
Adult Social Care: Performance Report

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Cabinet Member: Cllr Dean Ruddle, Cabinet Member for Adults

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to Scrutiny Committee members on key performance metrics across adult social care in Somerset. It is supported by an accompanying presentation (Appendix A) which includes some visuals to support Committee members to assess and scrutinise local performance in the context of the ongoing pressures and challenges facing the national health and care system, and the upcoming new Care Quality Commission assurance regime.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1 For Scrutiny Committee to note the key updates provided in relation to Adult Social Care demand and performance, and to consider whether it wishes to make any recommendations arising from the report and wider discussion.

3. Background

3.1 The service most recently provided a detailed update on Adult Social Care performance to Scrutiny Committee in August 2023 (*see link below*¹) as part of a wider focus on assurance across the service. This report included a focus on:

- The Adult Social Care 2022/23 Annual Report;
- The Adult Social Care Strategy for 2023-26; and
- Adult Social Care preparations for upcoming external scrutiny via Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance and Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge.

3.2 This report's supporting performance presentation (Appendix A) includes the following performance highlights:

- **Calls resolved at first point of contact:** The proportion of calls resolved by Somerset Council's Customer Services (the Council's front door) at 'first point of contact' has remained in line with our target despite demand and enquiry levels remaining very high. This supports our ongoing objective for an effective front door that helps people find solutions to their problems and demonstrates its impact in terms of the delivery of good outcomes and diversions from formal/statutory care services. In June 2023, Somerset Direct

¹ [Adult Social Care Assurance Report - 3 August 2023](#)

won the Best Transformation Programme 2023 at the South West Contact Centre Forum Awards².

- **Continued high levels of overdue assessments and reviews:** The number of overdue assessments and reviews continue to remain high and above our desired targets, impacted by rising demand, complexity of need, and ongoing internal workforce capacity pressures which our operational restructuring in part seeks to mitigate.

A weekly Operational Assurance Group has been established to provide strategic oversight of the completion of assessments and reviews in our operational teams, and to support reduction of backlogs through close monitoring of trajectories and regular reporting to governance and assurance boards, including the Safeguarding Adults Board which receives quarterly updates.

Somerset has recently contributed to a survey of all regional Councils carried out by the South West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (SW ADASS) to understand the scale of the issue for overdue assessments and reviews. Somerset are analysing the responses on behalf of the region and findings will be available soon.

- **Stabilising levels of unmet homecare need, reduction in care package contract 'handbacks', increasing complexity and CQC Inspections of Providers:** Somerset has continued to see the impact of additional investment and focused commissioning activity, as well as some pick up in care provider recruitment of new starters over recent months, with levels of unmet homecare need falling to their lowest ever levels since March 2021.

This significantly improved picture is partly consequent to:

- o Homecare pods funded by system – supported stimulation of the market (5 pods of 200hrs)
- o Fee increase 2023/24 to £25 per hour – has enabled providers to pay above national minimum wage, offer contracted hours and improved term and conditions.
- o Oversea recruitment and focussed Proud to Care marketing has stimulated recruits coming into homecare market.

Since April 2023 the highest month end position in terms of the number of unmet packages of homecare has been 4. In contrast between April and September 2022 Unmet Needs ranged from 85 to 111.

The average size of home care packages, in terms of number of hours, has increased by nearly a third from 2020/21 to 2023/24 evidencing the increased complexity of people receiving support.

² [Somerset Council's Customer Services Team Celebrate Success](#)

We have seen a steady decline in the total number of active social care provision rated 'Good or Outstanding' by the independent regulator, the Care Quality Commission, over the past year (dropping from a high of 87.6% in December '22 to 81.8% in August '23). This particularly linked to inspection outcomes in residential provision. Whilst this downturn is predominantly linked to the current CQC approach (which is only inspecting 'high risk services' currently pending the launch of their new single assessment framework from November 2023), we continue to monitor closely and support wider care provider quality improvement and oversight.

Placements were fully or partially restricted by the Council in 13 regulated care provider settings in August 2023 whilst quality/safeguarding improvements were being addressed. New quarterly provider returns were launched in July 2023 via our new PAMMS (Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution) system to further support system scrutiny in partnership with NHS Somerset, and our multi-agency Commissioning & Quality Board was most recently held on 18 August 2023 where providers of concern were discussed and overseen.

A number of home closures have been underway in Somerset following independent decisions taken by Somerset Care Ltd to close Oaktrees and Sunningdale Lodge, and Leonard Cheshire to close St Michaels; these events are intensive from both a capacity and process perspective and are managed sensitively to support affected residents and their families.

Homecare package contract 'handbacks' have steadily reduced since hitting a peak (38) in May 2022. The average per month so far this year (to end of August) is 14. This compares to 19.5 in 2022, and 16.9 in 2021.

- **ASC Hospital Discharge Pathways:** In August 2023 94.6% of people aged 65 and over that were discharged from Somerset Hospital were able to return home. This compares with August 2022 when the figure was 92.3%.
- **Learning from ASC Stakeholder Feedback:** Since launch in January 2022, our ASC Feedback form responses have offered valuable insights on the experience of service users and carers, partner colleagues and other key stakeholders, and opportunities for learning and improvement.

The single biggest element and influencer of both positive and negative feedback is communication – how clear, responsive, professional and compassionate we are in our respective job roles makes a fundamental difference to the experience of those we engage with and support.

Over the last 12 months, 85% of the 236 responses received via the ASC Stakeholder Feedback route rate the overall service received from our adult social care teams as either good or excellent.

- **'My Life, My Future' Transformation Programme:** We are seeking to build on the strengths we have in Somerset to design and deliver high quality, person-centred Adult Social Care services that promote independence and wellbeing. This means providing the right support, in the right place at the right time. We want our service to be future focussed; efficient, effective, resilient to future pressures and providing a supportive environment in which our staff can thrive.

We are working in partnership with Newton Europe to deliver an ambitious Transformation programme, 'My Life, My Future', made up of 5 key workstreams, one of which centres on 'data visibility and control' which will further support us in fostering a culture of performance and improvement through data-driven behaviours and evidence-based decision making.

4. Supporting Appendices

4.1 Appendix A - ASC Scrutiny Performance Slides (Oct 2023)