

Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel

Communications with Residents (Adult Social Care) – Draft Scope and Terms of Reference (2025/26)

Rationale	One of the eight themes of the Council’s Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-26 is ‘Resident experience and enabling success’ which refers to <i>“building mutual trust and confidence through positive interactions with residents”</i> and states that the theme is focused on <i>“how we will ensure residents have an excellent experience when accessing our services and how we will develop inclusive participation, where residents have genuine opportunities to have a say in decisions that affect them”</i>. Another theme of the Corporate Delivery Plan is ‘Adults, health and welfare’ which states that <i>“Our goal is to create a community where every adult feels valued, supported and empowered to reach their full potential. Critical to this is taking an equitable approach, working hard to understand barriers and striving to address inequalities of access, experience and outcome.”</i> Activities specified within this theme include: • Implement the Localities Programme, including projects that support the integration of health and social care, to deliver the right support at the right time to targeted residents and reduce the impact of health inequalities. • Developing online resources to ensure information about localities is accessible to all. • Services will be redesigned to deliver localities model to improve connections and understanding with the local community, designed with resident participation and incorporating Assistive Technology. At the Scrutiny Café consultation event in September 2024, the issue of communications with residents emerged as the top priority from the residents and voluntary group representatives in attendance. Examples of some specific feedback included: • When residents had issues, the communications back from the Council were not always prompt or clear. Residents did not always know what was happening and did not feel that they were part of decisions. • Residents needed to have confidence that the Council would always come back to them and respond to their concerns/queries/requests otherwise they became frustrated. A lack of communications could contribute to depression, anxiety, stress, and feelings of powerlessness from not being responded to.
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	- Scrutiny should examine the demand for services compared to the supply of staff. A small team of staff could be taking a large number of calls from residents on a daily basis, which inevitably led to delays in responses to residents. Statistics on this should be gathered by Scrutiny and shared with the public. The Panel has previously scrutinised the standard of communications with residents specifically in relation to equipment and adaptations in people's homes, following which a number of recommendations for change have been implemented. Councillors report that difficulties experienced in contacting the Council is one of the most frequent areas of concern highlighted to them by residents. This needs to be considered within the current context of ongoing reductions to the Council's budget and resources. Given the ongoing shift to a wider range of digital communications channels across the Council, Panel Members have also specified that the Review should also include an examination of: - Digital communications and inclusion; - The accessibility of information on the Council website; - Improvements to the Haricare resource. The Panel will seek to consider evidence from a broad range of witnesses and to develop recommendations to Cabinet on possible improvements in communications with residents in Haringey.
Scrutiny Membership	The Members of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel that will carry out this review are: Councillors: Pippa Connor (Chair), Cathy Brennan, Thayahlan Iyngkaran, Mary Mason, Sean O'Donovan, Felicia Opoku & Sheila Peacock. Co-opted members: Helena Kania.
Terms of reference	The aims of this project are: To review the current arrangements for communications between residents and Adult Social Care services including: - The experience of residents when they contact the Council regarding Adult Social Care services, including response times, acknowledgement of enquiries and the rate of satisfactory resolution of issues. - How the Council proactively updates residents about the status of their case, including with regards to assessments, safeguarding follow up and in circumstances where delays are anticipated.

	• How residents access the 'front door' to services, whether that is through the Council's main communications channels or the locality team for their area. • The accessibility of information about adult care and support services on the Council website and the online Haricare directory.
Links to the Corporate Delivery Plan	Theme: Adults, Health & Welfare Outcome Areas – • Residents connected with the right support at the right time in their neighbourhoods • Vulnerable adults are supported and thriving Theme: Resident Experience & Enabling Success Outcome Areas – • Excellent resident experience • Opportunities for residents to participate in decision-making
Evidence Sources/Witnesses	The Panel will speak to senior officers within the Adults, Housing & Health Department, other relevant services within the Council such as Digital Services. Local organisations that represent service users will be invited to take part in the review and to submit evidence, including the Joint Partnership Board and Disability Action Haringey. Local health partners may also be consulted.
Equalities Implications	The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to: (1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act; (2) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not; (3) Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not. The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy/maternity; race; religion/faith; sex and sexual orientation. In addition, marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty. The Panel should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during final scoping, evidence gathering and final reporting. This should include considering and clearly stating: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to service and fair representation of all groups within Haringey; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised.

Timescale	For completion by February 2026.
Reporting arrangements	The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing & Health will coordinate a response to Cabinet to the recommendations of the Committee's final report.
Officer Support	Lead officer: Dominic O'Brien, Principal Scrutiny Officer, 020 8489 5896, Dominic.Obrien@haringey.gov.uk