
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee

18 September 2024

Update on the delivery of the two-year improvement programme 2023-25 to assist the delivery of the Adult Social Care Strategy 2022-25 and preparation for Care Quality Commission Assurance of Adult Social Care

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Summary

On 6 March 2024 the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) considered a report on the detail and delivery of the adult social care directorates two-year improvement programme (2023-25) and preparation for Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance. As part of the directorate's preparations, a self-assessment document has been produced, which will be shared with the CQC prior to an assessment visit. The document sets out a number of areas for improvement, which had been identified for delivery as part of the two-year improvement programme. The delivery of this programme is being supported by the County Council's transformation fund. It was agreed that regular updates would be presented to update on progress.

As set out in previous reports, the programme is being delivered during a period of significant challenge, which includes the need to support our NHS partners in the facilitation of discharging patients from hospital, as well as manage increased demand for adult social care. The latest Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) annual survey, published in July 2024, has also found that people are needing more complex care and support due to illness and disability and local councils are struggling financially to meet peoples higher-level needs. Workforce recruitment and retention issues remain key for the council, as well as independent and voluntary sector providers, with the fragility in the care market together with increasing prices across the whole care sector.

Ongoing management oversight of the capacity required has been planned and resourced for the improvement programme during the remainder of 2023/24 and throughout 2024/25, with the procurement of Roretti Ltd to provide external capacity to support delivery, up until 30 June 2025.

Focus for Scrutiny

The Committee is asked to consider the update on the delivery of the two-year improvement programme.

Key Lines of Enquiry include:

Key areas for the committee to consider and comment on are:

1. The progress made to date within each of the improvement programme workstreams, taking into consideration the County Council's strategic ambitions and the complexities currently facing adult social care.
2. Does the updated self-assessment reflect the areas the service should be proud of, and the areas for improvement from an elected member perspective?
3. How the committee intends to discharge its scrutiny responsibility to support service improvement by identifying specific parts of the improvement programme for future scrutiny, if required.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

Background and Context

1. Strategic focus for Adults Social Care

National Policy

National policy and publications

- 1.1 The Chancellor confirmed on 29 July 2024, that the implementation of adult social care charging reform from October 2025 would be cancelled. This results in no immediate impact or action required from WSCC adult social care. The County Councils Network (CCN) had recently called for a further delay to the introduction of a 'fair rate for care', as well as allowing self-funders to ask their local authority to arrange care on their behalf together with access to the 'fair rate of care' due to funding, staffing and timescale concerns. CCN published a report on 22 July 2024 on the cost of implementing the reforms and the preparedness of councils following a survey of councils last month, of which the County Council took part. Analysis carried out suggest that the cost of the cap on care and extended means test is £18.6bn, with CCN member councils in the South East, South West and East of England accounting for 61% of the total minimum cumulative costs of these elements. 86% of councils said they were not well prepared for the reforms, with 92% supporting a delay of at least a year or more. CCN stressed that if implemented, the reforms will need to be fully funded to avoid the real possibility of councils failing in their adult social care statutory duties or being forced into issuing a S114 notice. This recent announcement has removed the issues for councils as set out by the CCN however, the need for the government to address the issue of social care funding still remains, with the £1bn that had been identified by government to fund the reforms referenced as a 'saving' and therefore, will not be reinvested in the sector.
- 1.2 Skills for Care has published a new national workforce strategy that was co-produced with the sector. The strategy seeks to ensure there are enough of the right people with the right skills to provide the best possible care and support for the people who draw on it. It sets out the direction for the short and longer term, as well as action to be taken in the short to medium

term to address current workforce challenges. The key priorities are to attract and retain people into social care roles, the training and development of staff ensuring the provision of high-quality care, and transformation of the workforce required to meet the increasing demand and complexity of people's needs.

- 1.3 Councils, including West Sussex, recently completed the ADASS Spring Survey 2024. The [findings have been published on the ADASS website](#). The report concludes that the financial pressure faced by councils is untenable and requires consistent government investment to stabilise and support adult social care providers. It further recognises that investment in the workforce and support for carers is required, a prevention agenda is needed to enable people to live independently for as long as possible, and greater integration between health and social care systems is key to avoid the passporting of pressures from the NHS to local authorities and to realise the joint ambition of delivering early support closer to home.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance and Self-Assessment

- 1.4 The current iteration of the West Sussex Adult Social Care (ASC) self-assessment that is required for CQC assurance, and originally prepared last year, can be accessed via a dedicated webpage [here](#). The document has undergone a significant re-write following the publication and subsequent learning from published CQC assessment reports. The self-assessment sets out areas where the service are proud and areas for improvement. Areas for improvement are included as part of the two-year improvement programme. The self-assessment will continue to be regularly updated as the improvement programme progresses, as well as adding further examples of good practice, evidence and relevant data to aid the assurance process when it commences in West Sussex.
- 1.5 Formal assessments began in December 2023 and nine [reports have now been published](#). Of those nine, six received an outcome rating of Good and three have been rated Requires Improvement. The CQC have published that forty-five local authorities have been notified of their assessment visit to date, and since formal assessments began, the timescales for assurance visits have become broader. West Sussex County Council was notified of formal assessment on 9 September 2024 and will complete an information return, providing evidence within 38 categories, which includes a completed self-assessment, within three weeks (deadline for submission is 27 September 2024). Once completed it can be up to six months before the onsite assurance visit is carried out, which will last around 2-3 days. Once a date is known this will be shared with members. The CQC expect to complete all initial formal assessments for all local authorities within two years, so by the end of 2025.
- 1.6 There are currently 243 documents identified which could be submitted as part of the County Council's evidence return, these are currently being reviewed for quality; currency (to ensure they meet CQC requirements and are the most appropriate version); consolidation; included in other methods of evidence required by the CQC. Narrative sheets that will accompany each IR are being finalised. In addition to listing the information returned and any trends or themes, they highlight areas of which we are proud and

address potential areas of challenge by outlining plans to improve. The approach closely aligns with those described by partners at the SE ADASS CQC Assurance meeting and every opportunity is being taken to utilise learning from partners to adapt our processes. The service is in contact with Council's who have gone through the CQC assurance process who have shared learning with officers and members.

- 1.7 Case tracking is a method the CQC will use to obtain evidence from people's experiences. Seventy case files, which meet the key CQC required elements (e.g., 12-month Chronology Completed, Details of Care Plan Obtained & Saved, Support and Professional Advice Provision Listed, etc.) have been compiled. From these fifty are required to be supplied to the CQC, who are likely to engage with six of those cases, with Inspectors and Experts by Experience contacting those involved as part of their evidence gathering.
- 1.8 It should be noted that CQC have recently received the outcome of a [review](#) undertaken by Dr Penny Dash into its operational effectiveness and to examine the suitability of their new single assessment framework methodology for inspections and ratings of health and care providers. The interim report, that was accepted by government, published last month made five recommendations, which include for the CQC to rapidly improve operational performance; fix the provider portal and regulatory platform; rebuild expertise within the organisation and relationships with providers in order to resurrect credibility; review the single assessment framework to make it fit for purpose; and clarify how ratings are calculated and make the results more transparent particularly where multi-year inspections and ratings have been used. A more detailed report will be published in the autumn.

Adult Social Care Strategy (2022-25)

- 1.9 Work to deliver the 'we will' commitments in the Adult Social Care Strategy (2022-25) and support the delivery of all aspects of our Council Plan (2021-25) is central to the changes and improvements that are required. Opportunities to co-design and co-produce with customers and partners is included as part of the directorate's ongoing programme.

2. Adult Social Care Improvement Programme 2023-25 update

- 2.1 Work delivered throughout 2022/23 and early 2023/24 supported by transformation funding provided the foundation for the further improvements and service development planned within the programme. The improvement programme is using these foundations to design models of care and support that are focused on meeting the needs of people who need adult social care support and are better value for money.
- 2.2 Based on the work to date, the programme has been split into the following workstreams, which include strategic commissioning; practice and operations; finance and systems; workforce and organisational development; performance and insight; systems partnership working and a recent additional workstream focussing on financial processes. Communications and change, and CQC assurance readiness are included as

overarching workstreams. The delivery of these workstreams continues to be overseen by the Adults Portfolio Board – Improvement and Assurance, chaired by the Assistant Director – Improvement and Assurance, with all DLT members represented.

Strategic Commissioning Workstream

- 2.3 Further to the overarching Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy published earlier this year, work continues to develop accompanying market position statements (MPS). Extra Care and Older People bed-based accommodation market position statements have been produced, which involved a co-production session with providers being held, and published on the County Council's website. These MPSs provide a clear approach to strategic objectives for each customer type/service type with a view to improving outcomes for individuals, as well as the ability to work differently to engage partners in developing future value for money models of care.
- 2.4 As previously reported, following Chief Executive agreement for the current section 75 agreements between the Sussex ICB and the County Council to be wound down, milestones, deliverables and resources have now been agreed to review and transfer statutory functions, which have been delegated to both parties in their capacity as lead commissioners. As the current agreement comes to an end in March 2024, a 12-month extension has been applied to manage a safe and smooth transfer of functions from 1 April 2025.
- 2.5 Work has continued to develop an Individual Service Fund (ISF) model pilot with providers. This is an arrangement where the County Council transfers the funds agreed for customers care and support arrangements to an organisation of their choice so that the customer can control how their support is delivered. It has been agreed that the County Council will work with Independent Lives to deliver the pilot, with a list of customers currently being finalised to start from September 2024.
- 2.6 The Early Support Digital Directory (CLIO) platform developed between the service, partners and providers has begun in preparation for launch to support and enable people to retain their independence for longer in their communities. In addition, an Early Support Charter has been co-produced with partners within the Integrated Care Board and Communities. The Charter is made up of the following six principles:
 - **Principle 1: Commitment to a 'systems approach' to enabling Early Support Services** - Partners agreed Prevention should be everyone's business; a system wide approach is needed. Governance, agreed goals, clear communication pathways, and common language needs to be established; locally and countywide.
 - **Principle 2: Services should be easy to access** - Partners agreed customers need universal support, including self-serve options, to understand their potential or emerging health and care needs, what early support options are available and advisable, and how to access these.

- **Principle 3: Early Support should be personalised and strength-based** - Partners agreed customers should be empowered to have more choice and control of their health and care needs.
- **Principle 4: Specialist Advice should be quality assured** - Partners agreed Information, Advice and Guidance needs to be more consistent, with specialist advice quality assured.
- **Principle 5: Commitment to equity-oriented service provision** - Partners agreed the need to tackle inequality and equity; and recommended the Charter join up with the approach being developed by District and Boroughs to have a commitment to equity-oriented service provision.
- **Principle 6: Data Matters** - Partners agreed early support will be best enabled when partners use data to understand our customer's health and care needs, and their different engagement needs. Additionally, data should be used to understand what services are available, if they are being used effectively, where the gaps are and to avoid duplication of services.
These principles have been adopted by the service and it is anticipated that partners will do the same.

2.7 The Shaw project has concluded since the last update. Occupancy of Shaw Healthcare beds is performing well at around 88% consistently. A series of recommendations were considered and agreed at Improvement and Assurance Portfolio Board in June, which included the convening of three workstreams to be undertaken as business as usual, outside of the improvement programme, to take forward the proposals focussing on reviewing the mix of beds to expand the provision of dementia provision and streamline short stay arrangements; repurposing of space previously utilised by day services and review and make recommendations on future ownership models beyond the life of the current contract.

Practice and Operations Workstream

- 2.8 Stage 3 of the Transition Programme has further improved how the two cross-directorate Council transition-to-adult-social-care pathways meet the conditions for a 'good transition'. A set of joint transitions key performance indicators and assurance processes have been developed overseen by the Children First Transformation Board. Work to include adult staff in annual EHCP reviews (from age 17), when a residential placement is indicated, to support and influence conversations on placements, and work around transport arrangements has been developed. The implementation of financial reporting mechanisms from Children's Social Care to Adults Social Care continues to be developed. It is planned that this project will transfer to business as usual over the next reporting period.
- 2.9 Review of core guidance on training to ensure that it is aligned to strength-based working has continued. Dedicated review teams continue working to ensure our strategic objectives are being fulfilled, in accordance with statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, with an increased focus on those receiving care through council managed budgets and those in higher cost placements.

Systems & IT Workstream

2.10 Work has continued to develop the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the service, with a staff 'bot' being developed to help staff navigate practice information to assist them with their work. Work to develop customer facing 'bots' will be of focus throughout 2024/25. It should be noted that some of the work previously within this workstream has moved to the financial processes workstream. A provider portal is now being implemented to improve the current payment process, with suitable domiciliary care service providers, aligned to the new Care and Support at Home contract, moving to the portal for payment from July as part of a phased approach up until October 2024. Work will then move to residential/nursing care providers next year.

Workforce and Organisational Development Workstream

2.11 Work to deliver the Adults Workforce Strategy and action plan has continued. Actions focus on making sure the County Council's adult social care workforce are knowledgeable, culturally aware and capable, working pro-actively to ensure strength-based and person-centred outcomes at the right time, as well as ensuring staff wellbeing throughout. The plan also focusses on supporting us to recruit and retain the best workforce for West Sussex. Work has been delivered by the appointed provider to deliver training to contribute to the development of the County Council's commissioning workforce, across People and Communities commissioning teams with 94% of adults staff confirmed to attend the Certificate in Principles of Commissioning Level 4, with 31% confirmed to attend the level 5 qualification focussing on wellbeing, learning disability and autism and 71% confirmed to attend the level 7 qualification session.

Performance and Insight Workstream

2.12 Work has continued to build, test and roll out Microsoft Power BI dashboards. The new ASC Performance Dashboard (PowerBI) is designed to show the customer journey and outcomes in line with the agreed business processes, providing managers with information on 'open' or 'work in progress', timeliness and completed work. Dashboards for contact and assessment, reviews and safeguarding pathways have been delivered to date. Work will now move to Carers, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), Commissioning, Transitions, and a range of other data quality measures. Feedback on the dashboards has been positive and is helping staff to identify cases that require action, either to move on through the pathway or to data cleanse where work steps have not been completed accurately. This work will improve data quality, access to live performance management and case data, and ultimately improve confidence in performance data both internally and externally. This will support a recently agreed Performance Framework for implementation across the service.

System and Partnership Working Workstream

2.13 Engagement with staff has continued to progress the intermediate care project reflecting on the findings and proposals from John Bolton to develop key themes and principles for any new ways of working. A milestone

interdependency map and 12-month high level implementation plan has been progressed and is planned to hand over to a dedicated programme manager within the ICB.

- 2.14 Procurement of additional domiciliary care and care home capacity has been completed with additional hospital discharge services in place as well as additional staffing funded by the Discharge grant.

Financial Processes Workstream

- 2.15 A new financial process workstream has been established for year two of the improvement programme to address the financial challenges facing the service. The workstream will predominately focus on financial reporting to provide a holistic approach to financial management and control within the service, which is increasingly needed due to the continuing growth in demand and complexity for statutory-funded services and budget pressure faced by the service. The ambition is to improve transparency of social care expenditure, by managers and staff having an improved availability of information, statistical validity of data, and therefore the quality of reports to effectively manage their budgets ('knowing our business'). This workstream will also seek to address the processing backlogs that have had a detrimental impact on the budget in the final two quarters of last year, and the first quarter of 2024/25. The delivery partner will be tasked with supporting with the development of the financial framework to underpin this work.

Changes to the programme

- 2.16 Due to uncertainty and risk within adult social care, it is recognised that there will be a need throughout the programme to re-focus the content over the two-year period. All changes made will be delivered within the agreed funding allocation, as set out in the following section of the report.
- 2.17 Recognising the opportunities that extra care housing and supported living presents the County Council in terms of customer and strategic outcomes as well as financial efficiencies, a review of the supported living framework will be undertaken, working with colleagues in property and estates to review possible assets that could be used to develop further extra care and supported living opportunities, and further engagement with the market. This builds on the Extra Care Market Position Statement that has recently been produced as part of the improvement programme. The desired outcome for reviewing commissioning arrangements for up to 20 schemes within Life-Long Services (LLS) will be to ensure best value through rightsizing support arrangements, ensuring existing block arrangements and assets are fully utilised and identifying properties for re-allocation/disposal.
- 2.18 Work to manage adult social care demand is essential in relation to customer outcomes, staff workload and financial pressure. Therefore, work will be fast tracked within commissioning in relation to the County Council's reablement offer, which is currently subject to a re-procurement exercise. Moving into the latter half of the year, the use of technology will be explored, as well as prevention contracts funded by Public Health and the

work between the service and the Prevention Assessment Team (PAT), currently sitting in the communities directorate.

- 2.19 Following a learning needs analysis of managers from within the service undertaken last year, there is an identified need to ensure that all managers have the necessary management fundamentals training, as well as the opportunity to be supported in their leadership development, especially with the considerable amount of change underway and planned throughout the service. Having liaised with Organisational Development (OD) in relation to the support they can provide, it is considered that the skill and pace required by the service will need additional support in relation to leadership development and the management of change. Through the ability to flex the support available through the delivery partner contract, a specialist OD lead has been appointed by Roretti, and within the current financial envelope, to support this work over the coming months.
- 2.20 For most people who are in receipt of a direct payment (DP), the level of payment is either above or at the level of a council managed service. In most councils the DP payment will be below the council managed service amount. The DP policy has been reviewed and will be republished to include reference to a strength-based approach, looking at social and other networks to meet customer assessed needs. This is important as it will enable workers to look at development of micro-providers, which offer a different model of care for less cost than a traditional building-based service. In addition, work with Independent Lives, who support 80% of WSCC DP customers to develop a Personal assistant (PA) rate is underway. The ambition is to increase the number of DP customers whilst stimulating the market with cheaper alternative care services combined with strength-based working, achieving better outcomes and better value for money.

3. Risk implications and mitigations

- 3.1 Significant risks remain in the demand for adult social care and the waiting times for assessment and service provision that are ongoing. The management of these are crucial to ensure that the County Council is fulfilling its statutory duties under the Care Act 2014, especially with upcoming Care Quality Commission assurance. Mitigations continue to be in place to address some of the risks in the short term, however the recruitment of good quality locum social workers is an ongoing risk for the delivery of financial savings in respect of undertaking reviews across operational teams.
- 3.2 As has been reported in the Performance and Resources Report, data quality and reliability in Mosaic continues to present a risk to the Adults budget and ability to forecast accurately. Although progress continues to be made in addressing processing backlogs, Mosaic does not yet show an accurate record of customer numbers or care costs. Financial management framework improvements are included within the Adults improvement programme and required improvements in performance/data quality and reporting are part of the newly created financial processes workstream within the programme.

- 3.3 The financial assessment improvement programme, led by corporate finance colleagues, which although sits outside of this programme there are links to within the financial processes workstream. This work remains a risk for the directorate and its interdependency with various element of the improvement programme, as unaligned priorities and timescales may impact system design, resources, delivery of products, project timeframes, resulting in changes or reworking of report developments.
- 3.4 The level of demand and increasing levels of need for Adult Social Care, workforce challenges, the ongoing requirement for the delivery of savings, market sustainability, safeguarding and the ongoing support from the County Council to the NHS remain. These are all part of the rationale for investment to ensure that required improvements can be delivered in the necessary timescales.
- 3.5 Resources deployed to support the use of Government initiatives, such as the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund for example, are the same as those which are currently delivering the programmes of work as detailed in the report and therefore, there is an ongoing risk that key strategic actions may not be delivered due to the balance between the workforce capacity available and required.
- 3.6 While strong progress has been made over the past few years, the work involved in delivering savings, prepare for inspection, and deliver business as usual remains significant. It is crucial that the programme of work to improve adult social care in West Sussex continues to support the wider progress that the organisation has made in the past three years.

4. Contribution to achieving our Climate Change Strategy

- 4.1 Through the change opportunities afforded by proposed new models, new services and service redesigns within Adults and Health, we will contribute fully to the corporate ambitions on climate change, to be a net zero carbon organisation by 2030 and transforming how we work.
- 4.2 Climate Change has been embedded in all project documentation managed by the Programme Management Office and reviewed by the Adult Social Care Portfolio Board.

5. Finance

- 5.1 The County Council's net budget for adult social care in 2024/25 is approximately £264m, which has risen by 28% over the last five years. Adult services provide support to over 12,00 residents and around 95% of this relates to the cost of funding the social care needs of approximately 8,500 residents who meet the national eligibility criteria in the Care Act. The County Council has also committed £8m of additional funding to deliver the improvement programme over two years.

6. Policy Alignment and Compliance

- 6.1 The improvement programme will assist in the delivery of the Adult Social Care Strategy which sets out five priorities to guide the future development of adult social care services within the context of the Council Plan.

7. Our Council Plan

- 7.1 Developed from the County Council's reset plan in 2020/21, 'Our Council Plan 2021-2025' sets out the County Council's priorities over the next four years and the outcomes to achieve for people who live and work in West Sussex. The focus is on four priorities, which are:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential
- Making the best use of resources

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications.

9. Equality Duty and human rights assessment

- 9.1 The service is on a journey to move from an Equality Act compliance focus to one which embodies inclusion and truly person-centered services and support. Key decisions taken include an assessment of any equality implications of proposals and how, if necessary, these will be mitigated for people with protected characteristics. The long-standing Adults' Services, Customer and Carer Group, the Minorities Health and Social Care Group and the Learning Disability and Autism Partnership Boards meet regularly and serve as critical friends to the service.

10. Public Health

- 10.1 Adult Services works in close partnership with Public Health and the voluntary and community sector and other partner agencies to increase the range of options open to people to support their wellbeing, as well as reaching people earlier before they require adult social care services.

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