

Northumberland Self-Assessment

Executive Summary



Introduction

As part of preparations for the Local Authority CQC Assessment, Northumberland County Council have produced a self-assessment that provides a comprehensive overview of how our adult social care service meets legislative requirements under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014.

The four themes of the Local Authority CQC assessment are:

- Working with people
- Providing Support
- Ensuring Safety
- Leadership

This is an Executive Summary of our self-assessment linked to these themes.

About Us

In Northumberland 7,624 residents currently have an adult social care case worker (January 2024).

According to the Office for National Statistics the population is forecast to increase to around 339,415 by 2043, an increase of 4.0%. Northumberland has an ageing population with those aged 85+ projected to increase by 80% by 2043 (compared to England 60.5% and North-East England 58.2%).

Our Market Position Statement 2022 provides an overview of the health and care needs of our adult population. An ageing population is probably the County's most significant feature and the most challenging issue for health and social care and public policy more generally.

Our Corporate Plan 2023–2026 sets out the vision – “A Land of Great Opportunities” and our corporate priorities – Achieving Value for money; Tackling Inequalities; Driving Economic Growth. These are underpinned by the four values People First, Respect, Excellence and Resilience. In Adult Services we promote the corporate vision and values with all staff and ensure that our strategies, policies and procedures reflect this.

There is a very strong history of genuine Health and Social Care integration in Northumberland over a long period, which is still evidenced today by leadership commitment, strong partnerships and operational collaboration with all parts of the NHS.

A Summary of our Key Performance Headlines

Below is a summary of Northumberland's ASCOF (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework) scores compared to the North East and England. Published in December 2023 for the financial year **2022-23**.

Key headlines:-

- **10** out of 17 report outturns for Northumberland **better** than the NE and England averages
- **6** out of 17 report outturns for Northumberland **between** the NE and England averages
- **1** out of 17 report outturns for Northumberland **worse** than the NE and England averages:
 - o Proportion of adults receiving direct payments – Action - strategic change project is underway to implement actions to improve take-up of Direct Payments in Northumberland
- **8** out of 17 indicators are ranked within the upper quartile of 151 authorities.

Annual Adult Social Care Survey headline results:

- Survey results compared to NE and England – **6** out of 7 ASCOF indicators report outturns **better** than the NE regional and England scores
- **6** out of 7 indicators from the User survey were ranked in the upper quartile
 - o 4A – “Proportion of people who use services who feel safe” is ranked **4th** in England. Note: the lower the ranking number the better
 - o 1A – “Social care-related quality of life” is ranked **7th** in England. Note: the lower the ranking number the better.

Our key strategic priority areas are:

- Further upskilling of front-line teams to utilise **strengths and assets-based approaches** to support care planning, to help ensure we meet the **diverse needs** of our residents
- Review of **workforce capacity** and further solutions to attempt to increase that capacity
- Strengthen our approach to **engagement and co-production**, particularly with those with lived experience
- Enhance our **information and advice service** in collaboration with our key stakeholders
- Further **development of partnerships with Health** particularly the relationship with primary care and CNTW (Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust)
- A review of the use of **direct payments** and more flexible solutions to ensure this is a primary option for individuals and their families
- Continue to support the health and wellbeing of our **unpaid carers**
- Increased interaction with **Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) and wider partners** to develop more **community asset options** for support and particularly **preventative support**
- Promotion of growth in **extra care and support housing** solutions

- Development of **specialist dementia care and dementia solutions** focusing on shortfalls in localities
- Full **engagement** in the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) **co-ordinated regional pilots of assistive technology**
- Further work with Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Trusts on **system wide solutions to the hospital capacity issues**
- Work with partners to strengthen our collective approach to **MCA assessment and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards / Liberty Protection Safeguards**.

Our key strengths are:

- We have developed and continue to promote a **positive and supportive culture** within Adult Services workforce
- We have **strong integrated services** and **partnership arrangements** at strategic and operational levels, based on a long history of various forms of integration particularly with Health partners
- We have **maintained performance and financial performance** in most areas through some very challenging times for the service and the Council over the past 2-3 years
- Our **Safeguarding partnership** demonstrates **best practice** and leads on regional and national initiatives, and our innovative **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** provides an integrated children's and adults services response
- We have a **well-established and effective integrated hospital discharge service** with Adult Services staff working into all Northumbria Health Care Trust sites
- We have established **effective and robust governance arrangements** since moving back into the Council in 2021
- We have recently established a **social work academy** within Adult Services which provides dedicated and consistent support for all newly qualified social workers and social work apprentices
- We have in place a very **strong collective focus in our senior management team** within Adult Services and a fresh and integrated Executive team at a corporate level in the Council. The platform for growth is strong
- In order to respond to the geographical challenges which Northumberland presents, we have **locality-based teams** to strengthen knowledge and provide the best possible support for each area.

Our key risks and challenges have identified the following areas for development:

- **Workforce Capacity:** Develop further capacity in the adult social care workforce to meet demand in the system
- **Engagement and Co-production:** Use client, stakeholder and workforce feedback to effectively drive forward service improvement and ensure there is an embedded culture of co-production in everything that we do
- **Strengths Based Approach:** Embed outcome focussed strength-based approaches across all of Adult Services
- **Direct Payments:** Enhance and strengthen our approach to Direct Payments.
- **Housing solutions:** Speed up the delivery of new supported and extra care housing solutions across the geography of Northumberland
- **Technology:** Pilot and invest in new technology to provide innovative solutions to the key challenges that we face across Adult Services.