safeguarding practices of Dorset Council were recognised by the Independent chair of Safeguarding Adults Board.

There was a question about the cross border working and the learnings from the “Simon” SAR and the requirement of legislative change in the solution. The Committee were pleased to hear that a review of recent SAR’s would be included in next year’s report.

The findings of the Safeguarding Adults Board investigation into out of county placements was to be shared with the committee.

44. 2025/26 Quarter 1 Performance Report

The Strategic Performance Lead for Intelligence & Risk introduced the progress to date and the report provided and set out the key indicators.

The subsequent discussion focussed on the following areas;

- Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and the resource required to manage the current performance around this area and the plan to utilise Artificial Intelligence and increased capacity.
- System issues around EHCP and the reviews have resulted in more amendments which are more time intensive from an officer perspective.
- The outcomes of children on EHCP around academic performance has improved and is currently above national averages.
- Children in care population and the services that are used to manage the population and keep children in their homes as much as possible.
- The role of information sharing in the ability to support children at hubs and in communities and the importance of parental consent.
- The need for local solutions around school transport.
- Identification of need and the importance of that in shaping provision and the right support.

- The Valuing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (VSEND) programme and the early support provision and that the needs of children can be met outside of EHCP provision.
- Concern was raised that the new management system was not fully working yet, although the committee understood that this was affected by the complexities of partnership working.

Note: Please use the following link to access the Quarter 1 Performance Dashboard: [Link to Performance Dashboard](#)

Recommendation

The Committee noted the Quarter 1 (April–June 2025) performance overview available via the Scrutiny dashboard, with an accompanying exceptions extract provided in Annex 1 and 2.

The Committee considered the triangulated analysis for the identified areas of performance focus, to inform actions and recommendations

45. Committee's Work Programme and Executive Forward Plans

Suggested future items:

Help and care young carer support requested for summer 2026
Reablement service performance and rationale

46. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 2.12 pm

Chairman

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