Nottinghamshire County Council

minutes

Meeting	ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE
Date	11 September 2025 (commencing at 10.36am)

Membership

COUNCILLORS

Jody Stoll (Chairman)
Joseph Rich (Vice-Chairman)

Richard Butler
Terry Cox
Keith Girling
Jan Goold
Penny Gowland
Roger Jackson **(apologies)**
Andy McCormack
Brian Wheatcroft **(apologies)**
Simon Wright

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Sam Smith for Councillor Roger Jackson

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Barry Answer – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

OFFICERS

Linzi Adams	Senior Commissioning Officer
Katy Ball	Service Director, Strategic Commissioning and Integration
Maria Ballantyne	Head of Service Occupational Therapy
Martin Elliott	Senior Scrutiny Officer
Ainsley Macdonnell	Service Director, Adult Support Services
Dom Monahan	Advanced Democratic Services Officer
Anna Oliver	Interim Head of Service Strategic Commissioning
Emma Shand	Service Director, Community Social Work and Therapy
Guy VanDichele	Interim Executive Director, Adult Social Care and Health

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025, having been circulated to all Members, were taken as read and confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted from:

- Councillor Roger Jackson (medical reasons)
- Councillor Brian Wheatcroft (other reasons)
- Councillor Rory Green (other county council business)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ALL AGE CARERS STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report presented by Councillor Barry Answer, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care along with the Service Director, Strategic Commissioning and Integration, Interim Head of Service Strategic Commissioning and Senior Commissioning Officer that provided an update on the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire All-age Carers Strategy.

Members of the Committee noted that the All-Age Carers Strategy had enabled joint working between Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to redesign and retender carers support services. The contracts for these had commenced in October 2023. Early intervention support had increased through the Carers Hub with a reduction of 11% in people going on to require a full carers assessment during 2024/2025. This suggested that carers were getting the support they needed earlier on and without needing to progress to a full statutory carers assessment.

It was reported that the carers strategy implementation board, which included carers, commissioners, operational staff teams and commissioned providers across both children and adult services continued to drive the implementation of the carer's strategy. The Carers Hub that offered information, advice and guidance, peer support groups and one to one support had supported 1681 carers and 1365 new carers (not previously known to the Carers Hub) during 2024/2025.

Members noted that the carer wellbeing fund had been used to improve the health and wellbeing of carers, allowing carers to take part in wellbeing and leisure activities to enable a break from their caring role. The Committee noted that during 2024/2025 the Young Carers Service supported 527 new young carers to access one-to-one support, group activities and help and advice. It was reported that, in total, 742 young carers were registered with the young carers service. To support in identifying young carers, 61 new schools had been engaged with between April 2024 and March 2025. Members noted that in April 2025 the Council had launched the free travel cards for young adult carers under 19years old.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- There had been 527 new carers identified during in 2024-25. Was there a reason for increase in the number of young carers accessing support.

- Was the Council working with local schools to ensure that all young carers in Nottinghamshire were identified and supported.

- Could the Council implement a 'Carer Friendly School' qualification that could be used to ensure that schools were supporting young carers effectively.

- How did the Council work with local charities that supported carers.

- Who managed the Carers Support Fund and was a business case in place to replace it.

- What was the biggest challenge in implementing the All-age Carer Strategy.

In response to these points, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and officers advised:

- The Council had needed to seek permission to move young carers to the new service. Some young carers had left and had then been re-registered with the new service. For this reason, the number of new young carers for 2024-25 appeared to be particularly high.

- The Council had a dedicated officer that worked with schools to assist them in supporting young carers. The Council communicated with all schools, academy groups and governors in the County to help them to identify young carers.

- The Council was working on a Carer Friendly Qualification for all organisations, including schools that would assist in highlighting an organisations commitment to supporting all carers.

- As part of the implementation of the All-age Carer Strategy the Council worked with a wide range of organisations, including charities. The Council looked to create networks with these organisations wherever possible and to learn from their expertise.

- The Carers Support Fund had been managed by the Carers Hub. Once an evaluation report on the carers Support Fund was ready a business plan would be put together. The Committee would be given an opportunity to view the business plan once it was ready.

- The biggest challenge in implementing this strategy was helping people to realise that they were carers at the earliest opportunity. The ability to achieve this was resource dependant.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care and the officers for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

RESOLVED: 2025/08

1) That the comments and considerations of the committee on the progress made in implementing the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire All-Age Carers Strategy be noted.

2) That the comments and considerations of the committee on the on the areas of focus for the Carers Strategy implementation over the next 12 months be noted.

3) That the following issues raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report be progressed:

    a) That consideration be given by the Service Director for Strategic Commissioning and Integration on how all elected members can be best enabled to support carers in their local communities.

    b) That members of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee be engaged with on the work being carried out to establish how the support to carers that has been offered through the carer wellbeing fund could be continued into the future.

5. DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report presented by Councillor Barry Answer, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care along with the Service Director, Community Social Work and Therapy and Head of Service Occupational Therapy that detailed the delivery and performance of the new Countywide Occupational Therapy Service. A 'therapy-first' ethos was being embedded to support better outcomes for Nottinghamshire's residents who required adult social care assistance.

The Committee noted that the four aims of the Adult Social Care redesign for Occupational Therapy (OT) were:

- Better outcomes for people and carers
- People supported in their own homes and communities
- Consistency of experience and approach for people and carers
- Use of cost effective, life affirming community resources, and digital solutions to promote independence and quality of life

It was reported that to support a consistent approach for communities and improve outcomes for people who needed support, additional OT posts had been created to ensure sufficient OT capacity in the Adult Deaf and Visual Impairment Service for those people who experience sensory impairment. Additional posts had also been created in the Preparing for Adulthood and the Provider Improvement Team. It was reported that an additional three FTE Service Advisor staff had been funded temporarily. These posts would support team performance in relation to supporting OT waiting times.

The Committee noted that the OT service was embedding an approach of continuous improvement with Team Managers and staff identifying where improvements were required and putting plans in place to address them. It was noted that the data that was analysed in order to drive continuous service improvement included waiting times for allocation to a worker; waiting times for the initial conversation; number of assessments completed by worker role and types of intervention which varied but could include advice, minor adaptations and/or major adaptations and quality assurance.

It was noted that following a data quality exercise to reduce waiting times, the number of people waiting for OT assessments had reduced from 323 to 264 people, with average waiting times also reducing. New OT service advisors were also focussing on partnership working with Local Housing Authorities (District and Borough Councils) to support improved waiting times for grant application work and financial assessment outcomes. These staff would also keep people who were waiting for major adaptations updated about timescales.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- Had the Adult Social Care redesign for Occupational Therapy led to any budgetary savings.

- What were the current waiting times for occupational therapy assessments and for subsequent home adaptations.

- How was home adaptation funding from the government distributed among the district and borough councils.

- How did the Council plan to measure and assess the impact of the redesign of this service.

In response to these points, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and officers advised:

- The service redesign allowed staff to focus on occupational Health rather than generic social care work. This in turn allowed staff to intervene and provide support to people at an earlier stage which then created long term savings. The use of technology enabled care had also produced savings as it was significantly cheaper than paying carers to fulfil the same tasks.

- The waiting time for an initial assessment with an Occupational Health Therapist was around two months. After the initial assessment, recommendations were provided to the Local Housing Authority, which in each case was one of the County's district and borough councils. Waiting times therefore varied across the County, but the County Council was working with the district and borough councils to try and reduce waiting times.

- Home adaptation funding was distributed amongst the Local Housing Authorities based on the amount of social housing in each district/borough. However, the County Council was working to try and distribute the funding as fairly as possible

across the County.

- A formal review of the service redesign would be carried out in 2026, and the results would be brought back to the Committee. It was noted that how the Council was meeting its statutory duties in this area of service delivery would also be used to assess the success of this redesign.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care and the officers for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

RESOLVED: 2025/09

1) That the comments and considerations of the committee on the implementation of the new Countywide Occupational Therapy Service be noted.

2) That the following issue raised by the Committee in its consideration of the report be progressed:

    a) That a progress report on the implementation of the new Countywide Occupational Therapy Service be brought to a meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee in six-months' time.

6. ADULT SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE, RISKS AND FINANCIAL POSITION – QUARTER 1 2025/2026

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Councillor Barry Answer, and Guy VanDichele - Interim Executive Director, Adult Social Care and Health that provided a summary of Adult Social Care and Health's:

- performance against the priorities set out in the Local Account.
- Vital Signs and key departmental risks
- financial position as at Period 3 2025/26.

It was noted that the Local Account was the department's Adult Social Care Strategy for 2024-26. The Local Account had been co-designed with the Our Voice co-production group and the 21 priorities drew on what local people had said was important to them in the Big Conversation held in 2023.

Members noted that work was underway to implement Magic Notes, an AI tool that assisted with summarising case notes, which was anticipated to reduce the amount of time frontline staff spent on administrative tasks. Training began in MIS teams in mid-June 2025, and the roll-out plan was scheduled to commence in September 2025. So far, this technology had been well-received by staff.

It was reported that waiting times for services had remained stable over this quarter. This had previously been identified as a key risk for the department and focused work was ongoing to mitigate this. Teams continued to be trained to feel confident using the new dashboards for waiting times and to help proactively manage these and to prioritise

based on a consistent risk model.

Good progress had been made against the Council's Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Strategy. It was noted that 50.19% of people who received social care support to remain at home had TEC as part of their package as of April 2025 – exceeding the 2023/24 baseline of 43% and the 2024/25 target of 50%. Members noted that the target for 2025/26 was 60%.

It was noted that the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Revenue Budget was reporting an overspend of £2.51 million at the end of Period 3 which was a variance of 0.79% on the overall budget. Prior to the use of reserves and before the impact of the ASCH Sustainability Plan, ASCH was reporting a forecast pressure of £19.58m which represented 6.16% of the departmental budget. The £19.58m pressure was almost entirely attributable to long-term care and was made up of £10.90m relating to people currently in receipt of support.

It was reported that ASCH aimed to manage and largely mitigate the pressure on care and support through its Sustainability Plan, which as at Period 3, was reporting an additional mitigating financial impact in the year of (£17.06m). Successful implementation and achievement of the Plan would have the effect of reducing the potential £19.61m pressure to the reported £2.51m.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points and questions:

- What actions had been taken to address the overspend in the Adult Social Care Department.

- Were there any new areas of risk that had been identified by the department.

- In which areas of service delivery was the department underperforming and in which areas was the department performing well.

- Had the department faced any challenges in recruiting and retaining staff and if so, what were the reasons for this.

In response to these points, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and officers advised:

- Overspend was currently 0.79% of the department's budget. The department was constantly looking at ways to reduce this overspend. Increasing the use of technology enabled care and reassessing care packages were two examples of ongoing actions that were being taken by the department. The department was also working with providers to keep costs down and was moving people from residential care to supported living where appropriate.

- Provider failure and sustaining the quality of care in Nottinghamshire was an evolving risk. There had been market failure for residential care homes in the County due to an oversupply of residential care beds in Nottinghamshire. The Council constantly assessed the market and worked with providers to improve the

service quality across the County.

- The department's ability to keep up with assessments and reviews was an area of challenge due to an ever-increasing demand. It was noted that this was not unique to Nottinghamshire. The department had seen success in rolling out technology enabled care and in increasing discharge rates.

- The department had not recruited operational staff during the restructure. There had been challenges in recruiting experienced and qualified social care workers, but this was also a national issue. There was a 26% vacancy rate for frontline care staff and on some occasions agency cover was required. This high vacancy rate was largely due to the availability of higher paying roles elsewhere in the local labour market.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care and the officers for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

RESOLVED: 2025/10

That the report detailing Adult Social Care's performance against the priorities of the Local Account, it's Vital Signs, key departmental risks, and its financial position as at Period 3 2025/26, be noted.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to an updated outline programme of scrutiny work for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: 2025/11

1) That the work programme be noted.

2) That committee members make any further suggestions for consideration by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for inclusion on the work programme in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and senior officers, subject to the required approval by the Chairman of Overview Committee.

The meeting closed at 13.02pm

CHAIRMAN