
Adult Social Care: Performance Report

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Cabinet Member: Cllr Heather Shearer, Cabinet Member for Adults

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides an update to Scrutiny Committee members on key developments in relation to demand and performance activity across adult social care, both nationally and locally. It is supported by an accompanying presentation (Appendix A) detailing some key performance indicators for the service to help inform the Committee's understanding of current activity and offers an opportunity to assess local performance in the context of the ongoing pressures and challenges facing the national health and care system.

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 In Somerset, we want people to live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities, with timely and easy access to high quality and efficient support when they need it. People tell us they want to live in the place that they call home, with the people and things they love, in communities that look out for each other, doing the things that matter to them. Our Adult Social Care Strategy and underpinning delivery plan is currently being refreshed for the period 2023-26 but will focus on 4 core priority areas:

- Prevention and early help
- Right support, right place, right time
- A supported, skilled and flexible workforce, *and*
- Future focused.

3.2 The service last provided an update on Adult Social Care performance to Scrutiny Committee in July 2022. We highlighted how ADASS (the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) had published findings from their latest survey indicating that more than half a million people were waiting for an adult social care assessment, for care or a direct payment to begin, or for a review of their care nationally. It highlighted new evidence that showed that 'levels of unmet, under met or wrongly met needs' were increasing and the situation was getting worse, concluding that '*the growing numbers of people needing care and the increasing complexity of their needs are far outstripping the capacity to meet them*'. Our July 2022 report also flagged how the rising cost of social care, driven

by increasing demand for services and well recognised workforce challenges (including across the external/independent social care provider market) had impacted on our own ability to consistently deliver within desired targets and timeframes in some areas of our activity.

3.3 As we start a new calendar year and reflect on our activity and impact, we acknowledge the latest findings emerging from the ADASS Autumn Survey Report, published in mid-November 2022¹. The report highlighted:

- That the impact of the cost of living crisis was being disproportionately felt by people who draw on care and support and those who work in adult social care;
- That rising costs were adding a further layer of pressure for adult social care providers;
- That workforce sufficiency remained a concern, with insufficient staff to deliver all the care and support needed and not enough being done to make adult social care an attractive and competitive career choice;
- That the majority of Councils responding to the survey were reporting care providers handing back contracts, closing or ceasing trading – resulting in significant impacts for a growing number of people;
- That Directors remained concerned about the financial outlook for health and social care;
- That more home care continued to be delivered.

3.4 Somerset has not been immune to these challenges and closely monitors risks facing the service, but also seeks to recognise, celebrate and encourage a counter-narrative to this dominant view of a social care sector in crisis – one where people are being supported to lead good lives of value, and communities benefit from and contribute to great social care. Adult Social Care in Somerset has much to be proud of and is performing comparatively well, with innovation and progress evident in a number of areas, consequent to a sustained commitment to improving outcomes, as well as investment and hard work.

3.5 Our supporting performance presentation (Appendix A) includes the following performance highlights:

- **Calls resolved at first point of contact:** The proportion of calls resolved by Somerset Direct (the Council's front door) at 'first point of contact' has remained consistently above 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 October, Somerset Direct

¹ [ADASS Autumn Survey Report Publication 15 November 2022.pdf \(mcusercontent.com\)](#)

was named the South West's 'Contact Centre of the Year – in house' winner for 2022².

- **Continued high levels of overdue assessments and reviews:** The number of overdue assessments and reviews continues to grow, impacted by rising demand, complexity of need and ongoing internal workforce challenges and vacancies. The service has recently concluded consultation regarding its Phase 1 Operational Restructuring plan across frontline teams; the restructure in part seeks to ensure our operational workforce is fit for the future and able respond to current and future service demands, ensuring we can safely deliver our statutory duties in a timely way.
 - **Somerset's performance across ASCOF (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework) measures:** Each year the Government collects data from Local Authorities and conducts surveys of people and their carers who use our services. The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF³) is how the government compares performance between local authority areas based on these statutory surveys and returns. In 2021-22 Somerset improved from having 7/25 to 14/25 indicators ranked in the top two quartiles. Within Appendix A specifically we have detailed how our performance has improved in relation to:
 - *The proportion of people using social care who receive self-directed support;*
 - *The proportion of people using social care who received direct payments;* (When well deployed, direct payments are a good indicator of exercising independence through choice and control, and research shows people who use of direct payments generally achieve better outcomes).
 - *Long-term support needs of younger adults (18-64) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes*
 - *Long-term support needs of older adults (65 plus) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes.*
- Further attention is needed in relation to:
- *The proportion of older people (65 plus) still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation* – The Service is working with Newton Europe to support a data and evidence-focused diagnostic of opportunities across Somerset's Adult Social Care service and expect developing our reablement offer to be a key identified strategic priority theme.
- **Stabilising levels of unmet homecare need and a reduction in care package contract 'handbacks':** Capacity across our external (independent) adult social care provider market and workforce to meet high levels of need within our communities and local hospitals have posed a significant challenge in our ability to source timely care, impacted by high turnover rates /

² [Somerset County Council Customer Services team named best in the South West | Somerset County Council Newsroom \(somersetnewsroom.com\)](#)

³ [Microsoft Power BI](#)

recruitment and retention challenges, the consequences of Brexit and the pandemic, and external cost pressures and inflation over recent years. However, over recent months we have started to see the impact of additional investment and commissioning activity, as well as some recent pick up in care provider recruitment of new starters and overseas recruitment, with levels of unmet homecare need falling to their lowest levels since July 2021, hitting 48 at the end of December.

Latest data and intelligence relating to Care Market Quality also suggests some stabilisation and improvement since the summer. Care Quality Commission data for December 2022 shows that 87.6%% of active social care settings in Somerset are currently rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' - up from 83.5% in January 2022 - and internally we have seen a reduction in the number of care providers needing to have restrictions on new placements due to quality or safety concerns. The service managed very effectively a high number of home closures during the summer, primarily linked to one overarching national provider going into administration and supported the transfer of affected residents to suitable new homes. Additionally, care package contract 'handbacks' have fallen steadily over recent months – from a peak in May of 38 down to 6 in December 2022. Where these do occur, they most commonly link to staffing/capacity challenges making it unsafe for the care provider to continue to offer that provision. Somerset's new bold and inspiring Proud to Care campaign, 'My Time to Care', formally launched on 16/01/23; six films shot on location and featuring real Somerset carers and the people they care for. This is part of ongoing efforts to encourage recruitment into the sector.

- **ASC Hospital Discharge Pathways:** In November, 92.1% of all people discharged from Somerset Hospitals were able to return home. Social Care leadership team supporting 'Community Pull Events' this month in Acute Hospitals to support hospital discharge/flow and explore any learning opportunities to be taken for future improvement and data reporting.
- **Learning from ASC Stakeholder Feedback:** Since launch in January 2022, our ASC Feedback Form responses have offered enormously valuable insights into the experience of service users and their carers, our partner colleagues and other key stakeholders, giving us opportunities for further learning and improvement. Of the 183 responses we received via this route during 2022, we are very proud that 81.8% rated the overall service received from our adult social care teams as either good or excellent. 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.

4. Supporting Appendices

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

4.2 *For performance related to Adult Safeguarding, please refer to the Somerset*

Safeguarding Adults Board's Annual Report presented to Scrutiny in October 2022⁴

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<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s23568/Scrutiny%20AH%20Report%20SSAB%20Annual%20Report%20Oct%202022.pdf>