

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care) - 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024</b>		
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Period of Report</b>
Paul Cummins	Adult Social Care	January – February 2024

## **1. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) Assurance Update for Adult Social Care**

As per the last report, Sefton Adult Social Care (ASC) has held additional workshops with individuals, carers, partner organisations and staff in order to share the outcome of its Part 1 Self-Assessment, that concluded in August 2023.

Between November and December 2023, the service engaged with over 140 health, care, and support partners, 100 staff and 10 people with lived experience, and it tested the priority areas that came from the Part 1 Self-Assessment, to assure that they were right and could be further challenged, if wrong.

Over January and February 2024, ASC has been looking at the Part 1 Self-Assessment and has been putting in place its operational assurance plans and quality frameworks to ensure they are robust against the areas that further strengthen its self-assessment.

ASC continues to attend the North West ADASS regional forums which share learning from the five pilots that concluded in November 2023, and is supporting a new Cheshire and Merseyside ADASS CQC Assurance Group. This is focused on looking at the trends across the region, with a view to putting in place local project assurance resources, to continue to support Councils to strengthen their self-assessments.

Going forward, over February and into March, ASC is developing its nine quality assurance statements, and is preparing its CQC Information return pack.

CQC has published details of the three Councils which will be assessed over the next six months. These are:

- West Berkshire County Council
- Hounslow Council in London
- Hertfordshire County Council.

ASC is working with Council colleagues to develop CQC preparatory plans in anticipation of the CQC assessment, covering several key areas including, marketing and communications, HR and learning, Business Performance and Children to Adulthood Transitions.

## **2. Strategic Commissioning**

Key focuses for Adult Social Care Commissioning include the following:

### 2.1 Domiciliary Care

The new Domiciliary care contract has now fully mobilised and includes several block contract arrangements which specifically support hospital discharges, given the current winter pressures.

As a reminder, the Tier 1 Providers which have been successful are as follows:

- Delta for Locality 1 (Southport and Ainsdale areas)
- I Care for Locality 2 (Formby to Bootle areas)
- Warren Care for Locality 3 (Maghull and the east).

ASC has experienced some quality issues, with poor CQC ratings expected for two providers, however, it will, continue to work closely with providers and have contingency plans in place, to ensure all people in need of domiciliary care are getting safe and effective care.

ASC is working with providers to respond to winter pressures, including developing a night sitting service, working closely with domiciliary care providers to ensure they can respond to the most pressurised areas, as quickly as possible, making block booking arrangements, and holding a Winter Pressures Care Home Meeting every two weeks to discuss with the market how it can best support and respond to pressures; this will remain in place until March 2024.

### 2.2 New Directions

ASC continues to work closely with Sefton New Directions, and the outcome of the collaborative review (which was undertaken between ASC and SND) was submitted to January 2024 Cabinet. The report to Cabinet outlines the next steps, which will focus on a twelve-month transformation programme across a number of key services. This programme is currently being developed and will be implemented at pace.

### 2.3 Care Homes

ASC's Winter Care Home Cell is intended to continue until March 2024. ASC continues to meet with care homes in the Sefton Partnership Board monthly, where guidance is delivered and shared by Council officers and Health partners. Equally, the Sefton Partnership Board offers its Providers an opportunity to celebrate successes, share best practice and engage in peer support between care home leaders in a new arrangement, where the first half of the Partnership Board is reserved for care home leaders only, with officers and health colleagues joining for the second half. This arrangement was born out of the recommendations devised by ASC's care home leaders, partners in Health and Council officers at the latest My Home Life England summit (ASC's Care Home peer support programme with City University London) in September 2023.

ASC has just launched the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the Care Settings Grants Programme. Unlike the first three rounds, this next round has been expanded to include Supported Living settings, as well as Residential & Nursing Care Homes. In guidance to Providers, ASC has suggested the fund could be used for projects like Dementia-friendly improvements, digital inclusion, and technological solutions, and, more specifically, improvements to the Wi-Fi capability in care homes to support their

switchover to Digital Shared Care Records. The deadline for submissions is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

## 2.4 2024/25 Fee Setting

ASC has commenced work on formulating potential 2024/25 fee increases, working in partnership with consultants Care Analytics UK Ltd; a consultation with Providers will then commence on the proposals. Formal proposals will be presented to Cabinet in April 2024.

## 2.5 Quality Monitoring

The Quality Assurance Team continue to work with providers across the care home market utilising the recently introduced Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution system (PAMMS). The system enables ASC to understand the quality and effectiveness of services within individual care homes, adopt improvements to raise standards, and compliment existing quality assurance processes. The percentage of good and outstanding care homes in Sefton remains above average, with 91% of care homes rated as good or outstanding. The regional figure is 89%.

Feedback from providers regarding the system is positive and they report finding the formalised on-site approach beneficial, especially as many had not received a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection for several years owing to the Covid pandemic. Many are hoping that the PAMMS will supplement any internal audits they already complete, and also assist in inspection readiness for those services potentially expecting a CQC inspection.

The Quality Assurance Team have conducted nine PAMMS assessments in the last month and have a further three planned. Where intensive support is required, owing to quality concerns, the team provide enhanced support and work with the provider to implement an improvement plan. Two providers are currently receiving this additional support and making improvements.

## 3. Hospital Winter Pressures

As expected, both Hospital Trusts that cover the Sefton Borough, Southport Hospital Trust and Aintree University Hospital have been impacted by Winter pressures. Whilst the systems had prepared for these hospital pressures, the extent of the demand has exceeded expectations, and since the start of December both Trusts have been in and out of Full Capacity Protocol, with Southport close to calling a critical incident. Covid, Flu and Norovirus outbreaks have impacted, causing Trusts to have specific units of beds, but even without these challenges, demand has been exceptionally high, which has caused ambulances to “board” patients outside of Emergency Departments (ED) and for the Trusts to use additional space on corridors and wards.

As always, the Health and Social Care system has rallied to support the Hospital Trusts in Sefton, with additional resources both to prioritise discharges (such as block booked Domiciliary Capacity), and additional operational staff at the front door

## APPENDIX A

(Accident and Emergency), to assist in admission avoidance. There has been a push to implement new ways of working, such as the Care Transfer Hubs, a more integrated approach with system partners to promote a “home first approach” and therefore less reliance on bed-based services. As of 1<sup>st</sup> February, both Trusts are utilising corridor care and escalation areas.

The pressure remains on the Health and Care system to support with additional concerted efforts on reducing ‘stranded patients’ (the individuals who are in hospital who are deemed to have “no criteria to reside”).

### 4. Adult Social Care Budget

Budget monitoring at the end of December showed an improvement since November but remained challenging, with a projected deficit in excess of £4.5m now forecast.

This is primarily due to the increased costs of placements and packages, impacted by above inflationary rises and placement costs above standard rates. Other issues, e.g. additional costs because of a leap year and an extra bank holiday, have also impacted on the service. Adult Social Care continues to deliver against its approved efficiencies programme. In addition, the service will continue to review all reserves and external funding to determine what can be utilised to help mitigate the anticipated deficit. Further one-off mitigations identified to date would reduce the forecast deficit to £2.5m. This figure was in the latest Council Budget Monitoring report presented to Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

The Adult Social Care forecast is subject to a number of assumptions and is based on current client numbers and costs. In previous years, Adult Social Care has benefitted from additional income late in the financial year, e.g. from Government grants or Health contributions, which has helped its outturn position. As mentioned above, these areas will continue to be reviewed to determine what can support the service’s forecast outturn position. Forecasts, assumptions, and mitigating actions will continue to be reviewed and will be reported regularly. Robust monitoring and oversight is in place, with monthly sessions between the Chief Executive, Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health, the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (S151 Officer) and the Assistant Director of Adult Social Care. Regular updates are provided to me, as Cabinet Lead.

### 5. Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and MP Enquiries

In December 2023 and January 2024, ASC received thirteen complaints which was the same number as the previous two months.

Adult Social Care received fifteen MP enquiries in December 2023 and January 2024 with 93% being responded to within, or remaining within, the target timescale of ten working days.

It received two complaints regarding operational practice - for one of these complaints, ASC is awaiting full details of the complaint from the family. The second of these complaints concerned the way in which the Council had responded to a referral. On reflection, whilst the decision was appropriate for Adult Social Care not to progress with a safeguarding enquiry, it acknowledged that it would have been

## **APPENDIX A**

more reassuring for referrer if the Council had explained that the information provided by the referrer would not be progressed by Adult Social Care, however, it had been shared with other professionals who were better placed to take any necessary action to support the individual concerned. Furthermore, ASC believe that it would have been helpful if they had spoken directly with the individual about whom the referral had been made and confirmed with the referrer that this action had been taken.

Two complaints related to Adult Social Care decision-making, and both remain under investigation at this time.

Eight complaints related to the quality of the service provided by Adult Social Care. One complaint has been upheld due to poor communication - this issue was discussed with the staff member concerned and has been raised with the wider social work team. The remaining seven cases are being investigated and remain within timescale for response at this time.

One complaint related to quality of care provided by a residential provider, and ASC is awaiting further instruction from the Ombudsman in relation to this complaint.

It has been pleasing to see that the positive impact of work undertaken by Adult Social Care Staff has been recognised by service users. There was a 28% increase in the number of compliments received about the service provided. There were forty-one compliments received in December 2023 and January 2024.

### **5.1 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

ASC is currently awaiting a draft decision from the Ombudsman in relation to a complaint about funding arrangements.

The Ombudsman determined that another referral it had received was premature, and it referred this to the Council for consideration. ASC has confirmed to the Ombudsman that it does not consider that it would be appropriate to progress the matter as a complaint, at present, as there is an ongoing safeguarding enquiry relating to the substantive issues detailed in the complaint to the Ombudsman. ASC has contacted the complainant in this instance to clarify how the matter will be dealt with and confirmed that they can contact the Council once the safeguarding enquiry has concluded, if there are any outstanding queries.

## **6. Principal Social Worker Update (PSW) - Quality and Practice**

Since the last report, from a practice perspective, the PSW has, in partnership with the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team (DoLs), successfully tested a new audit tool and it is due to go live from 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024. This will assist in checking the quality of practice in this area in a systematic way, identifying both areas for improvement and best practice.

Adult Social Care has now commenced a twelve-month transformation programme working collaboratively with a company called Partners4Change. This programme is very much aimed at improving outcomes for people accessing the service, reducing bureaucracy and enabling practitioners to spend more time with individuals and carers. The innovation sites for this new way of working will go live from March 2024.

## APPENDIX A

The PSW is currently engaged in ensuring the Case Tracking is completed as part of ASC's preparation for assurance by CQC. Case file audits form a major part of this activity, and the requirement is for ASC to identify the records of fifty individuals that CQC will review as part of their assessment process within Sefton.

The period of reregistration for social workers closed on 30th November 2023 and it can be reported that all social workers had completed the process before the cutoff date.

The Employer Standards Health Check, which is run by the Local Government Association, (LGA) is usually released at the end of each year, typically around the same time as the social work registration. The survey was not conducted at the expected time last year and the LGA reported that they hoped this would be ready around the end of January. The PSW has once again opted Sefton ASC into the Health Check and further updates on progress and the findings once completed will be presented to Committee.

### 7. Performance and Key Areas of Focus

#### 7.1 Long-term activity trends

The following highlights ASC's long-term activity trends:

- Overall provision of long-term services to clients have remained stable over the course of the past twelve months. At the end of December there were just over 4,100 open long-term services.
- Service starts for carers have gone up in the last twelve months. On average, ASC had 136 service starts in the last three months, which is up by twenty-two percent from the previous three months.
- Number of contacts received in the past three months decreased by three percentage points compared to previous three months. On average, Sefton ASC is receiving around 2,000 contacts per month.
- The number of assessments undertaken in the latest three-month period decreased by nearly seven percent compared to previous three months. On average, teams are completing 475 assessments per month. This was expected, due to the impact of reduced staff during the Christmas period.
- The total number of reviews undertaken in the last three months was up by three percent from the previous three months. The teams have been working to clear the backlog of overdue reviews, many of which are complex cases requiring much greater time and resource. It is hoped that review numbers begin to increase once the backlog has been dealt with. On average, almost 504 reviews are being completed by the teams each month.
- Number of safeguarding contacts received in the last three months declined by 12 percent compared to previous three-month period. On average, Sefton ASC is receiving around 233 contacts related to safeguarding per month.
- The number of safeguarding referrals and activity in progress remains high at month end. The 346 referrals open at the end of December was around a fifth higher than twelve months ago. All open referrals have been reviewed, are being progressed and all individuals are safe.
- In the last three months, timeliness in handling safeguarding contacts continued to perform well with 94% contacts being resolved within seven

## APPENDIX A

days. 72% of safeguarding referrals were completed within twenty-eight days, which is proportionally, slightly higher than in the previous three month period.

- 97% of safeguarding enquiries saw preferred outcomes met fully or partially and the proportion has been fairly stable over the past twelve months.

The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people as put forward by Central Government. The ASCOF is used both locally and nationally to set priorities for care and support, measure progress, and strengthen transparency and accountability.

### 7.2 Admission into care and reablement

Sefton's rate of admission to care homes for those aged 18-64 (2A1) remains relatively stable but it remains in the bottom quartile for both the North West and England. The rate of admission for over 65s (2A2) continued the downward trajectory, keeping Sefton outside of the bottom quartile for England and outside the top quartile for North West. Just under 70% of Sefton's service users are in 'community based' services (i.e. not in nursing or residential placements); this proportion is low compared to other North West authorities and puts Sefton in the bottom quartile. Developing additional community services including reablement, extra care housing and supported living provision will continue through 2024/25.

The number of people in receipt of reablement in December was down by thirteen percent from the previous month and was below the yearly average, however, Sefton remained out of the bottom quartile in the North West on the number of episodes of reablement or intermediate care for clients aged 65 and over (NW01).

December saw a small decrease for the proportion of older people (65+) still at home ninety-one days after hospital discharge into a reablement service. Despite this, the 96% of clients remaining at home was above the yearly average and put Sefton in the top quartile both in the North West and in England (2B1).

### 7.3 Self-directed support and direct payments:

Provision of services to clients by either self-directed support or direct payments has remained relatively consistent over the last twelve months.

The proportion of carers receiving a direct payment remained fairly stable from the previous month with around 98% of carers receiving a direct payment. In December, Sefton was outside the bottom quartile for England and outside the top quartile for the North West.

### 7.4 Employment

Number of learning-disabled clients going into paid employment remained stable, with around 2.4% of learning-disabled clients being employed. Sefton remained in the bottom quartile in the North West and nationally.

Changes in NHS methodology for indicators concerning clients with mental health services, resulted in Sefton dropping out of the top quartiles clients in employment.

### 7.5 Housing

The proportion of learning-disabled clients who live in their own home or with their family has remained stable over the past few months. In December, Sefton remained in the top quartile for England and outside the bottom quartile for the North West.

Changes in NHS methodology for indicators concerning clients with mental health services, resulted in Sefton dropping out of the top quartile for clients in settled accommodation.

### 8. Workforce

Sefton Adult Social Care are continuing their monthly review of internal workforce, especially qualified Social Work numbers and Occupational Therapists given the pressures regionally and nationally on the recruitment and retention of qualified staff in the Adult Social Care Sector. Turnover rate across the service in comparison to other Local Authorities is favourable (12.2%), however like all Councils there are still recruitment challenges, and ASC is also aware that, as a service, it has an older workforce. This is why drives to encourage a “grow your own approach” and recruit apprenticeships is imperative. Since the last report:

- Three newly qualified social workers have successfully completed their first year in employment programme and another two are due to complete shortly.
- Four social workers have successfully completed their Practice Educator (PE) training and are now able to support social work students within the service, which is another key aspect of the recruitment strategy.
- Two staff members are due to commence the Social Work apprenticeship programme.

With regards to the wider social care workforce, a care provider workshop has been set up to take place on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024. This initial workshop will include representatives from Residential & Nursing Care Homes, Domiciliary Care, Supported Living and Day Service Providers. The workshop will cover the key challenges in respect of recruitment, retention, and innovation, and how explore opportunities to work partnership to create solutions. The workshop will also enable discussion regarding the idea of creating a Care Academy with Providers.

#### 8.1 Learning and Development

Offering a wide range of learning and development opportunities for practitioners is key to ensuring the retention of staff, and during the last three months there has been progress in several areas:

- Following the implementation of the updated Supervision Policy, ASC now has training to complement this – Developing Effective Supervision: Core Skills for Supervisors. Senior managers, frontline managers / lead practitioners will undertake the training February to March 2024 and post April, non-frontline managers will complete the training.
- Local Authority Limits and NHS Continuing Healthcare Eligibility Training is a two-day course that will run February to March 2024 for managers and practitioners.



## **APPENDIX A**

- Through its membership of Research in Practice, ASC will be providing on training on Making and Evidencing Defensible Decisions.
- ASC continues to work closely with the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership, which includes engagement in an anti-racism training event.

### **9. Learning Disability and Autism (LD&A) Team**

The creation of the new dedicated LD&A Team is underway. The team was a recommendation of the Local Government Association Peer Review in 2022. The formation of this new team will help provide a specialist and dedicated service to those with a learning disability diagnosis and autistic people. The team will be trained in interventions with this group of Sefton residents to help provide an excellent service.

A new team manager commenced their role on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.

Recruitment to the team will be from the existing establishment of Adult Social Care staff. The team will comprise of the Team Manager, two Lead Practitioners, twelve Social Workers and three Care Assessors. Expressions of Interests will be sent out to staff in February 2024; staff and caseloads will start transferring over to the new team in April – May 2024.

### **10. Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP)**

The AMHP Service is currently running well. ASC has twenty-three approved AMHPs (the highest number for since ASC started counting four years ago). It currently has another three AMHPs in training, therefore the daytime AMHP rota is well resourced.

ASC has recently appointed an AMHP Lead Practitioner to help increase AMHP management capacity and reduce the risk associated with the AMHP Lead being a single point of failure.

The out of hours AMHP rota is also currently working well. Issues related to loss of AMHPs to neighbouring authorities has reduced as opportunities to act as an agency AMHP in other authorities has also reduced. We have also trained our own AMHPs to support work on this rota.

Demand for Mental Health Act assessments has remained steady throughout the year; the daytime rota completes the majority of assessments. There has been a reduction in the number of assessments completed out of hours over the past two years with approximately nineteen assessments per month being completed outside of normal working hours.