

Somerset Council
Scrutiny Committee
– 10 October 2024



Adult Social Care Performance and Assurance Update Report

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Executive Lead Member: Cllr Sarah Wakefield, Lead Member for Adult Social Care Division / Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1.** This report provides an update to Scrutiny Committee members on latest performance and assurance related activity and developments across the Local Authority's Adult Social Care service.
- 1.2.** Adult Social Care's assurance activity directly supports the vision and priorities of Somerset Council, as outlined in the 2023-2027 Council Plan¹, especially those aligned to ensuring we are a 'Healthy and Caring Somerset'.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** For Scrutiny Committee members to note the key performance messages and updates outlined within this report and supporting presentation.
- 2.2.** For Scrutiny Committee members to consider whether they wish to make any recommendations arising from the report, its appendices, and any wider discussion.

3. ASC Performance and Assurance Highlights and developments

- 3.1.** Key performance metrics: The slides in the attached appendix provide updates on a number of key performance metrics within Adult Social Care.
- 3.2.** We are awaiting publication of the latest Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) comparative data for the 2023/24 financial year. Once this is published we will bring a report to Scrutiny Committee providing some analysis of how Somerset compares both nationally and within the South West region.

¹ [SCC - Public - Somerset Council - Council Plan.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- 3.3.** Assurance: The service works hard to ensure it is informed by both internal and external quality assurance activity, as evidenced by our commissioning of a Local Government Association Assurance peer challenge in March 2024. The Local Authority currently awaits notification of a Care Quality Commission assessment of its delivery of duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014, but work has continued to prepare for this new regulatory approach which launched in April 2023: Care Quality Commission Assessment ([somerset.gov.uk](https://www.somerset.gov.uk)). We maintain a detailed self-assessment, which forms part of an ‘Information Return’ requirement and evidence library, with work overseen on a quarterly basis by our Assurance Board; this met most recently on 27th September 2024 and is chaired by the Executive Director for Adults. The Assurance Board also monitors learning to emerge from other areas as the new assessment framework rolls out across England.

September 2023 saw the formal launch of a refreshed Adult Social Care Practice Quality Framework (PQF). The PQF is aligned to our Adult Social Care Strategy (2023-26) and sets out clear expectations for the Adult Social Care workforce. Developed by our Principal Social Worker and Principal Occupational Therapist, the framework outlines clear practice standards and expectations across 10 x Practice Standards for our workforce and has been supported by an aligned monthly auditing schedule. It compliments professional standards for our registered professionals and forms an important part of our internal approach to social care governance and quality assurance. The PQF was co-designed with people and carers with lived experience of social care, with the practice standards also informed by ‘Think Local Act Personal Making It Real “I” statements’ to ensure we keep people and their wellbeing at the heart of our work and focus.

Between September 2023 and June 2024, 1,146 practice quality audits were undertaken by staff at various levels across Adult Social Care as part of our structured PQF Auditing schedule. A detailed annual report capturing findings was shared with our monthly Practice Quality Board in August 2024 and is available via: <https://somersetprovidernetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/PQF-Annual-Report-August-2024.pdf>

We have since launched a revised PQF for 2024/25 to support ongoing practice quality oversight, starting September 2024.

The service continues to monitor feedback from people using our care and support services, as well as key stakeholders, including local independent care providers. Quarterly reports are provided to the Practice Quality Board to ensure learning is taken from people’s experience of care.

In July 2024, a Council-wide Staff Survey was undertaken. We ensured we undertook our own internal Adult Social Care analysis of the results emerging from the staff feedback to support assurance activity. A total of 206 responses were received from ASC, giving a response rate of 47% (based on June 2024 workforce data); this is replicated across the whole organisation.

Pleasingly, our ASC overall figures exceeded Council averages in all but 2 areas:

- Even when things are tough, I can perform well in my job - 72% ASC staff agree or strongly agree compared with 76% across the organisation as a whole); this is shown to be a concern stemming from our ASC Operational function response where 70% agreed/strongly agreed and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed;
- I am able to make improvements happen in my area of work - ASC figures are just below the Council average at 58% of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement compared to 59% organisationally. Analysis shows this is a primarily a concern arising from within our ASC Operational function where 53% agreed/strongly agree and 24% disagree or strongly disagree.

Staff Survey aspects where overall ASC results are particularly strong in comparison to organisational-wide results include:

- The proportion of staff who agree that ‘The work I do makes a real difference to the residents of Somerset and to my work colleagues’ – 90% compared to 84% overall. This was especially evident in the commissioning team response (94%).
- The proportion of staff who agree that ‘My manager encourages me and my colleagues to be flexible about when and where we work and to use space and technology creatively’ – 81% compared to 76% overall. This was especially evident in the Strategy, Transformation and Performance response (100%).
- The proportion of staff who confirm that ‘I have regular (at least six weekly) 1:1s / check-ins with my line manager’ – 85% compared to 76% overall. This was especially evident in the responses from Commissioning and Strategy, Transformation and Performance teams (94% and 100% respectively).

This was an interim short organisation-wide Staff Survey, giving people a chance to share their views about working for Somerset Council, help us

understand how people are feeling, and identify where improvements can be made. It provides a baseline for measuring progress over time. From next year, the Council plans to issue a longer annual survey with an opportunity to share comments, alongside quick pulse surveys for timely feedback on key issues. To access our analysis report and full detail, including results for each of our ASC Service-areas, via [Staff Survey Results 2024 - PDF](#)

A new Head of Service for Quality, Performance and Assurance was appointed in August 2024 to continue to lead and support activity in this space.

Note *For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author*