

## **Public Question – Council 21 June 2023**

### **Etain Stobbart**

Hallgarth Care Home is a vital service that's currently under threat. Durham County Council has a duty of care to its most vulnerable residents and to providing a decent adult services offer for all who need it. Will the council therefore commit to saving Hallgarth Care Home, including, if necessary, by bringing it in house?

### **Response by Councilor C Hood, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services**

Can I thank Ms Stobbart for the question regarding the closure of Hallgarth Care Home in Durham which is operated by Four Seasons Health Care.

We are fully aware of the situation at Hallgarth and officers from our Adult & Health Services teams continue to work sensitively in partnership with residents, families, and Four Seasons Health Care to ensure the well-being of residents.

I can confirm that the Council is not in a position to take over the care home provision in this case. We are informed by Four Seasons that Hallgarth is its only leasehold property, and the current landlord has made it clear that they are not willing to continue to lease the site as a care home service even to an alternative provider.

We understand that Four Seasons managers have also made this clear to residents, families, and staff. We are also aware that occupancy at the home has been much lower than the optimum level for such services, and has been for some time, meaning that the service would be likely to face significant viability issues were it to remain open.

I can also advise you that Durham care homes perform well, with both internal council monitoring assessments and Care Quality Commission ratings continuing to show the quality of local services are higher than many comparator areas. There is also currently an overprovision of care home places in County Durham, with detailed demand modelling carried out by the Council in 2022-23 predicting that this will remain the case in the coming years.

We understand the anxieties of residents, families and staff in the current situation and are following our established processes for such service closures.

The priority for our teams, working in partnership with all stakeholders will be to continue to support residents and families in finding suitable alternative placements for Hallgarth residents.

Additionally we will also be offering support to staff regarding potential alternative employment through our Durham Care Academy.