

Preparing for CQC Assessment in Trafford

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Overview of presentation

1. Overview of CQC Assurance Framework
2. Update on CQC pilots and roll out of inspections
3. Trafford LGA Peer Challenge process and findings
4. Post Peer Challenge activity – immediate actions and activity
5. Further planned activity for *Improving Lives Everyday* through a revised approach for Adult Social Care including CQC Assurance readiness

Part 1

Overview of CQC Assurance Framework

Overview of CQC Assessment Framework

- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) have a new responsibility to independently assess how local authorities are delivering their Care Act functions
- CQC assessment approach has been designed in partnership with a range of stakeholders and people who use health and social care services
- CQC will use a new single assessment framework to assess local authorities, using a subset of 9 quality statements focused across four themes:
 - Working with people
 - Providing support
 - Ensuring safety
 - Leadership

CQC Assessment Framework: Four Themes

Working with People: assessing needs, care planning and review, direct payments, charging, supporting people to live healthier lives, prevention, wellbeing, information and advice			Providing Support: shaping, commissioning, workforce capacity and capability, integration and partnership working	
Assessing Needs	Supporting people to live healthier lives	Equity in experiences and outcomes	Care provision, integration and continuity	Partnerships and communities
<p>We maximise the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them.</p>	<p>We support people to manage their health and wellbeing so they can maximise their independence, choice and control. We support them to live healthier lives, and where possible reduce their future needs for care and support.</p>	<p>We actively seek out and listen to information about people who are most likely to experience inequality in experience or outcomes. We tailor the care, support and treatment in response to this</p>	<p>We understand the diverse health and care needs of people and our local communities, so care is joined-up, flexible and supports choice and continuity.</p>	<p>We understand our duty to collaborate and work in partnership, so our services work seamlessly for people. We share information and learning with partners and collaborate for improvement</p>
Ensuring Safety: safeguarding enquiries, reviews, Safeguarding Adults Board, safe systems, pathways and continuity of care			Leadership: culture, strategic planning, learning, improvement, innovation, governance, management and sustainability	
Safe systems, pathways and transitions	Safeguarding		Governance, management and sustainability	Learning, improvement and innovation
<p>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>We work with people to understand what being safe means to 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. We make sure we share concerns quickly and appropriately.</p>		<p>We have clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance. We use these to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. We act on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and we share this securely with others when appropriate.</p>	<p>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>

Single CQC Assurance Framework

- Integration & Innovation Policy Paper, February 2021: introduction of a new assurance framework for ASC & ICS, confirmed in Health & Care Act 2022
- CQC acquire a new duty to independently review and assess how Local Authorities are delivering their Care Act Part 1 duties
- Focus on legislative framework; meeting statutory responsibilities as per the Care Act 2014
- Single assessment framework, with ratings
- All Local Authorities to be assessed in an initial formal assessment period of 24 months
- 5 pilots run over summer 2023, now rolling out to first formal assessments
- On-site work due to commence February 2024 in 3 announced areas (all in the South of England)
- Ongoing assessment throughout year, themes reported in State of Care report

Our framework will assess providers, local authorities and integrated care systems with a consistent set of key themes, from registration through to ongoing assessment

Aligned with "I" statements, based on what people expect and need, to bring these questions to life and as a basis for gathering structured feedback

Expressed as "We" statements; the standards against which we hold providers, LAs and ICSs to account

People's experience, feedback from staff and leaders, feedback from partners, observation, processes, outcomes

Data and information specific to the scope of assessment, delivery model or population group



Diagram taken from CQC. For more information on the single assessment framework see [Single assessment framework - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk)

CQC Assurance Process

Process

Preparation

- Self-Assessment
- Improvement Planning
- Staff Engagement

Getting 'the call'

- 8-10 week in advance of on-site arrival
- PCH support
- Internal communications

Local Authority Information Return

- Required between 1 and 3 weeks
- Set of approx. 50 documents
- Self-assessment
- Case list for case tracking (list of 50 from which they will choose 6 + 4)

Visit

- Around 3 days onsite
- Speaking to: PSW, DASS, Lead Member, CEx, frontline staff
- The level of contact the CQC chooses to have with senior managers is at their discretion!

Part 2

Update on CQC pilots and roll out of inspections

Development of the CQC assessment approach

CQC took a phased approach to introducing the assessments to give an opportunity to:

- Test & Learn – Manchester and Hampshire in summer 2022
- Pilots – Lincolnshire, Nottingham City, Birmingham City, North Lincolnshire, and Suffolk in summer/autumn 2023
- Pilot Evaluation
- State of Care 2022/23 published October 2023

CQC Pilots

The 5 pilot assessments conducted over the summer of 2023 offered the opportunity to:

- Test, refine and further develop their approach through pilot assessments
- Gather information to help develop their understanding of performance across local authorities
- Establish a starting point to use as the basis for future assessments
- Build relationships within each of the areas

Pilot evaluation

CQC have advised that headline findings from their evaluation indicate that their core approach is right as they found that:

- The quality statements at the centre of the assessments were broadly right and what Local Authorities expected
- Methods for assessment were broadly effective to provide the evidence to make a judgement on how well Local Authorities are discharging their duties against the Care Act

The evaluation helped to identify key areas where CQC can refine and define their operational tools and processes to ensure that the approach is efficient for both CQC assessment teams and Local Authorities. These include:

1. How to prepare Local Authorities for the assessments and what they can expect
2. The Local Authority Information Return and accompanying guidance
3. The role of self-assessment in baselining Local Authorities
4. The use of different roles in the assessment teams, including the contribution of experts by experience, specialist advisors and executive reviewers
5. The methods for collecting and understanding people's experiences and their health and care journeys

Themes from the pilots

CQC identified the following themes from the pilots:

- Integrated working has enabled pilot Local Authorities to address challenges in hospital discharge
- Waiting lists for assessments existed mainly due to lack of capacity in the social work assessment workforce, but LAs were managing this by prioritising risk
- Partnership working was key for improving outcomes for people
- Transition pathways from children to adult services did not always work well
- More work is needed for Local Authorities to understand how to reach people whose voices are seldom heard
- Social care workforce capacity issues persist, and Local Authorities are using a range of incentives to address recruitment and retention issues, as well as supporting the professional development of the workforce to meet local needs
- Overall, Local Authorities had developed learning cultures to help them identify where things were not working well and take steps to improve

Part 3

Trafford LGA Peer Challenge process and findings

Trafford Peer Challenge 26-28 September 2023

- Opportunity for mock inspection/dry run
- Facilitated by the Local Government Association (LGA)
- Review team of 7 people from outside the Greater Manchester area
- Engagement sessions with people with lived experience and case file audits conducted 12 & 13 September 2023
- Self-assessment and associated documents completed as evidence
- Series of focussed sessions with staff and partners
- Focus on specific areas of Care Act 2014 duties
- Final report agreed 13 December 2023

LGA Peer Challenge Summary

- The Peer Challenge was helpful in terms of ratifying the content of the self-assessment document and outlining required future tasks
- The objective approach has helped shape priorities and provided focus on where improvements can be made, including in some areas that are performing reasonably well
- The learning experience from a near inspection process was helpful in preparing for the actual event
- Embedding the *Improving Lives Everyday* programme will strengthen the prevention offer and improve the outcomes for people receiving care and support in Trafford

Peer Challenge findings

Theme 1: Working with People

Strengths

- There is confidence that the borough wide teams can deliver the Let's Talk model, though as referenced in the self-assessment this needs to be consistently applied to the neighbourhood teams
- The Business Unit is highly valued as a support to allow social work staff to focus on working with people, rather than administrative matters
- There were many references to good working partnerships with the voluntary sector, including the Carers' Centre, though the LGA felt more examples could have been provided in the self-assessment to evidence this
- Work relating to EDI is progressing with corporate staff EDI networks, champions, training offer and an ASC working group. There is an awareness of the need to do more to understand the data, the issues and barriers to equity of access and experience for people needing support
- Data is available demonstrating waiting lists and good inroads have been made in reducing waits for assessments. There is awareness that there is still more to do
- The Direct Payments support service is offering positive support to Direct Payment recipients, is focussed on meeting outcomes, and has clear links with the Social Care teams
- Community Link workers are valued by social work teams to support the offer of strength-based practice
- The self-assessment gives some helpful evidence of the impact on the sensory digital offer for people
- Good case stories including outcomes over hospital discharges
- Data shows that Ascot House is successful in helping people return to their own homes after a hospital stay
- Staff feel pride about the work they do and welcome the good integrated working to support hospital discharge

Considerations

- There were some areas identified as strengths where only limited evidence was provided in the self-assessment or in sessions to showcase what this means for Trafford residents. For example, feedback and evaluation systems about the quality of processes to work with people and the impact of VCFSE support on peoples' lives
- Some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment may be better linked to other themes. For example, the Trafford Learning Academy and Staff Wellbeing might fit better under the Leadership theme
- There could be a stronger and more effective pathway at the front door. For example, it may make sense to triage more of the requests for support with a Let's Talk conversation one at earlier stage before they are passed to a social worker
- There are a range of prevention offers though that would benefit from a coherent whole system approach
 - Community Link workers do not always have capacity to take new work
 - The equipment and adaptations offer has long wait times except for hospital discharge, and assessments are needed for simple services
 - There is no local authority Occupational Therapy capacity which may limit efforts to support independence
- To develop strong practice so that front line practitioners feel connected and supported
 - As identified in the self-assessment, the Principal Social Worker needs more clarity around the identity of the role and to dedicate more time to be visible in the role rather than providing operational support
 - Increase the level of practice audits
- The self-assessment identified the need to increase assurance regarding mental health services provided under the existing s.75 agreement with Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH).

Peer Challenge findings

Theme 2: Providing Support

Strengths

- Providers were positive about relationships with the Council. Providers were not raising issues over fees in interviews, possibly because of investment in the Real Living Wage
- Positive working relationships between commissioners and assessors to address immediate tactical requirements for support. This included:
 - Hospital discharges
 - Use of providers as trusted assessors in supported living
 - Commissioning specialist provision for people with complex needs
 - Responding to emerging pressures
- Day to day working relationships with providers is well resourced with contract officer quality visits and opportunities for direct support which providers welcome
- Data from Greater Manchester and the North-West region is used to complement the understanding of quality
- Trafford has a high percentage of Good and Outstanding CQC rated provision
- There are innovative providers, for example in Learning Disability provision, developing solutions such as Good Neighbours, and the Council works collaboratively with providers on change/improvement
- The Trafford care market can respond to requests for support, and there are relatively low numbers waiting for support, except for nursing care. The Council is working on how to address this shortage
- There is good evidence regarding provision of integrated support, particularly with the NHS and the Trafford Local Care Organisation. This includes a housing offer, for example extra care step down units
- Provider Forums have been restarted, after pausing during the Covid pandemic

Considerations

- Commissioning feels more tactical than strategic, though it is noted that there is activity to address this including development of a Market Position Statement though:
 - Providers were not aware of the Adult Social Care vision
 - Ambitions around autism support may need to look more broadly than accommodation needs
 - The articulation of needs requires development
 - Setting out the direction for alternatives to traditional support models would help to shape the Trafford market
- The impact that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy through partnership working has on the support available to residents could have been better evidenced
- The Carers offer could be much more robust. It relies heavily on the Carers Centre to provide support and to deliver the strategy. Current support appears to be limited
- Direct Payments could be more useful if there was more flexibility given

Peer Challenge findings

Theme 3: Ensuring Safety

Strengths

- The focus on safeguarding with providers is significant, with the specialist offer from the Safeguarding Hub
- The Safeguarding Hub supports multi-agency working, including Police
- Trafford benchmarks above average in the North-West for resolution of risks
- Hospital Discharge arrangements are strong on multi-disciplinary and co-ordinated working, with motivated and committed staff. There were good stories about the experience for people and their families, including when discharges were not initially successful
- The numbers on Pathway 3 for discharge (considered by hospitals to be likely to need long term residential care) seem high at over 30%. Based on the pilot, the new Rapid MDT assessment in care homes will hopefully reduce the numbers remaining in long term after a period of Discharge to Assess
- Domestic Abuse response is strong. There is a determination to listen to the voice of victims with a good focus on prevention

Considerations

- There is work to do to ensure that the Council consistently applies thresholds for concerns and that safeguarding enquiries are working well.
- The Council should consider the right balance in skills and resources across all adult teams to ensure concerns and enquiries can be responded to in a timely and person-centred way.
- Ensure that Making Safeguarding Personal is embedded into practice
- There are ambitions to improve transitions and Preparing for Adulthood, with encouraging plans. Progress and impact need to be tracked and measured. Future needs analysis and service development will be essential
- The self-assessment would benefit from clearer articulation of the high risk, escalation and complex case decision-making processes
- There is a need to complete the actions referenced in the self-assessment around the Emergency Duty Team offer and the areas of improvement

Peer Challenge findings

Theme 4: Leadership

Strengths

- Within Trafford there are a range of governance boards and groups to oversee integrated working, with senior level engagement and commitment
- Political and corporate leadership seems strong
- There is a vision at corporate level (EPIC) and directorate level (Improving Lives Every Day)
- There is a strong sense of work on partnerships, neighbourhoods and provider relationships
- Where issues have been identified, then action has been taken, for example to address retention and recruitment issues for social workers with a market supplement being offered
- The Trafford Learning Academy has offered career development and apprenticeship opportunities
- The SWAY communications are good developments
- Adult Social Care in Trafford is relatively financially stable, with pressures managed to date
- Examples of innovation in the evidence library, which came from staff, for example the Business Unit and the Control Room

Considerations

- No golden thread of the vision and strategy, with clear understanding evident throughout the teams
- Examples of tangible differences that the integrated governance is making and arrangements for risk sharing would strengthen the self-assessment
- Whilst there is strong governance for the integration for health and social care more broadly, the mental health integration governance needs to be strengthened
- There has been a reliance on initiatives using short term government funding which makes longer-term planning and staff retention more difficult
- There is self-awareness of the need and plans are in place to improve the use of data and intelligence
 - More can be done to enable operational teams to understand and use their own data and performance
 - Data and intelligence could be used more to inform longer-term strategic commissioning plans
- Professional leadership of social care practitioners could be strengthened
- Written strategies in the evidence file need to be backed up with delivery plans determining changes that will be incremental and transformational

Case File Audit Findings – Strengths and Considerations

- There was evidence of some good practice, but it was variable
- Access to support was timely
- There were some files where it was clear that outcomes had been agreed with the person, but this was not consistently applied
- Mental Capacity Act considerations were inconsistent
- Least restrictive approaches were not easily apparent
- Neighbourhood team safeguarding could be stronger on Making Safeguarding Personal

Part 4

Post Peer Challenge activity: immediate actions and activity

Immediate response to Peer Review findings

- Partner engagement and feedback provided on the LGA Peer Challenge findings to further strengthen *Improving Lives Everyday* activity to improve outcomes and to ensure alignment with partner's strategic objectives
- Support for the wider workforce, further developments of the workforce strategy and a review of Principal Social Worker role has commenced
- Partners in Care and Health briefing sessions to support front-line staff preparation for CQC inspection conducted mid-January 2024
- The LGA has funded Partners in Care and Health to provide independent support for strategic commissioning activity and to further strengthen the safeguarding offer
- Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (TSSP) Board Manager appointed
- Priority areas of improvement identified in a plan (inter-dependencies identified)
- Development of key data dashboards
- Agreement to establish an *Improving Lives Everyday* Development Board with independent chair

Part 5

Further planned activity for *Improving Lives Everyday* through a revised approach for Adult Social Care including CQC Assurance readiness

Planned activity

Programme Management support providing extra capacity and dedicated focus on *Improving Lives Everyday* commenced January 2024 to develop:

- Full Programme Plan underpinned by a new governance framework with phased activity
- Terms of Reference for the *Improving Lives Everyday* Development Board
- Governance flow chart
- Templates for flash reports, detailed business reports and presentations for the Board
- Risk register linked to the Programme Plan

Planned activity

- Monthly Development Board to be chaired by an independent person (currently under recruitment for February 2023)
- Self-assessment and evidence base to be refreshed on a quarterly cycle
- Alignment of activity with GMMH Trafford improvement plan to ensure social work elements are incorporated
- Further face to face engagement with Adult Social Care staff planned for February 2024
- Full communications strategy for engagement with all stakeholders drafted for sign-off at monthly board

Planned activity

- Development of the Adults & Wellbeing Directorate Vision, Target Operating Model (TOM) and Outcomes Framework - activity has commenced on this, but this needs to ultimately sit above the Programme Plan for CQC Assurance
- Focus must be on improving the outcomes of Trafford residents through more effective service delivery, not solely on passing inspection. If we get the offer right, then the inspection outcome should reflect this

Resources

1. CQC [evaluation report](#) of the pilot assessment process

2. CQC [local authority information return](#)

3. CQC [Local authority assessment framework](#)

4. LGA Top Tips for CQC Assurance

[Top tips for CQC assurance preparation | Local Government Association](#)

5. SCIE's website webinar, [Skills for Care: New CQC Inspection Process](#)