

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny (Adult Social Care and Health)	Date of Meeting:	3 rd January 2023
Subject:	Local Government Association Peer Review Adult Social Care		
Report of:	Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Place Director	Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Portfolio:	Adult Social Care		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report presents to Committee the findings of the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review into Adult Social Care in Sefton. For assurance it also provides details of the actions being taken following the review.

The Executive Director of Adult Social Care with the approval from the Cabinet Member and Chief Executive invited the LGA to complete a review of the service ahead of the arrival of the Care Quality Commission's assurance inspections which could be as early as 2023.

The Peer Review was conducted in July 2022 by colleagues from the Local Government Association (LGA), Northwest Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NW ADASS) with senior officers from other participating local authorities. The Peer Review team was led by Cath Roff Director of Adult Social Services from Leeds City Council and was consisted of colleagues from Lancashire, Leeds, Tameside, Waltham Forest, and Wigan councils. Representatives from the LGA also formed part of the challenge tea., The Peer Review mirrored the scope of the new assurance approach which will be implemented by the Care Quality Commission into all Councils with Adult Social Care responsibilities.

Following the review, a detailed improvement plan has been developed to address the areas identified for strengthening by the Peer Review Team and this is detailed within appendix 1. It is proposed that progress against this plan is provided to Committee on a regular basis, with ongoing monitoring being undertaken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Note the content of this report and the full LGA Peer Review.
2. Review the improvement plan and provide feedback.
3. Confirm agreement that the ongoing monitoring of the will be through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health), the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health
4. Provide recommendation on the desired regularity of updates to Committees on progress within the plan to enable robust assurance on progress.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Peer Review process forms part of the sector led improvement programme which is available to Adult Social Care Services in the North West. It was commissioned as part of Sefton's preparation for the implementation of the National Assurance framework and inspection regime which is due to be implemented in April 2023. Sefton being the first local authority in the Northwest to take advantage of this peer review programme.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Not applicable.

(B) Capital Costs

Not applicable.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

Preparation for Inspection does require additional resource however for the purpose of this report there is no specific ask.

Legal Implications:

None
Equality Implications:
Opportunities for strengthening Adult Social Care’s focus on the Inclusivity Agenda are identified within the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	
Have a neutral impact	YES
Have a negative impact	
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	NO

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: peer review provides an independent review on adult social care services provided for those who are most vulnerable within the borough.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: supporting communities and ensuring the adoption of a strength-based approach is a key aspect of the review.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Adult Social Care is responsible for delivering a number of core statutory duties.
Place – leadership and influencer: proposals set out the road map for greater local control driven by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
Drivers of change and reform: the Peer Review process is a key part of the regional sector led improvement programme and is an important part of planning for inspection.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: a key aspect of the review focused on market sustainability and maintaining local community services. Developing workforce strategies is also a key part of the review.
Greater income for social investment: effective management of demand and use of resource will ensure both sustainability and opportunities for reinvestment.
Cleaner Greener: integrated services allow a greater focus on wider determinants of Health and promote independence for local residents.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director Corporate Resources & Customer Services (FD 7053/22) and the Chief Legal & Democratic Officer (LD 5253/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Board.

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Background Papers:

The LGA Peer Review Report can be viewed at the following link:

<https://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/documents/s113196/SeftonCouncilAdultSocialCarePreparationforAssurancePeerChallengeReportJuly2022.docx.pdf>

The full report will also be published on the Local Government Association's website once Council's Cabinet has been presented with the detailed findings.

1. Background

In April 2022, the Health and Care Act received Royal Assent and introduced the requirement for a new national assurance framework for Adult Social Care. From April 2023 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will independently review and assess all Local Authority Adult Social Care Services. As part of its preparation for assurance Adult Social Care asked for a Peer Review of its services.

A "Peer Review" is part of the current Sector Led Improvement offer provided by the North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NW ADASS) and the Local Government Association (LGA). It is not an inspection but provides a "critical friend" and is undertaken by colleagues from other Local Authorities. Sefton Council was the first authority to undertake the process as preparation for the implementation of the assessment process in 2023.

2. Local Context

Adult Social Care with Sefton is responsible for the discharge of a range of statutory duties to support and protect adults with care and support needs. This includes advice and information, assessments of need, safeguarding and the provision of support services for those with eligible needs. During 2021/22, Adult Social Care provided support to over seven thousand individuals and carers. During the last 12 months, the service received over twenty-one thousand referrals. The annual gross budget for Adult Social Care is circa £160m. As with all other Adult Social Services across the country, Sefton has continued to face challenges due to increased levels of demand, acuity, workforce shortages and market sustainability.

The previous inspection regime for Adult Social Services ceased in 2010 and was replaced by a sector led improvement programme. The new regime and requirements for a return to a national assurance regime have been heavily influenced by the COVID pandemic and a desire by the Department of Health and Social Care to have greater visibility of performance and data; similar to that provided by the NHS.

This report outlines Sefton's preparation for the newly planned inspection of Adult Social Care by the CQC through an LGA Peer Review of its current services and practice.

3. Overview of the Review

Sefton Council through its officers invited the Local Government Association to undertake an Adult Social Care Preparation for Assurance Peer Challenge at the Council and with strategic partners from across Sefton including people with lived experience of Adult Social Care.

The work was commissioned by Deborah Butcher, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health (DASS) and Cheshire and Merseyside NHS Place Director. The purpose was to seek an external view on the readiness of the Adult Social Care Directorate for the arrival of the Care Quality Commission's Assurance inspections which could be as early as 2023 and a view on how the Council is able to deliver value for money, quality, effectiveness, and the most personal outcome focused offer for local people.

The members of the peer challenge team were:

- **Cath Roff**, Director of Adults and Health, Leeds City Council
- **Councillor Khevyn Limbajee**, Cabinet Member for Adult Services (2018 – 2022), Cabinet Member Community Safety London Borough of Waltham Forest
- **Samantha Baron**, Director of Quality and Improvement and Principal Social Worker, Lancashire County Council
- **Tracey Harrison**, Assistant Director, Adults, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- **Niamh Kearney**, Service Manager, Performance and Practice, Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
- **Hazel Summers**, Northwest Care and Health Improvement Adviser, Care and Health Improvement Programme, Local Government Association
- **Marcus Coulson**, Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

The Peer Review was conducted between the 5th – 7th July 2022. The Team was led by the Director of Adults and Health at Leeds City Council. Dedicated programme support was provided by the LGA.

Prior to being on-site peer team members met seven people with a lived experience, five carers and a day centre manager and considered fifteen case files from across the areas of adult social care. The Peer team read at least 189 documents including a self-assessment / position statement. Throughout the review the team had more than thirty-seven meetings with at least sixty-four different people from adult social care, health, the Community Voluntary and Faith Sector and other partners. The peer challenge team have spent over 196 hours with Sefton Council and its documentation, the equivalent of twenty-eight working days

The framework the Peer team used was that of the Care Quality Commission and their proposed four Domains of Assurance they will be using for the up-coming Adult Social Care inspection regime:

Care Quality Commission Adult Social Care Assurance four Domains	
Working with People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing needs • Supporting people to live healthier lives 	Providing Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care provision, integration, and continuity • Partnerships and communities • Workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion
Ensuring Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe systems, pathways, and transitions • Safeguarding 	Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Learning, improvement, and innovation • Capable, compassionate, and inclusive leaders

4. Findings from the Review

The findings contained within the full report details areas of strength under each domain and suggested areas for focus and improvement. Overall, the review was received as positive, with recognition that the areas of focus will be utilised to further improve and transform services.

The following section is lifted from the full LGA report into Sefton Adult Social Care.

4.1. Working with People

The peer team met a wide range of staff and commented that the staff are the Directorate's greatest asset. The feedback was that staff in Adult Social Care in Sefton are positive and well-motivated. There is an explicit strategy focusing on prevention and early intervention to help people live healthier lives. This was backed up by a revised front door with a focus on advice, information, and signposting. There is also a plan to have investment in the Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector and pathways and signposting resource for those who are not yet eligible for services under the Care Act. The directorate will be creating a 0-25 integrated service with Children's Social Care as a dedicated and specialist resource for this cohort of service users and building on the current transitions to adulthood approach already embedded.

Sefton Council has a market position statement in place that explores market shaping and the work needed to develop the future market requirements. The Directorate should consider updating the directory to make it accessible online.

4.2. Providing Support

There are good relationships with providers and strategic forums are in place to work together. There are strong partnerships with the NHS. The peer team felt they were mature and had strengthened during Covid. The DASS being appointed as the new NHS Place Director for Sefton in the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board is a real opportunity.

The Place-based approach by Sefton Council working in communities is a real strength and there are plans for it to be rolled out. There is also an opportunity with Place based working and investment in the Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector to identify and embed strengths-based practice across all areas the Directorates strategic objectives and the shift to prevention.

Public Health spending is aligned to tackling inequalities with wide recognition of universal proportionalism to tackle the health of the poorest fastest and a recognition that there is more to do. Cheshire and Merseyside are a Marmot region, with Sefton being one of nine Places making up the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System supporting the work of the Marmot team. This is based on the Marmot Review into health inequalities in England (2010) which proposes an evidence-based strategy to address the social determinants of health conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and which can lead to health inequalities

4.3 Ensuring Safety

There is a robust model for transitions and the Peer team heard evidence of a good system for identifying people who are transitioning into adulthood and who have complex needs. There is active take up by young people of direct payments to buy the right support. The Peer team recommended the development of a wider choice for young people transitioning to Adult Social Care especially around pathways into work and supported employment. There would appear to be an opportunity to create a "Promoting Independence" service for young people as they come into adulthood.

The Directorate has a quality assurance team with a focus on care home quality improvements, however, due to challenges in the market the team are largely focussed on reactive intervention. The Peer team recommended a move away to a more proactive approach. The communication between commissioning and contracts colleagues could

be stronger and bringing commissioning into the Directorate is an opportunity to strengthen those links.

The engagement between partners at a strategic level in the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is strong.

4.4. Leadership

The Peer team reflected on the political leadership and commented that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care is an asset to the Adult Social Care Directorate, being knowledgeable and experienced, providing political direction and oversight. There is strong and experienced political leadership by the ruling party and consensus in the area of Adult Social Care and Health between the different political parties.

There is a clear separation between the executive and scrutiny and there is a clear narrative from the political leadership over their direction and what is expected of them from the Care Quality Commission.

There was evidence to suggest there is clear engagement with the other partners across the newly formed Integrated Care System and it was good to see adult social care represented on the Integrated Care Board.

The Chief Executive of Sefton Council is fully sighted on adult social care and as a Council prioritises the work supporting vulnerable people as per the Council vision.

Both the Executive Director of Adult Social Care (statutory DASS) and the Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and the leadership team are very experienced which they demonstrated throughout this process and from talking with frontline staff, the senior and middle managers in adult social care are seen as approachable and responsive. They described the culture as positive and supportive with clear leadership. There is stability in the management structure retaining organisational knowledge and understanding.

4.5 Areas of focus and challenge

Whilst the review identified many areas of good practice, the LGA team provided clear feedback on areas for consideration and improvement. A number of these areas have been referenced in the summary sections above. Other areas are also detailed below, and a full plan has been developed to address these.

- Continue to focus on recovery post covid and managing increased number of referrals and people awaiting assessment and support – it is recognised that Sefton is not alone in this position, and it is a challenge currently being faced by most Local Authorities.
- Ensuring adequate workforce capacity and leadership to manage the scale and requirement of transformation within the service, which is driven by national reform.
- Development of a departmental plan given the breadth of demands and activity within the service.
- Continue to focus on market sustainability increasing availability of domiciliary care and reablement services, reducing variation of offer.

- Explore opportunities for integration approach to access social care at the front door, workforce strategy and specialist learning disability teams.
- Explore opportunities to reset the “strength- based approach” for social work and develop the community service offer
- Greater focus and development of the neurodiversity agenda

5. Action taken post review.

Following the completion of the review a comprehensive improvement plan has been developed to address the areas for consideration identified within the report. This improvement plan is contained within Appendix 1. This improvement plan forms a key part of the services' preparation for inspection. The Peer Review Improvement plan has been developed in conjunction with a number of other work programmes which have been identified following a review of the latest guidance provided by CQC detailing the key lines of enquiry for the national assurance framework.

Progress of the improvement plan will be overseen by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Executive Director Adult Social Care and Health. It is proposed that regular updates are provided to the Committee for scrutiny and assurance.