

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2025

Scrutiny Review – Reablement Service	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>Since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting in December 2024, three evidence-gathering sessions have taken place for this review.</p> <p>The third session was held in December 2024 and focused on a submission from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT). The stated desire to move to 24/7 reablement provision was probed by the Committee in terms of its potential impact on staffing need, as was the 'hospital at home' (Virtual Frailty Ward) initiative. Members also queried if there were any established links between reablement provision and end-of-life care.</p> <p>Session four took place at the Committee meeting in January 2025 where Members heard from SBCs delivery partner, Peopletoo (commissioned to assist the Council in assessing the impact of current ways of working and analyse the best model for continuing to support people to maximise their independence) in relation to the findings of its review of local reablement provision as part of the ongoing SBC <i>Powering Our Future</i>-related work.</p> <p>The fifth, and final, evidence session was held in February 2025 and included a contribution from the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector (via Catalyst, as well as consideration of customer feedback data and approaches / good practice examples from outside of the Borough. Regarding the VCSE contribution, Members expressed concern about the lack of a clear point of contact within both Catalyst and the Council when it came to reablement matters.</p> <p>To understand how staff who worked within the local Reablement Service felt about the existing offer from their perspective, a staff survey was issued in January 2025. 25 responses were received (out of a total workforce of 47) – feedback will be shared with the Committee once collated.</p>
Problems or concerns	<p>Challenges continue to arise in relation to ongoing developments around local reablement provision which are being progressed through the Council's <i>Powering Our Future</i> (POF) initiative whilst the Committee undertakes its review of these services. The complexity of running two stands of work concurrently had presented a number of difficulties with regard to scope and timescales.</p> <p>The Committee has highlighted these concerns to the relevant Director and Cabinet Member, and this has led to some improvements in the timely supply of information – the Committee will continue to monitor this and feedback as appropriate. Discussions have also taken place internally to improve communication and achieve clarity on the scope of ongoing scrutiny work where this is running alongside wider transformation work.</p>

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Planned this / next month	The Committee will consider a summary of all the evidence received as part of this review at an informal session in March 2025. Draft recommendations will then be formulated.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance

Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>NTHFT Maternity Services: Senior NTHFT representatives presented a further update to the Committee in December 2024 on developments in relation to the Trust's maternity services (this was the third such update following issues raised by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2022 regarding NTHFT maternity provision). Members welcomed a broadly positive picture, with comments / queries raised around midwifery apprenticeships, health visitation, and the potential for maternity testing within the new Community Diagnostic Centre in Stockton.</p> <p>Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) Annual Report: The Committee considered the latest TSAB Annual Report (for 2023-2024) at its meeting in January 2025. Presented by the TSAB Independent Chair, Members sought clarity on some of the stated data regarding Section 42 enquiries, and discussed joint arrangements between children's and adult services, training, and other safeguarding initiatives across the TSAB footprint.</p> <p>Care Quality Commission (CQC): The Committee was disappointed to be informed that the CQC was unable to fulfil its request for a presentation on the CQC's national State of Care Annual Report 2023-2024, along with a reflection on local provision, at the January 2025 Committee meeting.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) 2025: Mindful of recent developments involving pharmacies (closure of one within Stockton-on-Tees earlier in 2024; the push for the public to go to pharmacies instead of GPs for certain issues / treatments) and the anticipated publication of an updated PNA in October 2025, the Committee requested further details on the existing situation regarding pharmacy provision across the Borough, whether this was deemed sufficient, and what was being identified as part of the consultation phase of the latest PNA review. A presentation was given at the meeting in February 2025, with Members querying the consultation process, the potential impact of new parking charges on pharmacy use, and existing sites.</p> <p>NTHFT Quality Account 2024-2025: Communication from senior 'Group' (the NTHFT / STHFT partnership) personnel continues to be poor in terms of scrutiny-related requests. The annual Quality Account item has been moved back from the usual March meeting slot to May, though confirmation of who will be preparing the required documentation and who will be presenting this to the Committee is still yet to be received despite numerous attempts.</p>
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NHS Updates / Consultations	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>Arrival Medical Practice and Riverside Medical Practice (Proposed Merger): The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) shared details on 24 December 2024 of a proposed merger between the Arrival Medical Practice and Riverside Medical Practice – this was subsequently shared with the Committee for any comment.</p> <p>Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV): The TEWV Chair issued notification on the 6 February 2025 of the impending departure of the Trust's Chief Executive.</p> <p>Preston Farm Pharmacy (Closure): The NENC ICB issued notification on 11 February 2025 of the sudden closure of Preston Farm Pharmacy – this was subsequently shared with the Committee for any comment.</p>

Regional Health Committees	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: The chair and support function for the Committee sits with Hartlepool Borough Council for 2024-2025. The third meeting of this municipal year took place on 9 January 2025 – items included a further TEWV update on Tees Respite Care, a Clinical Services Strategy Update ('Group' model), a Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy presentation, and a North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) performance update. The next meeting is scheduled for 13 March 2025 – this will include consideration of Quality Account-related presentations from relevant NHS Trusts.</p> <p>Southern Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) / Integrated Care System (ICS) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: No meetings are currently scheduled.</p> <p>North East Regional Health Committee: No meetings are currently scheduled.</p>

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>No updates had been received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care at Home (April 2025) • Access to GPs and Primary Medical Care (TBC)
Requests for more information	None

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Next Scrutiny Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be confirmed

Remaining 2024-2025 Meetings (all 4.00pm unless stated)
Tuesday 18 March 2025 (informal)