



Hartlepool
Borough Council

Adult Services and Public Health Committee

Minutes and Decision Record

21st July 2026

Meeting commenced

Time: 4.30 pm

Location: Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Wiley (in the Chair)

Councillors: Gaines, Hall, Little and Stevenson

Also present: Councillor Male as substitute for Councillor Cook

Councillor Napper

Officers: Jill Harrison, Exec Director of Adult Services & Public Health
Chris Woodcock, Director of Public Health
John Lovatt, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care
Trevor Smith, Head of Strategic Commissioning
Angela Lucas, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer
Claire McPartlin, Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

- Councillors Cook and Dunbar
- Chris Robson (Dalton Piercy Parish Council)

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Little declared a personal interest in Item 5.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2026

Minutes received.

4. Introduction to Adult Services and Public Health – *Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health*

The Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health and the Director of Public Health delivered a presentation which provided an overview of the Adult Services and Public Health Department. The Department, which employed over 350 staff, brought together adult social care and public health functions with a focus on wellbeing, prevention and reducing health inequalities.

The presentation highlighted a number of strengths and achievements within the department and outlined the department's strong history of partnership working.

The key challenges facing both Adult Services and Public Health were also outlined in the Presentation.

A Member expressed concern about local health outcomes in their ward, and the potential impact of environmental factors such as air quality. Members were advised that assessing links between air quality and health outcomes can be complex and that an Air Quality Strategy is in place.

A request was made for a future presentation on this issue, and it was agreed that the matter could be explored further outside the meeting and considered for a future report.

Members discussed the Changing Futures Programme and its focus on supporting people with multiple and complex needs. Members were advised that the programme was in its early stages and that Hartlepool was selected due to levels of deprivation. It was noted that outcomes would take time to emerge, with the programme expected to run for approximately 2.5 years. Members requested a future update on progress and outcomes.

A Member asked if there was an increase in the number of people accessing the Adult Social Care service and was informed that there was not a significant increase in numbers, but an increase in people presenting with more complex needs which impacts on staffing resources and costs.

Members expressed their thanks for the information provided and praised the team for the services provided.

Decision

That Members note the report and welcome future updates on progress.

5. Annual Report of Adult Social Care Complaints and Compliments 2025/26 – *Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health*

The Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health presented a report which provided information and analysis on adult social care complaints and compliments received during 2025/26. It was highlighted that during 2025/26, 50 compliments had been received which was an increase from the previous year.

Also, during 2025/26, 26 complaints had been received which showed a decrease from the previous year. Of the 26 complaints received, 3 had been resolved within 24 hours and 8 were not considered further. The remaining 15 complaints were investigated. 14 complaints had concluded through the local statutory complaints process with 1 complaint remaining ongoing to be carried forward to 2026/27.

Members felt it would be beneficial to receive progress updates about complaints, and it was reported that the Annual Report provided information on the progress of complaints.

Members praised the excellent work being undertaken by the Handy Person service which provides support to people within their own homes.

Decision

The Annual Report of Complaints and Compliments 2024/25 was noted and would be published online.

6. Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Report 2025/26 – *Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health*

The Executive Director of Adult Services and Public Health presented the report that provided an overview of quality assurance activity within adult social care. The aim of quality assurance was to ensure that services were safe, effective and centred around the needs of the people receiving support. Areas of work covered in the annual report included feedback from carers and people who used the service, case audits, a peer review and feedback from the workforce. The report also referred to improvement activity being reflected in the Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Plan for 2025/26.

In response to a question from a Member regarding cases involving falls and people with sensory loss, the Executive Director acknowledged this was an important issue and advised that the Falls Prevention Service focussed on practical issues such as environmental adaptations and equipment, and also consideration of physical factors that may contribute to falls risk.

Members were advised a number of staff are currently undertaking Level 5 training in sensory loss to strengthen specialist knowledge and enable a greater

focus on this area of need. It was recognised that while positive progress had been made, there was still further work to be undertaken to continue improving outcomes for people with sensory loss.

In response to a Member question, the Executive Director advised progress was being made in terms of digital developments and how people could be supported differently in their own homes.

Decision

That the Adult Social Care Annual Quality Assurance Report 2025/26 be approved and the work undertaken to ensure quality of practice and to understand the views of people with lived experience and the workforce be noted.

7. Public Health Services Feedback and Complaints – *Director of Public Health*

The Director of Public Health sought approval for the new Public Health Services Feedback and Complaints Policy to be implemented from 1 August 2026 and presented the Annual Public Health Services Feedback and Complaints Report for 2025/26.

Members were advised that the revised policy outlined how complaints would be considered and responded to in accordance with the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012. The new policy would ensure that there was a greater emphasis on early resolution of complaints, clearer arrangements for complaints relating to commissioned services, a focus on putting matters right where complaints were upheld, and clearer signposting to alternative complaints procedures where appropriate.

Members were also asked to note that although no complaints had been received, the Annual Public Health Services Feedback and Complaints Report 2025/26 set out the process for handling complaints should any be received.

Decision

The Public Health Services Feedback and Complaints Policy for implementation from 1 August 2026 be approved and the Annual Public Health Services Feedback and Complaints Report 2025/26 be noted.

8. Tobacco Control Strategy/Tobacco and Vapes Act – *Director of Public Health*

The Director of Public Health provided Members with an update on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026. An overview was

also given on the progress made against the Tobacco Control Strategy 2023-2028.

The Director reported smoking rates had reduced in recent years but smoking remains one of the most significant health risks, particularly for disadvantaged communities. Members were advised that the new legislation would prohibit the sale of tobacco products to anyone turning 18 from 2027 onward. Alongside this were a range of measures relating to the promotion, packaging and sale of tobacco and vaping products. The legislation was intended to reduce smoking uptake and was focused on regulating sales rather than penalising smokers.

Members were informed that the legislation represented a significant step towards achieving a smoke-free generation and reflected on many years of partnership working, including through the Tobacco Alliance and commissioned local stop smoking services. Ongoing work included providing evidence-based quit support, maintaining and extending smoke-free environments, promoting smoke-free homes through Family Hubs, and working with NHS partners on smoking cessation initiatives, including support during pregnancy.

Members were informed that tobacco pricing remained an important factor in reducing smoking, although there were still concerns about the availability of illicit and low-cost tobacco. The development of digital support would help improve access for those unable to attend in-person services. It was also noted that engagement with national consultations on tobacco control would continue.

Decision

Progress in relation to the tobacco control strategy was noted and it was agreed to continue to support further regulations and implementation of the Tobacco and Vapes Act.

7. Any other business which the Chairman considers urgent

A member queried the rationale regarding the Committee meetings being held at 4.30 pm as it was felt this could adversely affect vulnerable members of the public from being able to attend during the winter months.

The Chair reported the meetings had been arranged at this time to facilitate the attendance of those with working hours during the day.

Decision

The Chair would look into this request and report back to a future meeting.

The meeting concluded at:

Time: 6.00 pm

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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