



**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 25 June 2024

**Subject:** ASC Self-assessment for inspection: Improvement Plan

**Report by:** Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Social Services

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Matthew Winnington, Community Wellbeing, Health & Care

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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### 1. Purpose of report

This report follows the report of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to Cabinet, which presented the Adult Social Care, (ASC) self-assessment (Appendix 1) setting out how well ASC was meeting its statutory duties and responsibilities under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014<sup>1</sup>. Cabinet requested the improvement plan drafted as a result of the self-assessment presented in March 2024.

### 2. Recommendations

Cabinet to:  
Endorse the improvement plan.

### 3. Background

The Health and Care Act 2022<sup>2</sup> gave the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and social care in England, a new responsibility to independently assess care in a local area; this responsibility applies to assessments of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and Local Authorities, (LA).

On 8 December 2023, government approval was given to publish the Local Authority assessment guidance, this included the framework CQC will use to assess how well Local Authorities are performing against their duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 and signalled the start of formal assessment. Local Authorities' adult social care responsibilities have not been subject to formal assessment for over 14 years.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/31/contents/enacted>



All 153 Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs) will be inspected between December 2023 and December 2025; to date 27 local authorities have been contacted by CQC to start assessment activity, with the first three reports published on 17 May, each with a rating of 'Good'.

### **The Improvement Plan**

As a Directorate a decision was taken to incorporate the improvements identified within our self-assessment into our 2024/25 Business Plan (Appendix 2), meaning we would have a single plan aligned to our strategy.

Appendix 2 includes our 'Strategy on a Page' which set out our vision, the outcomes we will work towards, the activity to deliver, our values and the underpinning approach. The activity to deliver improvement (our improvement plan) is captured in 'our activity' which is broken into projects and activities. Each project or activity is supported by a more detailed plan, these have not been included in the report given the level of detail they contain.

### **Our Activity (the improvement plan)**

Deliverables to support improvement have been grouped under nine headings:

- Developing our strength based approach
- Improve delivery of our social care statutory functions
- Develop our engagement
- Develop and embed our reablement offer and pathway
- Progress work on our commissioning
- Our workforce
- Improve our digital capability and capacity
- Manage our finances, budgets and savings
- Our carers

Each heading is further broken down into areas of focus, what we are going to do and the outcome of the change. For example:

Focus:

Improve delivery of our social care statutory functions

Summary:

The delivery of social care statutory functions involves the implementation of legal obligations and responsibilities outlined in legislation concerning the provision of social care services.

The delivery of social care statutory functions involves fulfilling legal obligations to provide appropriate and effective support to individuals in need of social care services, while upholding their rights and promoting their well-being and independence.



Development area:  
Assessment, review and care plans

What we are going to do:

- Development and implementation of a new care and support plan and carers support plan
- Redesign and implementation of new Care Act 2014 assessment documentation.
- Development and Implementation of new Care Act 2014 review documentation.
- Development and implementation of associated practice guidance and training.

Outcomes:

- Improved Care Act recording compliance.
- Tools that support embedding of Strength Based Practice

## **Progress**

As a Directorate we have started to progress work to deliver improvements, including:

- the three workstreams of Practice, Process and Culture under phase two of the Strength Based Practice programme of work;
- work with the Engagement team to map our communities, groups, stakeholders etc in a single place before we move to developing an Engagement Strategy and 'toolkit' to support consistent and meaningful engagement across the Directorate;
- appointment to the Commissioning Lead for Adults Care and Support. The post-holder leads on a number of areas including an accommodation strategy and micro commissioning, with the aim of increasing the number of micro providers and solutions available to give people more choice, control and creativity over how their care needs can be met, increasing the opportunity for more independence through the use of a direct payment.

## **Resource**

The need to prioritise managing resources over time has impacted on ASC as with all Council services and, as reported in March, the Council has previously identified some additional resource to support data analysis.

The improvement plan has identified some gaps in capacity to deliver the plan and support the business to continue to function well, minimise waste and provide clarity on how we work and give direction to staff. One such area is policy and service development, there is a deficit in guidance supporting best practice recommended by lead professionals such as the Principal Social Worker (PSW) and Principal Occupational Therapist (POT). Practice guidance is key to support/evidence good governance and shape and drive consistent practice.



As officers work through the improvement plan, required work is being prioritised against existing capacity, in order to understand if further resource is needed or where work can be deferred. It is of note that where Local Authorities have had a low inspection rating, the costs associated with this rating and improving the rating are significant.

**4. Reasons for Recommendations**

The recommendations are being made to:

- i. be transparent and accountable for the delivery of improvements.
- ii. ensure Cabinet are appraised of the improvement plan and aware of what the plan aims to deliver
- iii. highlight that additional resource may be needed in the short and long term to deliver and sustain improvement

**5. Integrated impact assessment**

The self-assessment responds to new legislation and regulation to inspect adult services under Part 1 of the Care Act, with relevant impact assessments being undertaken by the regulator. The improvement plan responds to the self-assessment.

**6. Legal implications**

Legal implications would be as a consequence of being scored 1 for any of the (9) Quality Statements by CQC. This would result in CQC referring this fact and evidence to the Secretary of State, who would then exercise judgement over the level of intervention, under the Intervention Framework published by the Department for Health & Social Care in 2023<sup>3</sup>.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

The service is expected to deliver as per its authorised cash limit, if implementation of the improvement plan requires additional resources then the Director of ASC will need to raise this requirement with the S151 Officer in order to agree mitigating actions before any expenditure is committed.

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Signed by:

Andy Biddle, Director of Adult Care

**Appendices:**

- 1. ASC Self-Assessment 2024
- 2. ASC Business Plan

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<sup>3</sup> [Adult social care intervention framework for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)



**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: