

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 7.00 pm at 160, Tooley Street, SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Suzanne Abachor (Chair)
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Esme Dobson
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Naima Ali

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Simon Rayner, Assistant Director for Children's and Adults' Services
Liz Brutus, Assistant Director & Consultant in Public Health, Southwark Council
Zara Gross, Senior Programme Manager – Early Diagnosis, South East London Cancer Alliance
Vicky Stewart, Senior Programme Lead for Lung Screening, South East London Cancer Alliance
Smitha Nathan, South East London Cancer Alliance
Dr Nancy Küchemann, GP and Co-chair of Partnership Southwark, Deputy Medical Director, SEL Integrated Care Board
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Charlie Smith gave apologies.

**2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR
DEEMS URGENT**

There was none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There was none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. CHILDREN'S RESPITE CARE

The Chair welcomed Simon Rayner, Assistant Director for Children's and Adults' Services, who attended to present the Short Breaks and Preventative Support Offer, as circulated with the committee papers.

The Chair explained that the purpose of this item was to scrutinise the new service model following the Orient Street being repurposed for adults only. Previously it provided residential respite care for children and young people (CYP) with SEND.

Summary of Presentation by Simon Rayner

Simon Rayner outlined the transformation of Southwark's short breaks provision, highlighting the shift from a residential model to a broader, more inclusive and preventative approach. Key points included:

Three-tiered provision:

- Specialist (via AAD assessment)
- Targeted (commissioned services for CYP with SEND)
- Universal (inclusive leisure activities for all children)

Expansion of services:

- Targeted schemes increased from 3 (2022) to 17 (2025)
- Annual places rose from 2,600 to 8,050
- CYP accessing services grew from fewer than 100 to over 400

Online booking platform launched to improve access and oversight:
www.eequ.org/southwarkshortbreaks

Alignment with Southwark 2030 Vision:

- Strengthening preventative services

- Reducing inequality
- Empowering families with choice and control

Overnight care:

- Orient Street previously served 28 CYP with low occupancy
- Now only 2 families use residential care; most prefer in-home support
- £475k saved from Orient Street closure reinvested into broader short break services

Survey feedback:

- 88% rated services as good/excellent
- 94% reported positive impact on mental wellbeing
- 92% said their child tried new things

Member Questions and Officer Responses

Q1: How are children and young people with more complex needs supported?

A: There are specific services tailored to complex needs, including autism-focused support. CYP with the highest needs are supported through all-age disability services, which provide more intensive and long-term care.

Q2: How many families use the Family Link service?

A: Usage is relatively low, partly due to a shortage of foster carers. However, Direct Payments are available to enable carers to support families within their homes, particularly where needs fluctuate due to changing circumstances.

Q3: Is it possible to identify who receives overnight care packages?

A: Yes. Overnight care packages differ from broader all-age disability support, which includes day and night in-home care for hundreds of families. Residential care is now used by only two families, with most opting for in-home support. Orient Street previously provided occasional residential care, not long-term placements.

Q4: Is there a waiting list for short breaks?

A: There is generally no formal waiting list. However, the booking system requires families to plan ahead, and not all preferred slots may be available due to demand and capacity.

6. CANCER PREVENTION

The Chair welcomed council officers and health colleagues attending the meeting to present on Cancer Prevention, in support of the Commission's ongoing scrutiny review into Cancer Prevention and Early Diagnosis.

Presenters:

- Liz Brutus, Assistant Director & Consultant in Public Health, Southwark Council
- Zara Gross, Senior Programme Manager – Early Diagnosis, South East London Cancer Alliance
- Vicky Stewart, Senior Programme Lead for Lung Screening, South East London Cancer Alliance
- Smitha Nathan, South East London Cancer Alliance
- Dr Nancy Küchemann, GP and Co-chair of Partnership Southwark, Deputy Medical Director, SEL Integrated Care Board

The Chair invited the presenters to introduce themselves and provide the presentation circulated with the agenda papers.

Discussion and Questions

Cervical Cancer Screening:

- A pilot self-screening programme is being launched to improve uptake.
- Innovative outreach methods have included Tinder promotions and plans to engage local sports clubs and pharmacies.

- Drop-in clinics are being trialed, including Saturday sessions.

FGM and Screening Barriers:

- A member raised concerns about the estimated 7,000 women affected by FGM in Southwark, and the associated psychosexual trauma that deters cervical screening.
- Public Health officers noted targeted outreach in languages with higher prevalence.
- SELCA representatives highlighted that self-sampling could reduce barriers and proposed developing language-specific information packs.
- A member stressed that while safeguarding issues to do with children are raised by GPs with women, their trauma is rarely addressed, and this gap needs attention.

Prostate Cancer and Black Men:

- SELCA highlighted the Brother to Brother survivors support group as part of community engagement efforts.

Collaboration with Environmental Health:

- Public Health is working with Highways and local industry on the Air Quality Plan to address environmental risk factors.

Smoking and Vaping:

- Increasing tobacco costs have shown a positive impact on reducing smoking rates, though not universally effective.
- Free stop smoking services are available.

- Concerns were raised about vaping and its health impacts.
- It was noted that it takes an average of six attempts to quit smoking.
- Discussion included the potential of stronger legal disincentives, though caution was advised about pushing activity underground. SELCA noted the presence of a black market in cigarettes.
- Smoking rates have declined from 30% to around 12–13%.

Hepatitis C Testing:

- A question was raised about the rationale for Hepatitis C testing, given the availability of effective treatments.
- Testing is being conducted in STI and drug use clinics, where prevalence is highest.
- Data collection is ongoing to support targeted interventions.

RESOLVED

A briefing will be provided outlining the health impacts of Vaping.

7. NURSING CARE HOME DELIVERY SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT

Members noted the final scrutiny review report and reported that this was presented at cabinet.

The below steps were agreed to scrutinise delivery of the new home through the market led approach of a land transaction.

RESOLVED

A briefing will be requested asking the following questions:

- I. How will key stakeholders be involved in the decision-making, and in particular will there be community and

voluntary sector involvement in assessing the bids.

- II. The deadline for bids .
- III. How many bids have been received.
- IV. How dementia friendly design will be assessed and assured, with reference to the below, or any other good practice:.
 - The EADDAT - which underpins our globally recognised 'Gold' standard in design for dementia:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5UBIEk3850>
<https://www.dementia.stir.ac.uk/newsblog/tax-8y9m9-4pdt5-xfdmp-2ze6s>
Environmental Toolkit (EADDAT) – Dementia Services Development Centre
 - PhD research from Dr Martin Quirke on building layouts in residential care:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368642727_Plan-EAT_A_Tool_for_Assessing_Dementia_Design_Quality_in_the_Layout_Planning_of_Residential_Aged_Care_Environments
- V. The timeline for a decision to be made at cabinet, and any opportunity for pre-scrutiny of the cabinet paper at a commission meeting.

8. SAFEGUARDING SCRUTINY REVIEW

The reports were noted.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED

Add the following to the work-plan:

- Menopause
- FGM
- University of Stirling's work on dementia friendly design