

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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QUALITY OF CARE AND VALUE FOR MONEY ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN MEDWAY

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Summary

This report provides information on quality of care and value for money of Adult Social Care in Medway, as requested by members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Local Authorities have duties and powers to provide Adult Social Care services to eligible adults and their carers and these have previously been set out in various Acts and Government guidance, now largely brought together in the recent Care Act 2014.
- 1.2 Medway Council has long been committed to supporting adults with social care needs and their carers with high quality care and support, and the Cabinet has directed Council officers to provide support that demonstrates in practice the Council's core values and priorities, namely:
 - Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do
 - Giving value for money
- 1.3 The Council's four strategic priorities are:
 - Children and young people have the best start in life
 - Adults maintain their independence and live healthy lives

- Safe, clean and green Medway
- Everyone benefitting from regeneration.

- 1.4 Council targets have been set to monitor the performance of Adult Social Care and that performance is reported to this Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 1.5 Crucially, the voice of service users and carers is heard in assessment, reviews and service provision; through annual surveys; through complaints and compliments; through feedback from relatives and neighbours; through safeguarding investigations; feedback from the local voluntary sector; feedback from partner agencies; via advocacy and self-advocacy groups and services; via Partnership Boards, via Healthwatch Medway and via representations from Councillors and MPs.
- 1.6 Wherever possible performance is benchmarked and triangulated and the Directorate's Performance and Intelligence Team work hard with colleagues regionally and nationally to ensure that performance is reported in a clear and meaningful way, with integrity.
- 1.7 In recent years Local Authority Adult Social Care in England has not been subject to inspection but that will change with the re-introduction of inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The last two inspections of Adult Social Care in Medway concluded that Medway Council was 'Performing Well' and the outcomes of those inspections were reported to the Committee. The new inspection framework is in development and it is not yet clear what it will involve or when inspections will commence. Medway Council took the decision to continue with the internal checks and processes to assure itself of quality and performance and, for example, the Committee commissioned an independent assessment of safeguarding to provide assurance, which it did. CQC have continued to regulate and inspect care homes and home care providers.

2 Quality of Care

- 2.1 Over the past five years, the quality of care in Adult Social Care services in Medway has improved and then been sustained at a high level. Prior to this period, it was good but variable in some pockets of the local residential care and home care provision. The Council's commissioning strategies targeted quality of care directly and ensured that there was protected investment in training for leaders/managers and frontline care staff through the Medway College of Social Care. Some services were de-commissioned and providers with solid track records were able to tender to provide services in Medway. The procurement process was purposely set with quality as the dominant assessment criteria and specifications were co-developed with service users and carers to expressly set out our expectations.
- 2.2 A new framework for home care was introduced with a very explicit and powerful focus on quality of care and a robust approach to care home placements, with an emphasis on quality, was established. An embargo policy was introduced to manage any providers if significant concerns arise and quality of care has been a recurrent theme at the local provider forum, which is very well attended.

- 2.3 Intelligence from CQC inspections of Adult Social Care services locally, Council contract monitoring of services, feedback from service users, carers and staff triangulate to present a picture of high quality care and support. The insight from safeguarding investigations, complaints and compliments, audits and reviews support this position. However, there is no room for complacency when it comes to providing care and support to vulnerable adults and carers, who rightly expect the highest standards of quality, so we remain ever vigilant and are committed to continuous improvement. Medway Council will be inviting a Peer Review of Safeguarding and a Peer Review of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding prior to the re-introduction of CQC inspections for Local Authorities.

3 Value for Money

- 3.1 High quality care and support has been achieved and sustained against a backdrop of increased demand for services and less funding available. In 2013/14, 15,603 people approached Medway Council regarding Adult Social Care services. Medway Council's Adult Social Care team undertook 5,927 reviews (a 9.6% increase on the previous year); 3,098 community care assessments (a 3.8% increase on the previous year, on top of a 9% increase the year before that), reablement following hospital discharge achieved a 92.5% success rate and Medway Council achieved a 17.2% reduction in the number of admissions to care homes in 2013/14.
- 3.2 The efficiency targets have been met without compromising quality of care and the budget has been managed very carefully as it is the largest divisional budget under the direct control of the Council. In relation to use of resources, Medway Council spends less than 9% of the Adult Social Care budget on care management with more than 91% spent on direct care and support to vulnerable adults and carers. In the last Department of Health assessment of use of resources Medway was top quartile.
- 3.3 In relation to unit costs published by the PSSRU for Adult Social Care services, Medway compares very well in regard to home care and residential care, being mindful in setting floors to cost envelopes to protect quality of care. Regional benchmarking suggests that there is some efficiency still to be driven in services to adults with physical disabilities and learning disabilities and the system for placements being introduced this Summer will address that directly. Partnership Commissioning with NHS Medway CCG offers both organisations opportunities to realise efficiencies in integrated health and social care and there is commitment to building on the partnership formally in place since April 2013.
- 3.4 The approach going forward will involve even more co-production and co-design with service users, carers and stakeholders to achieve great outcomes and efficiencies through innovation, seeking value for money of the significant public funding and service user contributions that makes up the Adult Social Care budget.
- 3.5 The Better Care Fund and the Care Act 2014 will have a significant impact which will be programme managed over the next year as implementation is progressed.

4 Risk Management

- 4.1 Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Failure to support vulnerable adults or carers adequately or effectively, resulting in poor outcomes for them, potentially putting them at risk.
Description	High quality care and support for service users and carers that has positive affect on their wellbeing and resilience will ensure that the Council's, and partners, duties to service users and carers is met in a meaningful way and minimises the risks.
Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Partnership Commissioning (health and social care); committed, motivated and highly skilled professionals in Medway Council Social Work and Occupational Therapy Teams; responsive locally commissioned services; annual service user and carer surveys; listening to service users and carers and engagement with stakeholders in development work to take forward the Better Care Fund and the Carers Act 2014 in Medway.

5 Equalities

- 5.1 The Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity, access and outcomes for all, through the delivery and commissioning of high quality services that are accessible and fair, and mainstreaming equality and diversity across all service delivery activities. All new services commissioned are subject to a diversity impact assessment that compels service providers to think carefully about its target audience and to demonstrate how it intends to serve their needs. This gives the Council a better measure of the impact the services are having on the community.
- 5.2 Service users and carers come from many different ethnic backgrounds and the assessment and review process is sensitive and respectful to their needs, which in turn supports services to recognise and meet their individual needs. Cultural competence is a key element of monitoring quality of care and support.

6 Financial and Legal issues

- 6.1 The budget for Adult Social Care is set as part of the Council Budget setting decision by Full Council and budget monitoring is reported to members as per the Council schedule.
- 6.2 The legal issues have been addressed in the body of the report.

7 Recommendation

7.1 This report is presented to Members for information and comment.

Background documents

None

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