



Team
Reading

Striving for Excellence

● Preparation for Adult Social Care Assurance

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and
Education Committee.

January 2023

Context

- The Health and Care Act 2022 gave the **Care Quality Commission (CQC) new regulatory powers** to undertake independent assessment of **local authorities' delivery of regulated care functions** set out in Part 1 of the Care Act 2014.
- Under the Care Act, local authorities have duties to make sure that people who live in their areas:
 - ✓ Receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious, or delay the impact of their needs.
 - ✓ Can get the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support.
 - ✓ Have a range of high quality, appropriate services to choose from.
- CQC assurance of Adult Social Care is of great significance for local government and the governance of its Adult Social Care functions. It marks a shift from a system founded on council owned sector led improvement to one of **external assessment which hasn't been in place since 2010**.
- Where issues in how a council is meeting its Care Act 2014 duties are identified **the government will have the ability to intervene directly in the improvement processes and the decisions that the Council can make.**



Assurance

What is Assurance?

- Effective assurance by the CQC will provide evidence that what we determine to be our strengths really are strengths, that we have identified and manage risks to delivery and that our improvement plans have purpose, pace and impact. This is an essential mechanism to demonstrate accountability to our communities.
- CQC are likely to publish ratings for individual councils however this is likely to only be after having developed a national baseline which may take a couple of years to establish.

What will it look like?

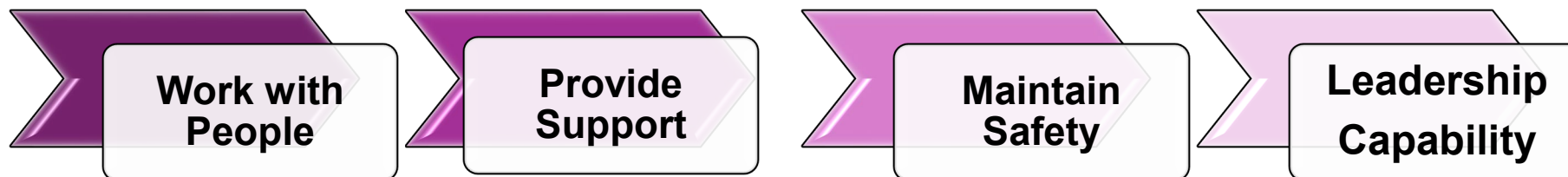
- Assessments are able to take place from April 2023. Although confirmation of this from the CQC is pending.
- It is expected that CQC will move away from inspections as being the only source of making judgements as they will rely on various data sources that measure quality, risk and performance utilising indicators such as ombudsman judgements, statutory returns and benchmarking. Physical visits will be used when they are the best means of gathering evidence.



CQC Approach

In September 2022, a DRAFT Local Authority Assessment Framework was issued which draws upon the Single Assessment Framework that has been adopted by CQC for assessing local authorities, providers and Integrated Care Systems. Local authorities will be assessed against a set of four key themes, each with several quality statements mapped to them:

1. **How Local Authorities work with people** → assessing needs (including for carers), supporting people to live healthier lives, prevention, wellbeing, information, and advice
2. **How Local Authorities provide support** → market shaping, commissioning workforce equality, integration and partnership working
3. **How Local Authorities ensure safety within the system** → safeguarding, safe system and continuity of care
4. **Leadership** → culture, strategic planning, learning, improvement, innovation, governance, management and sustainability.



What is our approach?

- In December 2022 the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) published ***Getting Ready for Assurance: A Guide to Support the Development of Your Adult Social Care Self-Assessment***, designed to enable the completion of **an objective, honest and authentic self-assessment**. It has been agreed that this approach will be followed in Reading and that preparation for the reforms and the resulting improvement journey will be titled '**Striving for Excellence**'.
- This self-assessment will **determine our strengths and identify risks** to delivery informing our **improvement plan** which will need to be robustly managed to **ensure purpose, pace and impact**, all of which will provide the assurance that CQC will be seeking via their assessment.
- To provide an accurate picture of adult social care the self-assessment must be **informed by experiences of service users, carers, professionals working in adult social care and partners**. All assertions need to be **evidenced** via key plans, routine and relevant reports; and policies and procedures with the **greatest weight given to experience and outcomes**.
- To ensure ownership and transparency the self -assessment should include **evidence of formal endorsement from those with the responsibility for delivering local priorities and plans and key contributors** e.g. the Council Leader; Chief Executive; Lead Member for Adult Social Care; Director of Social Care and Health; Director of Public Health; Safeguarding Adults Board chair; senior health colleague; Care Provider(s); a VCS representative; service user and carer representatives.



Learning from test sites and research

- In summer 2022, the **CQC tested their proposed assessment methodology** at two test and learn sites. They reported that a blend of **virtual and on-site assessment worked well** and that testing **helped identify challenges such as how best to include user voice, understanding what good looks like and making sure the follow up report is not too fragmented.**
- Test and learn sites reported that they found some of the **preparatory process challenging** as it required staff to view the impact of their work and how this is **evidenced from a different perspective.** Sites reported that staff enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to **reflect on their achievements** as well as identifying challenges with real value for staff in being involved and asked for their views and reflections. A key message was the **importance of being authentic.**
- **The Kings Fund also carried out research over summer 2022** on how local authorities improve the quality of adult social care, make improvements, measure success, and what type of support they use to make improvements. They found that while there is good work going on, **many of the markers of a quality improvement approach were missing – for example, sharing a common language or methods, being able to define and agree what quality includes, a clear theory of change, measurement of impact or continual efforts to continue and sustain improvement.**
- The Kings Fund noted that in addition to severe pressures on resource and capacity to identify areas for improvement and enact change, **local authorities have for a long time lacked a national framework to guide their efforts or in many cases control the levers to effect the change on the ground – with a lot of care being delivered by independent care providers.**



What have we achieve so far?

Resources →

- ✓ Project Manager resource identified and allocated
- ✓ Delivery Fund resources secured

Self-Assessment →

- ✓ Initial assessment completed to evaluate baseline and agree priorities
- ✓ A central repository called Tri-X has been procured for Policies and Procedures statutory guidance, local resources/induction information etc.

Engagement →

- ✓ Attending Peer Comparator Group with Medway and Portsmouth
- ✓ Strategy for consulting with service users drafted

Governance →

- ✓ Steering Group and governance process established



Phase 1 Project Plan

Phase	Activity	Date
1.	Completion of checklists based on CQC Quality Statements and assessment guidance, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, using evidence available. This should start to articulate the local context.	20/01/23
	Consultation and collaboration will commence to capture feedback from service users and carers, wider staff and leaders and partners	23/01/23
	An Evidence library will be launched containing key plans, routine and relevant reports; and policies and procedures. In addition a central log will commence of all links to data and performance information cited in the self-assessment.	23/01/23
2.	Completion of Self-Assessment Templates which will describe context and be supported by the evidence and insights from the checklists, will answer three core questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our ambition and what do we know about our performance and our impact? • How do we know this? • What are our plans to maintain or improve performance in this area? 	03/03/23
	Sign off by relevant partners of the completed self-assessment template with documentation providing a clear audit trail of the process undertaken.	10/03/23
3.	Final Self-Assessment completed.	22/03/23
	The final version of the self-assessment will be drafted drawing on the findings from Phases 1 and 2, setting the current performance in context. It will reflect the feedback received and draw out the key themes emerging relating to current performance.	
	confirm and test that plans to maintain and improve performance are in place and ensure completion of the evidence libraries.	24/03/23
	Formal process of sign off	31/03/23

Further Reporting

- Strong governance in the form of a monthly Striving for Excellence Board within the Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services (DACHS) and regular reporting to the Corporate Management Team will ensure pace and adherence to requirements.
- An update will be brought back **to ACE in May 2023** which will provide information on the outcome of the self-assessment and subsequent improvement journey.

