

Divisions Affected - all

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10 November 2022

Adult Social Care Quality and Assurance

Report by:

Karen Fuller - Interim Corporate Director of Adult Social Care

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 The People Overview Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:

- (i) Note Oxfordshire County Council's approach to preparing for Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance implementation in April 2023 and progress to date towards readiness for assessment, what we know so far, and the actions planned to support the assessment framework; and,
- (ii) Support preparations through awareness raising, engagement and promotion of the good work being undertaken in Adult Social Care.

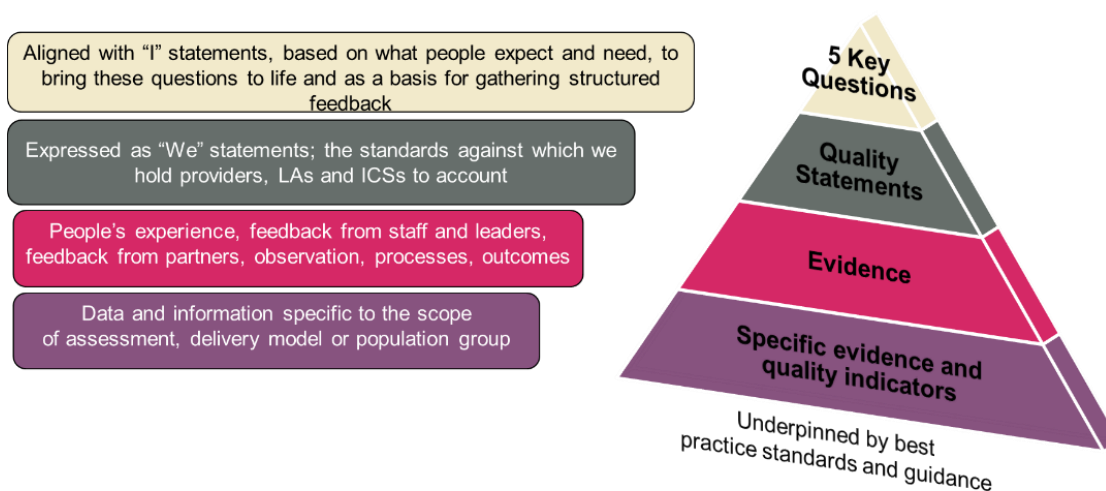
2 Executive Summary

This report describes the introduction of CQC Assessment to Local Authorities. It provides information about activities that are being undertaken by Adult Services to prepare, how the service is making use of an initial internal review and self-assessment to focus on opportunities for further improvement. It sets out actions we are currently taking and next steps that are planned towards assurance readiness.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Health and Care Act 2022 introduces a new duty for the CQC to independently review and assess how Local Authorities are delivering their Care Act functions. In 2020, Adult Social Care embarked on an extensive programme of transformation with the aim of improving outcomes for our residents, improving our governance structures, stronger integration with health partners and a focus on using residents' feedback to inform our decision making.
- 3.2 The Oxfordshire Way is guiding our approach to preparing for assurance. This is our vision of supporting people to live well at home in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. The Oxfordshire Way aims to provide people with the ability to support themselves through personal, local and system assets to lead independent lives. The Oxfordshire Way strongly aligns with the CQC's assessment framework.

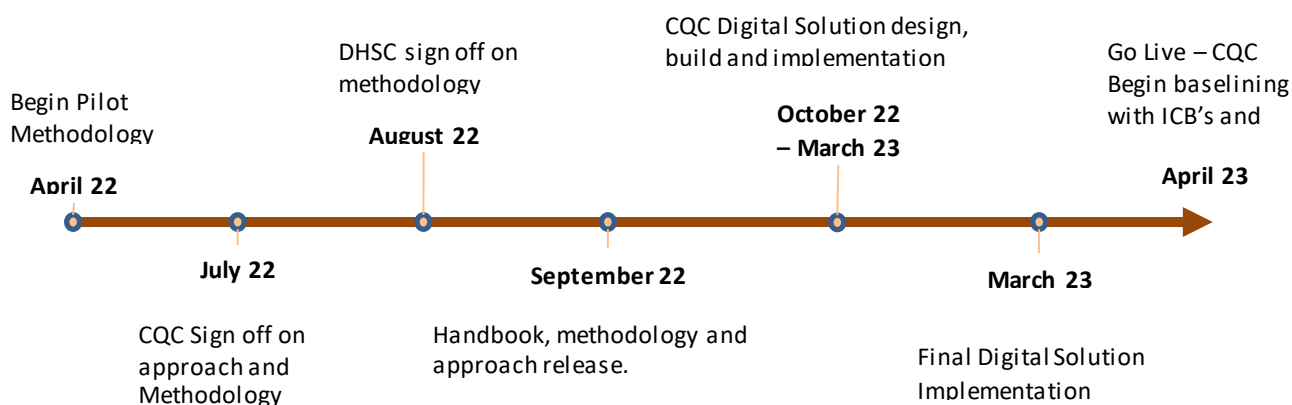
- 3.3 The introduction of CQC assessment allows us to build on our transformation programme and has been a driver towards strengthening assurance processes, aligning this with the Oxfordshire Way vision and improving connections with system partners.
- 3.4 Key elements of the new CQC strategy include giving independent assurance to residents about the quality of service, driven by needs and outcomes for residents, working towards stronger safety within the system and the acceleration of improvement.
- 3.5 The CQC will be using (and have already begun to implement) a Single Assessment Framework across all their regulated activities, summarised in the diagram below. The framework is based on a set of quality statements that are arranged under topic



areas and describe what good care looks like. It sets out clearly what people should expect a good service or system to look like, places people's experiences of care at the heart of the judgements and ensures that gathering and responding to feedback is central to our expectations of local authorities. Choice, control and personalisation are threaded through the entire framework and approach.

- 3.6 There are 4 key questions or 'themes' we will be assessed against
- Theme 1 - How Local Authorities work with people
 - Theme 2 - How Local Authorities provide support
 - Theme 3 - How Local Authorities ensure safety within the system
 - Theme 4 - Leadership capability within Local Authorities.
- 3.7 The quality statements have been developed to align with the 'I Statements' in the [Think Local Act Personal Framework](#). See Annex 1 for a table setting out how the Themes, Care Act duties and quality statements align.

3.8 The CQC engaged extensively with local authorities and co-produced the framework. The timeline for the implementation of the assessment framework is below, however there has been a delay to publication:



3.9 CQC assurance is one element of the significant Adult Social Reform agenda. The Adult Social Care Reform Programme has been established to manage the implementation of new government policy and legislation associated with the reforms. One of the workstreams for the programme is the Quality and Assurance Project, which will ensure readiness for the new CQC Assurance Framework in April 2023.

3.10 In June 2022 Oxfordshire was approached by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and invited to become one of six ‘Trailblazer’ local authorities, working with the DHSC to trial key aspects of the reforms.

3.11 The scale and pace of change involved in being a Trailblazer is driving innovative thinking about the way in which care needs are assessed and met in Oxfordshire, and teams across the organisation are collaborating to improve the way our systems work. Our Trailblazer activity is supporting our preparation for CQC Assurance: as we adapt and develop our policies, processes and systems, these will align with the CQC framework and provide the evidence base required.

3.12 Trailblazer activity also allows us the opportunity to work closely with DHSC to develop a forward plan to bring trailblazers together to learn from each other and collectively shape future policy and procedures. A theme running through all our reform preparations is a commitment to hear and learn from those who use our services and ensuring that we drive continuous improvement through coproduction.

4 Progress to date on assurance preparations

4.1 In Spring 2022 Adult Social Care commissioned an independent consultant to review our readiness for assurance and to provide some insights into further development opportunities. At this time it is important to note that the CQC assurance framework evidence collection methodology had not been published. The aim of the review and subsequent work undertaken was to establish a baseline across adult social care using a self-assessment tool developed by “Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care” (TEASC). This tool has been recommended by the

Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS). The sections closely relate to the themes within the draft CQC Single Assessment Framework, align with the quality statements and Think Local Act Personal 'I Statements'.

- 4.2 The methodology employed by the consultant was to host workshops, to work through the self-assessment tool with the internal workforce in operations, commissioning, service improvement, performance, HR and finance. Feedback was also gathered from members, partners and stakeholders on our performance. The review also considered publicly available documents, strategies, meeting minutes and internal policies.
- 4.3 We have built on the findings of the independent review facilitating further self-assessment workshops to develop our current evidence base.
- 4.4 The South East regional Principal Social Workers Network has established triads to offer peer support and challenge in the lead up to assurance. Oxfordshire is actively involved in our group with the current focus on sharing learning and evidence examples across the 4 themes. Oxfordshire are partnering with East Sussex and Southampton in a triad.
- 4.5 We are engaging with every opportunity to learn and engage with CQC Test and Learn Local Authority Pilots across the region. As a result of this we are developing our understanding of process, and this is informing our preparations. For example, CQC focus will be on the triangulation of evidence i.e., *how* do we know about the quality and impact of our services, rather than simply *what* do we know, and what are our plans for continuous improvement.

5 What have we learnt from Independent Consultant feedback and subsequent self assessment?

- 5.1 The self-assessment activities undertaken to date have given us valuable insight into our compliance with our Care Act duties and suggest Oxfordshire should be confident that we are "good".
- 5.2 Strengths highlighted are:
 - Political appreciation and value for Adult Social Care
 - Positive hard-working culture across adult social care building strong and resilient communities delivering to corporate objectives
 - Performance of health and social care delivering quality and timely support during the pandemic.
 - From November 2020 to August 2022 there was a 39% reduction in those waiting assessment. Figures from ADASS in August suggest nationally there are 37% more people waiting for assessments which shows that Oxfordshire County Council has bucked the trend of increased waiting lists and is showing good signs of managing demand moving forward which the council corporately should be proud of.
 - A good service that is underpinned by a commitment to transformation and the delivery of the Oxfordshire Way vision

- Our team led transformation training to increase team efficiencies has resulted in improved communication within the council.
- Our strength-based planning (focussing on individual and community strengths as opposed to deficits), has guided our approach to co-design and coproduction, promoting person-centred support planning.
- Operational staff felt they engaged with people and their carers in their decision making.

5.3 Opportunities for further development that were highlighted are:

- Streamlining processes – can we make our processes more efficient and proportionate with a focus on outcomes for residents.
- Strengthening feedback mechanisms – do our residents feel listened to and engaged in decision making?
- Accessibility of information – Through the Trailblazer opportunities work is being undertaken on the interface and accessibility of information, whereby we will adopt a test and learn process
- Continue working on demand management and reducing waiting lists for assessment by building on the principles in the Oxfordshire Way and ensuring that every contact an individual has with the department results in a meaningful outcome for them.
- Create standalone roles for the Principal Social Worker and assurance preparations
- Improve engagement with the provider market
- Workforce strategies and recruitment drives to increase capacity
- Further integration with health colleagues for multi-agency working
- Stronger links between operations and commissioning
- Develop a market position statement and sustainability plans co-designed with providers.

6 Actions taken towards improvement

- 6.1 A comprehensive programme of work is underway in preparation for assurance alongside the adult social care reforms. This is guided by the CQC Assurance Project Board which is comprised of key personnel across the directorate. This is essential to ensure a state of readiness by April 2023 taking forward the learning and opportunities identified through the independent review. Key highlights are described below, in relation to the relevant CQC themes.
- 6.2 Across all the themes the Oxfordshire Way approach continues to:
- drive innovations that will deliver a better experience for people we support
 - build resilience in our communities, working with wider system partners including the voluntary and community sector focusing on early intervention and prevention
 - reduce demand on formal services with proactive and preventative community outreach.

6.3 *Theme 1: Working with people*

- 6.3.1 This theme focuses on supporting people to live healthier lives, and activities to assess needs, including those of unpaid carers.
- 6.3.2 Oxfordshire has taken the lead in working with the DHSC on behalf of trailblazers to champion the digital approach, which has an underpinning principle of digital first and a drive towards self-service by preference, supporting and promoting residents to have increased ownership over the process and rapid access to assessment tools. Online self-assessment is being developed at pace and will enable residents, their friends, family and/or carers, to work through assessments at a time and place that suits them.
- 6.3.3 Implementation of the Early Assessment Team on a trial basis will ensure we can fully involve residents in the development of the self-assessment and supported assessment processes and use that to co-design our final approach to assessment.
- 6.3.4 Clear and accessible information and advice for residents is vital to ensure people understand how to access the support they need at the right time. We are working with the communications and IT teams to refresh online resources available through the Live Well Oxfordshire and council websites, providing easy access to high quality information. We are acting on feedback from the Carers Survey and Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework national survey, which measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people.
- 6.3.5 The commissioned Community Information Network (CIN) is a service for all adult residents in Oxfordshire with health and wellbeing needs. To help to deliver our Oxfordshire Way vision, this contact creates easy access to the wide range of information and support that already exists. It uses a strengths-based way of working that means more people will be enabled to live at home independently and confidently for longer
- 6.3.6 We are in the process of codesigning and co-producing a Carers Strategy for first draft publication in March 2023. A working group and strategic planning group were established earlier this year to critically review OCC Carers Strategy 2020 to identify our successes, determine whether our commissioning ambitions met local needs and use information gathered from the analysis to set the template for future planning.
- 6.3.7 Both groups consist of lived experience Carers, health partners, commissioners, and key voluntary sector partners to ensure that the residents voice remains central. We are at the stage of collating and analysing the first round of contract evaluation data to assess the outcomes against the priorities set out in the 2020 Carers Strategy. Lived experience carers are formulating the vision statement for the new draft and a series of listening events are being held across the county in partnership with our Communities of Practice partners, GP surgeries and social prescribers.

6.4 *Theme 2 – Providing support*

- 6.4.1 This theme focuses on market shaping, commissioning, workforce capacity and capability, integration and partnership working.

- 6.4.2 We have worked to engage care providers in the fair cost of care exercise required by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as part of Adult Social Care Reform. This exercise enables the Government and the Local Authority to work with providers to gain a view of the costs of providing care in the local area. Commissioners worked closely with providers to prepare them for the exercise and encourage and enable completion. The Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers was represented on the Project Board which led on the Fair Cost of Care Exercise and was involved in appointing LaingBuisson as an independent provider to support Oxfordshire in completion of the Fair Cost of Care exercise. The outcomes from this exercise were submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) In October 2022. They will be reviewed by the DHSC and it is anticipated that the Fair Cost of Care Report will be published in early 2023.
- 6.4.3 Working with our local providers through this exercise has helped to further our understanding of the cost of running quality and sustainable care provision in Oxfordshire.
- 6.4.4 The completion of the Fair Cost of Care Exercise was one part of a broader spectrum of planned engagement with providers to work together to develop the market for the future to ensure it is sustainable and able to provide high quality services for our residents. Alongside the fair cost of care report the DHSC also require that each Local Authority develops a market sustainability plan, outlining its assessment of the sustainability of their local care market in relation to 65+ care home services and for 18+ domiciliary care services. Oxfordshire has submitted the draft plan to the Department of Health and Social care (DHSC) and work has begun to produce a final market sustainability plan. Care Providers will be involved as key partners in shaping the final market sustainability plan, ready for submission to the DHSC in February 2023.
- 6.4.5 As part of the Adult Social Care Reform Programme a Workforce Development project is in progress. This project is assessing the impact of the reforms on Oxfordshire's internal and external workforce requirements and working to develop an aligned strategy for recruitment, training, and development.
- 6.4.6 Work is underway to engage external providers in the co-design and co-production of an Attraction, Recruitment, and Retention Plan for our external market in Oxfordshire. This is delivered in conjunction with OxLEP, and with the support of Skills for Care.
- 6.4.7 The Quality Improvement Team uses information from a range of sources such as CQC Inspections, Ofsted reports, safeguarding concerns, resident feedback and complaints to ascertain the quality of the provider. The system by which we collate this information has been consolidated and improved, to allow rapid identification where providers require support or improvement. Alongside this we are further developing our use of the Provider Assessment and Market Management System (PAMMS) to allow us to be efficient and consistent in how we monitor providers' quality.

6.5 *Theme 3 – ensuring safety*

- 6.5.1 This theme focuses on safeguarding, safe systems, pathways and transitions.
- 6.5.2 In our Safeguarding teams, we have reviewed and developed the way we use safeguarding intelligence, both in terms of data captured and soft intelligence, to deliver insights including early development of a new trend or an area of concern. Collection of data is based on 'Making Safeguarding Personal' outcomes, ensuring person-centred responses are delivered. We are also planning a programme of comprehensive qualitative audits in addition to the established quantitative methodology.

6.6 *Theme 4 – Leadership*

- 6.6.1 This theme focuses on leadership at all levels that embodies the culture and values of the workforce and organisation, as well as innovation, continuous learning and improvement across our organisation and the local system.
- 6.6.2 New standalone roles have been created in response to our initial self-evaluation recognising the need for key subject matter experts. The CQC Quality Assurance Lead ensure the Q&A project aligns with the CQC requirements, work with the workforce across operations and commissioning to drive evidence development and continuous improvement. The Principal Social Worker and Principal Occupational Therapists will drive and lead developments around best practice for our workforce. The Principal roles have senior accountability in supporting our readiness for ACQC assurance.
- 6.6.3 Oxfordshire's Interim Principal Social Worker is working with the Chief Social Worker at a national level to develop guidance to support Local Authorities to develop and implement a set of principles to guide approaches to prioritisation for assessment in view of reform and the anticipated increase in demand from those already in receipt of care. These principles are primarily intended for use to support Local Authorities to manage additional demand for assessments as a result of Charging Reform.
- 6.6.4 The opportunity has been taken to map, review and refresh our governance structures, board and groups. The Internal Assurance and Governance Board now has oversight across adult social care to develop, encourage and support a culture of continuous service improvement placing the resident at the centre of all that we do driving the realisation of the Oxfordshire Way. This group is underpinned by the CQC Single Assessment Framework which has been written into the Terms of Reference for members. All reports submitted to this group will highlight areas of good practice, areas for improvement, risks and clear action plans to provide assurance and evidence of our Care Act responsibilities.
- 6.6.5 A good quality induction is key to embedding good practice and our values from the outset. We have led a workshop with a range of staff across the service to co-produce improvements to our staff induction process. A working group has been established that includes staff from front line teams and commissioning to co-produce the guidance and create one cohesive programme across the directorate,

strengthening links between Operations and Commissioning. We have drafted a set of overarching principles and identified next steps. Mandatory training will be established more formally and lead on to CPD programme after the first year. This is the first directorate-specific induction programme, and we are working with our Organisational Development team to ensure it joins up with the corporate induction, refreshed leadership development and ASYE programmes.

6.6.6 Similarly, a good quality, strengths-based approach to supervision is key to implementation of good legally compliant practice. We have taken a fresh approach to reviewing our supervision policy, co-producing the guidance with staff. We held workshops with Coordinators, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, and managers. The outcome from these conversations has been the development of a set of guiding principles consistent across the workforce. We aligned the directorate guidance with corporate 12:3:2 performance management principles and also the new corporate values. The new co-produced supervision record is a formal, concise, and professional record of discussions. Both are being tested across different teams within ASC to ensure consistency before further refinements and final sign off as new procedure in November.

7 Next steps towards assurance readiness

7.1 The Quality Assurance project board is developing a detailed action plan setting out the next steps with specific timeframes for implementation. This will be aligned with the final CQC Assurance Framework once it has been published.

7.2 The aim is for continuous improvement and development aligning with the ethos of the CQC strategy and our corporate values of 'Always Learning' and 'Daring to do it differently'.

7.3 By further embedding and building upon the successes identified through Teams Led Transformation and delivery of the Oxfordshire Way we will continue to reduce the number of people waiting for assessment.

7.4 Key elements of our action plan include the following:

7.4.1 Strengthening our feedback mechanisms to gain much improved insight into how our residents feel about the service they receive. Development of a new feedback mechanism using Let's Talk Oxfordshire is underway to obtain timely feedback from people we support, to inform continuous improvement. Adult Social Care currently receives feedback on service delivery via a complaints and comments service, yearly user and carer survey, however this is not deemed sufficient in providing high quality data to make continuous improvements to service delivery. Given the predicted scale of demand increases driven by recent ASC reforms, having an automated and user-friendly way of capturing and processing feedback will be essential. The aim is to develop and implement an Adult Social Care Survey to be completed by people who use ASC services countywide

7.4.2 Strengthening how we use feedback in our decision making to improve outcomes for residents.

- 7.4.3 Policy development – as our care reform implementation comes to fruition our refreshed policies will reflect our new approach to assessment. Policies and guidance will align. A clear policy calendar will ensure documents are reviewed in a timely way and can be easily located by internal staff and the public (as required)
- 7.4.4 Further market engagement, intelligence and management activity including continuing to develop the Market Position Statement, Market Sustainability Plans and external workforce engagement activities.
- 7.4.5 Continuing to develop our co-production work, embedding co-production and co-design across our commissioning functions.
- 7.4.6 Implementation of a communication and engagement plan, continuing to work with partners, providers and stakeholders to raise awareness about assurance, our preparations towards assessment, and how feedback may be sought.
- 7.4.7 Explore opportunities for independent peer review – conversations are taking place with the LGA regards the offer of a peer review to provide further independent scrutiny and offer check and challenge to our self-evaluation.

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Appendices: Appendix A - Draft CQC Quality & Assurance Framework

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Appendix A - Draft CQC Quality & Assurance Framework

| Theme | Care Act section(s) | Key question | Proposed Quality statement |
|---|---|--------------|--|
| Theme 1 How Local Authorities work with people | Section 1: Wellbeing principle Section 2: Preventing need for care and support Section 4: Providing info and advice Sections 9-13: Assessment of an adult or carer's needs for care and support; eligibility criteria Section 14-17: Charging and financial assessment Section 18-20: Duty to meet needs Section 24-30: Next steps after assessment Section 31-33: Direct Payments Sections 67-68 Independent advocacy support | Effective | Supporting people to live healthier lives - We support people to manage their health and wellbeing so they can maximise their independence, choice and control, live healthier lives, and where possible reduce their future needs for care and support. Assessing needs (including unpaid carers) - We maximise the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them ✓ I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me. ✓ I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and goals. ✓ I can get information and advice about my health, care and support and how I can be as well as possible – physically, mentally and emotionally. |
| Theme 2 How Local Authorities provide support | Section 5: Promoting diversity and quality in provision of services (efficient / effective market) Section 8: How to meet needs Section 48-52: Provider Failure | Responsive | Care Provision, integration and continuity - We understand the diverse health and care needs of people and local communities, so care is joined-up, flexible and supports choice and continuity. |
| | Section 5 (iv): Promoting diversity and quality in provision of services; the importance of fostering a workforce to deliver high quality services Section 3: Promoting integration of care and support with health services Section 6: Co-operating generally Section 7: Cooperating in specific cases Section 58-66: Transition from childhood | Well led | Partnerships and communities - We understand our duty to collaborate and work in partnership, so our services work seamlessly for people. We share information and learning with partners, collaborating for improvement. ✓ I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me. ✓ Leaders work proactively to support staff and collaborate with partners to deliver safe, integrated, person-centred and sustainable care and to reduce inequalities. |

Appendix A - Draft CQC Quality & Assurance Framework

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| <p>Theme 3 How Local Authorities ensure safety within the system</p> | <p>Sections 42-44 Section 1: Well-being principle Sections 6-7: Co-operation Section 48: Provider Failure Section 58-66: Transition from childhood</p> | <p>Safe</p> | <p>Safeguarding - We work with people to understand what being safe means to them and work with them as well as our partners on the best way to achieve this. We concentrate on improving people's lives while protecting their right to live in safety, free from bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, avoidable harm and neglect, and we make sure we share concerns quickly and appropriately.</p> <p>Safe systems, pathways and transitions - We work with people and our partners to establish and maintain safe systems of care in which safety is managed, monitored and assured. We ensure continuity of care, including when people move between different services.</p> <p>✓ When I move between services, settings or areas, there is a plan for what happens next and who will do what, and all the practical arrangements are in place.</p> <p>✓ I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage any risks.</p> |
| <p>Theme 4 Leadership capability within Local Authorities</p> | <p>Delivery of all Care Act duties is underpinned by capable and compassionate leadership.</p> | <p>Well led</p> | <p>Capable, compassionate and inclusive leaders - We have inclusive leaders at all levels who understand the context in which we deliver care, treatment and support and, embody the culture and values of their workforce and organisation. They have the skills, knowledge, experience and credibility to lead effectively and do so with integrity, openness and honesty.</p> <p>Learning, improvement and innovation - We focus on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across our organisation and the local system. We encourage creative ways of delivering equality of experience, outcome and quality of life for people. We actively contribute to safe, effective practice and research.</p> |