



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

17 OCTOBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	CARE QUALITY COMMISSION SELF-ASSESSMENT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CARE AND HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

The Government is introducing a new duty for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to assess how Local Authorities are meeting their Adult Social Care duties in relation to the Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, and a new power for the Secretary of State to intervene where CQC considers a Local Authority to be failing to meet these duties. The CQC Single Assessment Framework provides the Council with an additional opportunity to develop more rigour in our governance arrangements and our practice. It will help us to focus on quality throughout everything we do, embedding a continuous performance improvement culture, while making us more accountable to the people we support. The report sets out the development of Wirral's Self-Assessment of how it provides Adult Social Care services.

This CQC Self-Assessment aligns with the Wirral Plan through providing assurance of working to provide active and healthy lives to the people of Wirral and safe and vibrant communities. This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is recommended to note the report and comment as appropriate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's views on the Council's Self-Assessment position, which is being finalised in preparation for inspection by the CQC under the new assurance process introduced through the Health and Care Act 2022. The presentation on highlights of the Self-Assessment is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and was shared at a member's workshop on 9 August 2023.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The option to not complete a Self-Assessment for the purpose of thoroughly preparing for a CQC assessment would clearly place significant risk on the Council.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 From April 2023, the CQC have new powers to assess Local Authorities in England. The CQC will undertake a programme of reviews across England to understand how well Local Authorities meet duties under Part 1 of The Care Act (2014). The assessments are based on a single assessment framework within four themes: How local authorities work with people; How Local Authorities provide support; How Local Authorities ensure safety within the system; and Leadership.
- 3.2 A peer challenge took place in December 2022, supported by Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) North West to provide an initial position on strengths and areas for development against the assessment framework that CQC had development.
- 3.3 Wirral Council have been developing a Self-Assessment against each of the four theme areas and this will form an intrinsic component to support the formal assessment. A workshop was held with partners, care providers and voluntary sector services in July of this year to share the progress with the Self-Assessment and seek feedback.
- 3.4 CQC expect Wirral to assess and make judgements about performance in relation to each quality statement, using evidence to support their judgement. Although Wirral Council will lead on the Self-Assessment, there is a focus on co-production and citizen engagement. Wirral Council has setup a project team to provide strategic oversight during preparation for the assessment and co-ordinate engagement with partners and people with lived experience. The Self-Assessment is in the final stages of completion and has a comprehensive evidence library and set of improvement plans for each theme.
- 3.5 A workshop was held with members on 9 August 2023 and the presentation from the workshop is included as appendix 1. The feedback has been taken into the project board to action.

- 3.6 There are four themes to the Self-Assessment, each has a section that identifies strengths and areas for improvement and provides a bank of evidence to support the statements that are made. More detail is provided in the background papers section of this report on the assessment framework and on the Self-Assessment itself.
- 3.7 Theme one is called 'Working with People'. There are 3 quality statements for this theme. Strengths for this theme include the development and implementation of the 'three conversations model' of social work practice. This has been a significant change to practice supporting improved outcomes for people, working in a more structured person-centred way. There has been an improvement in the number of 'Moving with Dignity' reviews completed that have improved the experience of people receiving care. People with more complex needs have had a named worker which has provided more timely support and intervention through the review of their care. There is a strong programme of Extra Care Housing development and provision; a range of early intervention and prevention services which reduce avoidable hospital and care home admissions; innovative models of care with providers; and the introduction of the Real Living wage across many care providers. An All-Age Disability Partnership Board supports the development of services and strategies to improve equity of experience. An autism strategy has been co-produced and supports plans to improve the support and outcomes for autistic people. 'Healthy Wirral' is a partnership programme that supports strategic approaches to tackling health inequalities.
- 3.8 Areas for improvement for Theme 1 include the need for improvement trajectories to be in place regarding the completion of annual reviews. There is a developing Transfer of Care Hospital Discharge Hub and 'Home First' service which is working well but in its early stages. There is a plan to re-design Reablement Services to ensure timely and targeted responses to those in need. There are clear arrangements for prioritising assessing and reviewing of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, however a plan is needed to address the significant backlog. A revised Direct Payment scheme is due to be launched to improve performance. There needs to be a relaunch of personal budgets and Individual Services Funds (ISFs) to ensure people can access the best options for them to receive the support they need. There needs to be a single prevention strategy that pulls together the various strands of activity that are in place. The community teams model provides for an ability to really focus on place and neighbourhoods and develop the provision of culturally appropriate services and for those with protected characteristics. A strategy is required to articulate how there is a proactive approach in engaging with people more likely to have poor care. Checks need to be completed to confirm if Equality Impact Assessments of care and support policies and processes have been completed.
- 3.9 Theme 2 is called 'Providing Support'. There are two quality statements for this theme. Strengths include strong engagement and relationships with the community care market, with streamlined contract and quality processes in place and with a new policy to underpin the Council's position. There are effective joint commissions with Public Health and the Children and Young Peoples Department, with long life contracts which promote sustainability and medium to long term planning. Contracts include early intervention and prevention and Wirral Independence service. A good extra care housing offer, for Learning Disability, Mental Health, and Older People

with further pipeline schemes. A strong Better Care Fund pooled fund set of arrangements are in place that support key health and care initiatives. New contracts and a quality framework are in place with underpinning policy, and good evidence of contract meetings in place.

- 3.10 Areas for improvement for Theme 2 include a need to ensure an improvement in quality in the care market, and embed and utilise the new commissioning, contracts, and quality policy. A need to ensure delivery of complex care services to ensure sufficiency for Autism, Learning Disability, and Mental Health. A need to do focussed work on market sustainability and shaping as part of preparations for charging reforms. A need to improve our integrated commissioning arrangements within the Council departments and continue to work proactively with Health and Care system partners to respond to local demands. There is a need to further develop the third sector offer to meet local needs, within the lifetime of the contract.
- 3.11 Theme 3 is called 'Safety'. There are two quality statements for this theme. Strengths include Wirral Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (WSAPB) forming a learning partnership with the Liverpool City Region. There is a process in place for learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Coroner investigations and findings as well as Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman enquiries. The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has a clear function in ensuring consistent decision making around the progression of contacts to enquiries. Safeguarding practice has a strong focus on Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP); individual agencies are clear on their risks in relation to safeguarding; thresholds are clear for those working in adult safeguarding on a regular basis and section 42 enquiries are investigated sensitively, timely and are person-centred.
- 3.12 Areas for improvement for Theme 3 include a need to further progress connecting the WSAPB more to outcomes being delivered in practice, and to challenge partner agencies to build leadership capacity to take agreed work forward. Information sharing via the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference needs to be improved and a risk register developed for the board to seek assurance on risk mitigation and management. A greater understanding about Modern slavery and human trafficking is required across partners and communities and improved feedback to referrers about the outcome of safeguarding concerns.
- 3.13 Theme 4 is called 'Leadership'. There are two quality statement for this theme. Strengths include a strong and effective governance and performance management arrangement within the Adult Social Care Department, across the organisation, and between partners as evidenced by the pooled budgeting arrangements with the NHS. There is a strong relationship between the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee and the Leadership of Adult Social Care. Risks and budget oversight are monitored monthly and quarterly. There is a strong and effective budget oversight, accountability, and governance. Where savings are identified, these are assessed and monitored for delivery. The department has a strong history of achieving its savings target and continuing to deliver its statutory duties. Services commissioned and delivered by the Council in most cases have been designed with service users, for example carers and co-production is used widely in Day Services and the Care Market. There are processes for evaluating and sharing learning and innovative ways of working to enable better outcomes.

- 3.14 Areas for improvement for Theme 4 include attention to the supervisory arrangement of the remaining partner organisation could be improved. An Adult Social Care workforce plan is required and there is an under-representation of ethnic minorities in our workforce when compared to our local population. An All-Age Disability review found there were 4 key areas of improvement including better access, housing, joined up transition planning from the age of 14-years, along with an improved training, volunteering and employment offer. Further benchmarking opportunities and shared learning across partners will be sought.
- 3.15 There were several areas for improvement that were applicable to more than one or all of the themes. These included co-production and the creation of a co-production strategy which will inform the development plan. The development of an Early Help and Prevention strategy; development of a Workforce strategy; embedding the recently transferred social work teams back into the Council and acting on the recommendations of the December 2022 Peer Challenge.
- 3.16 Although Wirral Council has not been given a timeline for when an assessment may take place, an indicative timeline has been provided and CQC will start formal assessments in September 2023 and aim to carry out up to 20 assessments in Local Authorities. There will be a nine-week lead in period.
- 3.17 A plan is being developed to take forward the identified areas for improvement with governance arrangements to oversee its progress. The Self-Assessment and improvement plan will be completed in October 2023.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications. Failure to achieve a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' in the CQC inspection would likely result in considerable resource and financial investment requirements to address any areas requiring improvement.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the Self-Assessment. There can be challenges to the CQC assessment outcomes by Councils, which may require legal support.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Officer resources have been assigned to undertake the remaining engagement activities and finalise the Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan. Delivery of the Improvement Plan will however require support from officers throughout the Adult Social Care and Public Health Directorate and from colleagues around the Council.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to achieve a rating of 'good' or 'outstanding' in the CQC inspection would likely result in considerable resource and financial investment requirements to address any areas requiring improvement. There is a risk and issues log in place overseen by the current CQC Self-Assessment project board.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 A workshop has taken place with range of partners including statutory partners, partners from the voluntary sector and care providers. There is further consultation planned with people who have experience of using services, and their carers, and families.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.

9.2 The Self-Assessment includes an assessment of the Adult Social Care's overall performance around equalities, diversity, and inclusion. It sets out some key strengths in this area along with some potential areas for development. Associated actions from the assessment may need an Equality Impact Assessment and will be done at the earliest stage of development.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Commissioning arrangements are considered under theme 3 of the Self-Assessment and demonstrate work with care providers and commissioned care to reduce the carbon footprint.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Commissioning arrangements support local care providers to be sustainable and provide continuity of care for the local population.

REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Garner

Assistant Director of Operational Delivery & Professional Standards
email: simongarner@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Members Workshop Presentation (9 August 2023)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CQC Self-Assessment Framework 2023 – <https://www.cqc.org.uk/local-systems/local-authorities/assessment-framework>

People at the Heart of Care
Health and Social Care Act 2022
Care Act 2012

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in accordance with Section 2.2 (a) and (b) of its Terms of Reference, “adult social care matters (e.g., people aged 18 or over with eligible social care needs and their carers)” and “promoting choice and independence in the provision of all adult social care”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date