

Care Quality Commission Regulation

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is now responsible for regulating local authorities' delivery of its Care Act duties. This is the first-time local authorities have been assessed on these duties since the introduction of the Care Act in 2014. The CQC has piloted their approach in five authorities with four rated as 'good' and one 'requires improvement'. The framework and approach for regulation has evolved during these pilots and further information about the final approach is expected shortly. The CQC has committed to complete assessments on all local authorities in the next two years. The next 3 authorities were informed of their visits scheduled for February 2024, and all authorities will now be contacted on a staggered basis over the next 2 years. The CQC will focus on four key areas - Working with People; Providing Support; Ensuring Safety; Leadership.

To support our preparations Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP) has started to complete and seek views of partners, and other stakeholders to develop a self-assessment which sets out our strengths and areas for improvement. This will be aligned with the national data CQC will have access to, the views of our workforce, feedback from people who use our services, our key partners and demonstrates our compliance with the Care Act. In addition to our self-assessment, we are focusing on:

- Performance improvement in some key areas such as safeguarding, timeliness to assessment and having plans in place so we can demonstrate further improvement.
- Reviewing practice and listening to people who use services, their carers and our workforce to understand the experience of people using adult social care.
- Communication and engagement plans to make sure everyone internally and externally understands the CQC framework and what it means for local government and our Care Act duties. We will have in place all of the housekeeping arrangements so that when we are notified of a CQC inspection, we have rooms, and a schedule in place to be activated.

Safeguarding

There have been some significant changes in staffing within Safeguarding in Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP). Firstly, a new post, Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Assurance, Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) has been established to provide strategic oversight and leadership across Surrey. The post has been recruited to on an interim basis following attempts to recruit permanently. A new team manager has been appointed to the specialist Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub team and took up post on 1 January 2024.

Like many authorities Surrey has experienced increased numbers of safeguarding concerns and investigations referred to the local authority. Not all of these after investigation are safeguarding adults' issues, however the high numbers, in the context of other increased demand has led to an outstanding list of open safeguarding cases which though reducing is currently standing at 3,700. Prioritisation and tracking processes are in place and we continue to work on reducing this number. We are also working through the Safeguarding Adults Board with our partners including the NHS and Police to make sure that we have a shared understanding of what is appropriate to be referred as a safeguarding adult's referral. A new safeguarding tracker has been developed to support each area to focus and bring the lists down with clear governance arrangements.

The new Assistant Director is establishing regular performance meetings with the Business Intelligence Team to monitor and review progress. In addition, the overarching safeguarding adults pathway with partners is under review and plans developed to ensure that we have the right resources in place at the right points to manage what is now clearly a significant increase in demand. The redesign will address any areas of inconsistency, improve timeliness, and the experience for people who may need safeguarding.

We have a high number of safeguarding adults concerns raised from our care providers for example medication errors where though they may need addressing are often more about quality and provider support. The CQC approach for the care market means that to meet their own registration standards they feel they need to refer to the local authority and raise as a safeguarding concern. In other systems in order to manage these types of issues a Provider Alert approach is taken and this helps to focus resources and support. Work has commenced to review the Provider Alert process and early discussions between the Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Director of Commissioning, have led to recognition of the need for a streamlined approach. It is recognised that the transfer of quality concern activity from care providers

pathway to commissioning needs to be implemented, supported by clear communication and engagement plan with key partners, wider directorate, care providers and approved by the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB). This will be included as part of a workshop planned for late January.

Performance quality assurance

An audit programme has been developed to ensure a quality approach across Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP). Auditing is being rolled out and incorporated into a quality business-as-usual approach. Initially, integrated into our CQC tracking cases, it will also be included as part of regular supervisory processes.

The quality monitoring process within commissioning is also being reviewed and will be covered in a workshop later in January. Areas considered will include:

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- Quality of staff - how they present, including their interaction with people who use services.
- How well people who use services are cared for - how they present and feedback from them and their relatives.
- How people who use services' wellbeing is assured - 'the user voice', accessible activities, co-design etc.
- Quality of environment.
- How service users are engaged in running the service.
- Compliments and complaints - staff awareness and follow up.
- Maximisation of choice and control - layout of building, involvement in design of activities, menus etc, co-production.
- How well understood safeguarding is and embedded as a culture - key workers, policies, relatives and people who use services' understanding.

The AWHP Quality Improvement Board is being refreshed and will be led by the Assistant Director of Quality and Safety reporting directly into the DASS. The terms of reference are currently being reviewed and it is anticipated that the board will have a renewed focus on performance, quality and provide scrutiny to new processes and procedures.

Links with providers

Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP) have well established mechanisms for working in partnership with providers on key opportunities and challenges facing the social care sector. These include:

- Regular strategic liaison meetings with Surrey Care Association (SCA) – the counties care provider representative membership body. Through these regular meetings SCA and Surrey County Council are reviewing and updating our shared work programme that supports the development of the sector and quality and availability of social care services for Surrey residents. Areas of focus have included workforce, integrated working with health and developing new and more innovative models of service delivery. The joint work on shared workforce challenges with SCA through the Surrey Academy will deliver an accredited and portable care certificate qualification to support recruitment and retention for all providers.
- Regular Partner Update meetings led by the Executive Director AWHP at which key stakeholders across the Voluntary, Community & Faith Sector (VCFS) and provider sector come together to discuss and problem solve on the key strategic priorities for Surrey.
- SCA led provider forums themed around key service areas which AHWP commissioners are regularly invited to attend to update on and discuss key issues.
- A range of task and finish group meetings led by AHWP commissioners to develop priorities and approach to future service commissioning and ways in which providers can work in partnership with the Council to solve key challenges.
- Ongoing and specific market engagement events with providers both around strategic planning as well as engagement as part of formal recommissioning/tendering processes
- Regular provider quality assurance and contract monitoring meetings focused on both holding providers to account as well as working jointly on actions to deliver ongoing service improvement and delivery of high-quality care services.

Surge in demand and what we are doing to meet this

With people living longer and increasing numbers of people with chronic or multiple conditions, Surrey like many other local authorities, is seeing extra demand for health and social care services. On 1 December 2023, Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP) had 23,688 open cases— including costed, non-costed package of care and people waiting for services to be put in place – an increase of 9.5% in the last 12 months. Mental Health cases, have increased by 43% in the last two years, reflecting a national trend since the pandemic. These increases are broadly in line with our regional and national comparator averages.

The increasing caseload, combined with the growing numbers of safeguarding cases, is putting considerable pressure on frontline teams, resulting in waiting lists for both assessments and reviews. Improvement plans are in place to respond. For example, teams are prioritising people for assessment, we are looking at alternative models for undertaking reviews and working to ensure our workforce is the right size, with the right skills deployed in the right places.

One of the key priorities for the newly created AWHP directorate will be to scope and implement transformational changes to ensure the long-term sustainability of services. This will mean new models of delivery, streamlining and digitising the way we work, and investment in preventative interventions to support people to lead healthier and more independent lives. AWHP has started to shape our 3-5 year transformation agenda for long-term sustainability around three programmes of change with prevention at their heart as follows:

- Customer Journey
- Market Shaping and Commissioning
- Partnerships and Integration

Housing, Accommodation and Homes Strategy for Surrey

Following the agreement of the Housing, Accommodation and Homes Strategy for Surrey in 2023 work has been underway to continue the momentum and focus on this agenda, and to bring partners together in tackling what the strategy described as a housing crisis in Surrey. There is a need for a collective effort by local authorities, the private sector and government agencies operating across Surrey to enable the delivery of supply of homes for Surrey residents which are truly affordable for local people. This “Call to Action” remains a focus and priority for the year ahead.

The Leader and I were delighted to be invited to the LoveLocalGov event focused on celebrating the best of local government work, showcasing our innovative work on developing the Housing, Accommodation and Homes Strategy for Surrey. There was genuine interest in the leadership role that Surrey County Council is taking in this space and the way we are helping to drive forward this agenda, even if we hold very little direct control over land and housing provision.



There is an ambitious programme of work underway across the organisation which contributes to tackling issues of housing supply and suitable tenure. The wide range of workstreams includes activities such as investment in transport through the Surrey Infrastructure Plan programme to reduce congestion and support sustainable growth; working with local partners involved in the One Public Estate Partnership, to establish funding bids for the development of brownfield sites; delivering our retrofit programmes, to improve the efficiency of homes across Surrey; working to help define the housing and accommodation needs to support an aging population in Surrey; and delivering the Accommodation with Care and Support Programme.

Housing, Health and Wellbeing - We have recently completed an update to the Housing Chapter of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which considers the relationship between housing and health, recognising that housing is a wider determinant of health and having a stable and secure home is one of the foundations of a good quality of life.

Delivering the Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy – ‘Right homes, right support’

The size and scale of our Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy demonstrates Surrey County Council’s commitment to transform how residents are supported to live independently in the ‘right homes with the right support’. In total, we have an ambition to deliver over 1,400 units of specialist accommodation across Surrey. We look forward to working with the market to realise this ambition, deliver improved outcomes for our residents and ensure ‘nobody is left behind’.

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We have set a target to deliver a minimum of 725 units of affordable Extra Care Housing for older people. We are making good progress delivering this ambition and have plans in place with development and housing management partners to deliver circa 350 units. We have secured full planning approval at one site and outline planning approval at a further two sites. This means construction will commence in 2024 on the first site.

We plan to reduce the number of people in residential care with learning disabilities and/or autism by 40 to 50%. This means that we need to increase the number of Supported Independent Living units in Surrey by at least 500 units. We have delivered or have plans in place to deliver circa 390 units of Supported Independent Living. Circa 340 units have been delivered with the market either through deregistering residential care homes to Supported Independent Living or through the market completing new acquisitions. There are plans in place to deliver 50 units of Supported Independent Living at four County Council owned sites across Surrey. All four sites have full planning approval and construction will commence in early 2024.

We have a target to deliver 185 to 210 units of Supported Independent Living for people with mental health needs. At Cabinet in April 2023 five sites were allocated capital funding for feasibility assessments and allocated as in-principle for Supported Independent Living for people with mental health needs. These future developments are subject to successful feasibility assessments, full business cases and approval by Cabinet. The site names and locations are currently confidential.

Over and above the work underway locally which contributes to the delivery of the strategy, we’re working to influence Government’s position and have shared with Ministers a Call to Government which reflects the policy and legislative changes required to address some of the housing supply issues.



Concept images show how Supported Independent Living could look, once completed, at Byfleet, Cobham and Horley (from L to R)