



Vulnerable Adults, Health and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee

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| Date: | 26 November 2024 |
| Classification: | General Release |
| Title: | Care Quality Commission Local Authority Assessment |
| Report of: | Director of Adult Social Care |
| Cabinet Member Portfolio | Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector |
| Wards Involved: | All |
| Policy Context: | Fairer Westminster |
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1. Executive summary

- 1.1. In 2023 the Care Quality Commission (CQC) implemented its new approach to assessing how local authorities meet their Care Act duties. This assessment process was introduced as part of the Health and Care Act 2022. It enables the CQC to understand the quality of care in a local area and provide independent assurance to the public.
- 1.2. In February 2024, Westminster City Council received notification that the CQC was commencing its formal assessment of the local authority.
- 1.3. In October 2024, the CQC awarded Westminster City Council's Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) directorate as *GOOD: Evidence shows a good standard*. This report summarises the assessment process and results.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's consideration

- 2.1. Members are asked to note the outcome of the CQC assessment outlined in this report.

3. Background

- 3.1. The CQC's single assessment framework describes what good care looks like and is based on four themes, each with sub-categories, and a set of quality statements. They are outlined in the table below.

| Theme | Sub-category |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 – Working with people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing needs • Supporting people to live healthier lives • Equity in experiences and outcomes |
| 2 – Providing support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care provision, integration and continuity • Partnerships and communities |
| 3 – Ensuring safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe systems, pathways and transitions • Safeguarding |
| 4 – Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, management and sustainability • Learning, improvement and innovation |

3.2. The key questions that the CQC considers in its assessments are:

- Is the local authority meeting its Care Act responsibilities?
- What is the quality of care in Westminster?
- Has Westminster City Council improved outcomes for people?

3.3. The overall possible outcomes of assessment are Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement or Inadequate. A percentage score is provided:

- Outstanding: 87 - 100
- Good: 62 - 87
- Requires Improvement: 38 – 62
- Inadequate: 0 - 38

4. Westminster City Council assessment

4.1. Preparations for the assessment process commenced before formal notification was received, with officers meeting regularly to review and compile possible documentation required for the assessment.

4.2. Workforce engagement throughout the preparation and assessment process was key. Ongoing communications, “lunch and learn” sessions, team meetings and workshops helped ensure all staff and partners were kept informed about the assessment process at each step.

4.3. Throughout the preparation period, officers also attended various national and local fora to learn more about other councils’ experiences of the assessment process. This included networking with local authorities that had participated in the initial CQC ‘test and learn’ sites (for example, Manchester City Council), those that formed the ‘pilot’ sites in Summer 2023 (for example, Birmingham City Council) and those included in the first tranche of formal assessments (for example, Hounslow) during Spring 2024. ASCH will, in turn, use its experience to support colleagues from other local authorities as part of its ongoing commitment to wider sector improvement.

4.4. ASCH received formal notification of its assessment on 19 February 2024. The assessment included numerous steps, such as information returns, interviews with partners, interviews with service users, a meeting with the senior management team, and a three-day on-site assessment, during which the assessment team spoke to officers and Councillors. The CQC assessment team spent two and a half days at Westminster City Hall between 17 and 19 June 2024.

5. Local authority rating

- 5.1. Following the assessment process, Westminster City Council's ASCH directorate was rated as *GOOD: Evidence shows a good standard*.
- 5.2. The CQC grades each of the quality statements on a four-point scale: Outstanding (4), Good (3), Requires Improvement (2) or Inadequate (1), with a percentage score attached. ASCH received Good (3) in all sub-categories of the four themes previously mentioned and an overall rating of 75%.
- 5.3. At the time of writing, this is the highest score in London and second highest across England.

6. Feedback received from the CQC

- 6.1. Feedback received from the CQC was largely positive, with some areas for ongoing development, as summarised below.
 - The local authority showed commitment to involving people and unpaid carers in designing services, systems and reviewing practice at all levels. They even participated in the recruitment of senior staff.
 - Feedback received from people and unpaid carers about their experiences of assessment, care planning and reviews was mostly positive. The local authority acknowledged it was working with partner agencies, people and unpaid carers to ensure unpaid carers in Global Majority communities accessed support they need.
 - People could easily access information and advice on their rights under the Care Act and ways to meet their care and support needs. This included unpaid carers and people who fund or arrange their own care and support. Information and advice provided was clear and concise, which helped people to understand the process as well as the support arranged for them.
 - Positive feedback was received about the assessment process. People told the CQC they felt listened to and their wishes were considered with support plans tailored to meet their needs. However, it was noted that people's experience of direct payments was mixed. Where it was positive, people described being able to use direct payments to meet cultural needs.
 - ASCH has a positive and timely approach when carrying out assessments and reviews, with no waiting lists and demonstrates a strengths based, person-centred approach to assessment and support planning.
 - The local authority worked with partners to quickly deliver reablement services that enabled people to live independently following hospital discharge. The council's reablement services were highly effective, with over 90% of people who received short-term support, such as mobility equipment, no longer requiring ongoing care.
 - Effective systems, processes, and practices to make sure people are protected from abuse and neglect, with excellent multi-agency partner working are in place.
 - Staff are skilled and well supported to undertake safeguarding duties effectively.

- Overall, the feedback around hospital discharge was positive as people felt the journey was seamless due to good communication. People shared positive comments about the relationship with staff, as they found them supportive and responsive. People felt listened to and valued by senior leaders when they suggested improvements to services.
- Partners told CQC that mental health provision and support was good, but wasn't always appropriate for all levels of need. Whilst there was support for those with low-level needs and those at crisis, the support available was not always appropriate for those with on-going mental health needs. For example, there weren't many places for people needing specialist dementia care. The local authority was working closely with health partners to improve support for people who required specialist mental health support.
- Positive feedback was also received from The Local Account Group who represented the views and wishes for people and unpaid carers. They felt listened to and were able to influence policy and services run by Westminster City Council. Their suggestions were welcomed, and they felt valued by the senior leadership team.
- When working in partnership with other agencies, clear arrangements for governance, accountability, monitoring, quality assurance and information sharing was demonstrated.
- Westminster City Council demonstrated a commitment to tackling health inequalities.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Khatija Rasool, Strategic Delivery Lead
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Link to the published report on CQC website:

[Westminster City Council: local authority assessment - Care Quality Commission](#)