

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 20 October 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - People

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: A New Assurance Framework for Adult Social Care

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.2 To provide Executive Board with information on the Halton preparation for the new CQC Adult Social care assurance framework.

2.1 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted;**
- 2) the Board agree the approach to the preparation and generation of an improvement plan;**
- 3) the Board note the risks; and**
- 4) the Board agree to a members seminar later in the year to brief on the plan**

3.1 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.2 The Health and Care Bill created a new duty for CQC to independently review and assess the performance of Local Authorities in delivering their adult social care functions as set out under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014. The aim is to ensure that the right frameworks are in place so that it is easy for local people, providers and national Government to see how well local authorities are meeting their adult social care duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014.

3.3 These frameworks will also provide a basis on which the Secretary of State might exercise new legal powers to intervene where a local authority is failing or has failed to discharge its duties under Part 1 of the

Care Act 2014. They will be based around:

- Independent assessment of local authorities by the Care Quality Commission.
- Enhanced improvement support, led by the sector.
- A mechanism to interact as a last resort if a local authority is assessed as not delivering good quality and effective adult social care
- Improved data reporting to national Government.

3.4 The ambition is for CQC to use its powers and duties to help improve outcomes for people who draw on care and support, by assessing how local authorities are meeting individuals' needs. In order to make these assessments, they will look at a range of local authorities' activities. Initial thoughts, informed by working with the sector, are that assessments may look at some, or all of, the following, for example:

- Maintaining oversight of the social care workforce in their local area, supporting staff retention and professional development.
- Managing transitions between services, for example between health and social care, and the transition from children's to adults' services.
- Preventing people from requiring social care in the first instance, for example by supporting and developing community organisations working on prevention and reablement.
- Carrying out their safeguarding duties. Ensuring good outcomes for people through effective leadership.
- Managing their commissioning and contracting responsibilities. Shaping the care market to meet people's needs with diverse and quality provision, enabling choice and independence.
- Meeting the needs of unpaid carers.
- Assessing the needs of people who may be eligible for care and support them to access what they need, whether or not they receive local authority support or will fund their own care.

3.5 The intention is that the approach for assessments will be flexible enough to react to risks and changes in circumstances in an agile way. Assessments will be informed by a range of information and data, including insights gathered from discussions with local authorities and providers, as well as people who draw on care and unpaid carers, whose views and experiences will be central to CQC's assessment approach.

3.6 This framework will build on the approach that is currently used to assess providers, and will also draw upon Think Local Act Personal's (TLAP) "I" statements as the basis for its single assessment framework which seek to reflect the most important aspects of personalised,

culturally appropriate care, for example: *'I am treated with respect and dignity.'* "We" statements will also be used to clarify what standards CQC expects. For example, for a local authority this might be: *'We understand the health and care needs of individuals and local communities, so care provision is planned and delivered to ensure flexibility, choice and continuity of care.'*

3.7 As CQC develops this framework, it will work collaboratively with TLAP, National Voices, and other stakeholders to design further statements to cover the whole range of its assessment framework. It is expected that CQCs assessment framework will be launched no sooner than April 2023.

3.8 CQC have now published a draft assessment framework for consultation. The draft framework includes 4 Key areas of focus:

- How Local Authorities work with people
- How Local Authorities provide support
- How Local Authorities ensure safety within the system
- Leadership

Each area of focus has quality statements, and within each quality statement there are a number of areas of evidence required, in line with the "we" and "I" statements.

4.0 ASSURANCE PREPARATION

4.1 North West ADASS - CQC Readiness

North West ADASS Sector Led Improvement Board, are leading on assurance preparation across the North West. A number of work streams have been pulled together to support Local Authorities with assurance preparations:

1. A consultant has been appointed. The focus of his work initially is to engage with DASSs across the North West, to discuss approaches and level of support needed. A "Top Tips" document has been produced to support Local Authorities to prepare for assurance.
2. The recent self-assessment completed, will be considered alongside assurance when undertaking the challenge sessions.
3. Work has commenced across the North West, North East and

Yorkshire and Humber (Northern Block). Task and finish groups have been established, each group will be led by a DASS. The task and finish groups will explore the four key themes of assurance and develop “What good looks like” in each of the areas. Publication is estimated as autumn.

The LGA have completed and initial scoping of key data requirements aligned to the proposed assurance framework; there are a number of challenges in this work, in that assurance is looking at population level and unmet need, where ASC data looks at client level. However, a proposed set of indicators have been developed in draft form.

4.2 Halton-CQC Readiness

Adult Social Care Management Team have established a task and finish group to ensure we are fully prepared for a CQC inspection, working on a timeline for full preparation by April 2023.

1. ASC are fully engaged with the NWADASS assurance preparation work streams, and will ensure we make full use of resources etc.
2. Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC) self-assessment has been completed and submitted, a challenge session with the LGA is being arranged. The outcome of this will be incorporated into our overarching improvement plan.
3. An evidence document has been developed, based on the draft assurance framework. This will provide an initial position statement of readiness, with the development of an improvement plan.
4. Adult Social Care management team, have completed a self-assessment and identified an initial suite of priority areas for further development. These include:
 - Commissioning - finalise current commissioning plan, address gaps in the market, complete cost of care and sustainability plan, co-production.
 - Communication across all teams and stakeholders.
 - Practice, review approach to risk enablement, complex needs, person-centred approaches and escalation.
 - File audits, supervision and management of workloads, to ensure policies are fully implemented.
 - Leadership; wider care act responsibilities across partners, integration, performance.

5.1 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.2 The new assurance framework will include an assessment of the Council's implementation of recent reforms; as detailed in the white paper 'People at the Heart of Care' (December 2021) the Government outlined a 10 year vision for Adult Social Care (ASC).

6.1 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.2 Adult Social Care has not been subject to CQC assessment for many years, this has resulted in a reduction of the functions to support the preparation required to ensure a positive inspection.

A further report will be needed to detail any additional resource requirements.

7.1 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

7.2 **Children & Young People in Halton Borough Council**

None identified

7.3 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified

7.4 **A Healthy Halton**

Good quality delivery of adult social care will be enhanced within this CQC framework, with a long awaited framework that measures what good looks like and will focus on what is important to people who use our services with a continual focus on improvement.- could you have a look at something along these lines.

7.5 **A Safer Halton**

None identified

7.6 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1 There is a significant risk of not achieving a positive rating if we do not prepare adequately. This will require resources for both the preparation and maintaining performance.

9,0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 9.1 None identified at this stage