PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2026

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

Apologies: Cllrs Bridget Bolwell, Robin Legg and Andy Todd

Also present: Cllr Clare Sutton

Also present remotely: Cllr Gill Taylor

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):
George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director - Children's Services), Jen Furnell (Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Julia Ingram (Director - Adult Social Care), Liz Crocker (Head of Strategy), Sue Evans (Head of Specialist Services), Chris Heighway (Performance and Analytics Team Manager), Michael O'Donovan (Senior Corporate Performance Analyst), Louise Ryan (Head of Service - Birth to Settled Adulthood) and Lynette Emsley (Deputy Director of Nursing for All Age Continuing Care and Complex Care)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):
Sunita Khattra-Hall (Corporate Director for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Families), Iain Sim (Interim Corporate Director for Housing) and Dean Spencer (Place Director - Dorset)

16. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bridget Bowell, Robin Legg and Andy Todd.

17. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

18. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2026 were confirmed and signed.

19. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

20. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

21. **Urgent Items**

The Committee had one item of business considered to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for urgency:
To enable the committee to consider and agree the proposed scope of the Continuing Health Care and Joint Funding Deep Dive.

22. **Continuing Health Care and Joint Funding - Deep Dive Scoping**

The Committee considered the proposed scope for the deep dive review into Continuing Healthcare (CHC) and Joint Funding. The Head of Specialist Services reminded members that the issue had previously been considered by the committee in April and that, following that discussion, a deep dive review had been commissioned. She presented the proposed scope of the deep dive review and sought the committee's agreement to the review approach and timescales. The Chairman advised that an additional committee meeting would be held on 14 December to consider the findings.

The Head of Specialist Services asked whether members wished to include input from someone with lived experience as part of the review and whether a member of the committee would be willing to participate in the work. Members supported the inclusion of lived experience, and Cllr Jane Somper was nominated to be involved in the deep dive process. It was agreed that Cllr Sally Holland would shadow the deep dive work.

Committee members discussed the scope of the deep dive and raised the following points:

- Concern that a single lived experience perspective might not adequately reflect the experiences of all service users. The Director of Adult Social Services advised that one individual was willing to attend and speak to the whole committee but suggested it may also be beneficial for a small group of councillors to meet with a wider group of people with lived experience. Members indicated that they would be willing to participate in such a session.
- Whether the deep dive findings could be broken down by ethnicity and locality. Officers explained that the available dataset did not reliably capture this information, as ethnicity data was not consistently recorded within NHS systems.
- The proposed scope did not explicitly refer to identifying service gaps and considering how they might be addressed, which would be a helpful

addition to the final report. The Head of Specialist Services agreed to consider this as part of the review process.

In summing up, the Chairman welcomed the proposed approach, including the involvement of people with lived experience, and highlighted the importance of ensuring that the final report identified any gaps in provision and potential actions to address them.

The committee agreed the proposed scope and arrangements for the deep dive review.

23. **Children and Young People's Mental Health Services**

The Committee agreed to postpone this item to enable a written report to be produced.

24. **2026/27 Quarter 1 Performance Report**

The committee received the Quarter 1 Performance Report. The Strategic Performance, Intelligence and Risk Manager introduced the report and highlighted that a number of indicators were performing well, although ten indicators remained rated red.

Children's Services
Members received an update on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education reported that performance had improved during Quarter 2, with 5,049 EHCPs in place and 45.95% issued within statutory timescales in August. The Executive Director of Children's Services advised that 60% of annual review meetings were completed on time. However, where reviews resulted in changes to an EHCP, only 21% of amended plans were being reissued within the required four-week period. He reported that artificial intelligence would be introduced from January to assist with bringing together professional reports, while retaining human oversight. He added that most SEND performance indicators had improved during Quarter 2.

Officers worked directly with schools that were not engaging in attendance improvement work, although low engagement remained a concern where attendance rates were poor.

A member asked whether SEND tribunal activity was linked to delays in obtaining EHCPs. The Executive Director of Children's Services explained that tribunals could arise for a range of reasons, including disagreements over need, provision or school placement. He added that the SEND Reform Programme aimed to meet children's needs earlier and more locally, reducing reliance on EHCPs where appropriate.

The Chairman raised concerns regarding communication with parents. Officers acknowledged that increasing workloads, the adversarial nature of the SEND

system and varying staff confidence levels could affect communication. Members were advised that additional support and professional development for staff were being considered.

Adult Social Care

The Director of Adult Social Services advised that improvement was required for Care Act Assessments and explained that reviews were prioritised according to risk, changing needs and waiting times. She noted that demand continued to increase and that a business case was being developed to address capacity pressures. While the service aimed to complete assessments within 28 days, this target was not currently being met.

Committee members asked about
the impact of Integrated Care Board (ICB) cluster arrangements. The Director Adult Social Services advised that NHS restructuring had created particular challenges for Continuing Healthcare arrangements, although relationships and lines of communication were now improving. It was confirmed that the NHS reorganisation process had been completed, while the Executive Director of Children's Services advised that partnership working with health services had strengthened.

A member asked about the "Waiting Well" approach to Care Act assessments. The Director of Adult Social Services explained that both waiting times and case complexity were considered when prioritising work and agreed to circulate further information to members.

Housing, Prevention and Communities

The Chairman noted that rough sleeper performance information was not included within the report and requested that it be incorporated into future reporting.

A member referred to temporary accommodation performance. The Corporate Director for Housing advised that there were currently five family households in bed and breakfast accommodation and that homelessness approaches had increased by 20% during Quarter 1, with 960 approaches received. He reported improvements in temporary accommodation performance, including a reduction in open voids to 28 and shorter average stays in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Chairman highlighted concerns about changes in the private rented sector and the potential impact on temporary accommodation provision. The Corporate Director for Housing advised that the Council had received £1.1 million in rough sleeper funding and agreed that a wider review of temporary accommodation stock would be beneficial. It was agreed that a report on this matter would be brought to the committee in March.

Following the discussion, the Strategic Performance, Intelligence and Risk Manager highlighted the indicators rated amber and those showing declining performance. No further questions were raised, and the report was noted.

25. **Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan**

The Chairman summarised the items on the work programme for upcoming meetings.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education suggested that the committee review the effectiveness and progress of the SEND Reform Plan at an appropriate point. The Executive Director – Children's Services updated the committee on the current progress of the SEND Reform Plan and announced that it had been approved by Government.

The Committee noted its work programme and the Executive's Forward Plans.

26. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 2.00 - 3.41 pm

Chairman

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