

Report for:
ACTION

Item Number:

Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	NO
Title	LGA Adult services Peer Challenge response
Responsible Officer(s)	Kerry Stevens, Strategic Director Adults and Public Health
Author(s)	Andrew Knox, Change and Transformation Programme Manager
Portfolio(s)	Cllr Josh Blacker, Healthy Lives
For Consideration By	Cabinet
Date to be Considered	14 June 2023
Implementation Date if Not Called In	26 June 2023
Affected Wards	All
Keywords/Index	Adult social care, Care Quality Commission, Local Government Association, inspection

Purpose of Report:

To report on the LGA peer challenge of Ealing's adult services conducted in February 2023., Ealing Council were the first Local Authority in London to engage with the LGA Peer Challenge framework to provide a basis for service development and to provide the Council with assurances in terms of inspection preparedness for future assurance framework and inspection approach from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The peer challenge highlighted a number of substantial positive aspects of adult services in Ealing, including Ealing's approach to transition into adulthood, support for the wellbeing of staff and a positive environment which promotes equality. The peer challenge also identified some areas of development for adult services, many of which had been identified by the Council as part of its self-assessment process, and which reflected a high level of self-awareness. The peer challenge exercise will further support the development of the Council's vision and strategic priorities for adult services, which will be co-designed with residents, partners and Ealing staff, and support delivery of the Council Plan.

1. Recommendations for NOTING

- 1.1 Note the final report and recommendations from the LGA Adults peer challenge.

2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered

- 2.1 An LGA peer challenge of adult services in Ealing was conducted in February 2023 and was commissioned to support the Council's planning for the future assurance framework and inspection approach from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- 2.2 The Cabinet is asked to note the report, recognising the significant strengths of adult services in Ealing identified in the peer challenge, and areas of future development. These will help inform and refresh the delivery plan for commissioning and social work operations in adult social care, the continued focus on delivery of the Council Plan, improving outcomes for Ealing residents, and preparing for future assurance and inspection by the Care Quality Commission.

3. Key Implications

- 3.1 The LGA peer challenge was conducted over 3 days between 7- 9 February 2023, with a peer team drawn from a number of local authorities, which included engagement with residents and a case audit. The exercise was based on the published CQC framework at that time. Ealing was the first local authority in London to receive an LGA peer challenge based on the framework, and as such was an early opportunity to assess preparedness for inspection. The peer challenge was preceded by internal analysis, engagement with staff and partners to begin development of a self-assessment in preparation for future assurance by the CQC.
- 3.2 The LGA peer challenge report, Appendix 1, sets out a summary of the information that the peer team found based on what they had read, and having spoken to a range of staff, partners, and residents during their visit. The LGA report noted that the preparation that Ealing had undertaken by way of a self-assessment was a good place to start, indicating that the Council had a high level of self-awareness of the strengths of adult services and the areas that required for future development. The peer challenge identified many positive aspects of Ealing's adult services and approaches across the inspection framework including:
 - The new administration has a very clear political direction driven by the Leader and his team
 - The Manifesto is clearly reflected in the Corporate Plan
 - High level, innovative bold and ambitious vision and priorities to create a dynamic organisation
 - Strong relationships with care providers, and that partners have positive relationships with adult services
 - A positive environment that promotes equality, diversity and inclusion

- Ealing’s approach to the transition of young people with special educational needs and disabilities into adult services demonstrates best practice
- Ealing’s staff are committed, passionate and invested in the lives of local people.

3.3 There are also a number of areas of consideration and future development that the peer challenge identified many of which aligned with the our self-assessment and which will inform the the department’s refreshed delivery plan and priorities. These include priorities to take forward work on vision and communications, quality assurance of practice, workforce development and equalities, community engagement and co-design, market and demand management, partnership working and statutory change.

4. Financial

4.1 The Adult Social Care budget is agreed through Ealing's medium term financial planning process to meet the demands of delivering social care in Ealing, including the delivery of the strategic priorities set out in the report.

4.2 The agreed budget for 2023/24 is £84.775m.

4.3 There is potential for significant spending pressures from a demand-led service such as Adult Social Care including cost of living, inflation and legacy cost of COVID-19. Although growth has been built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to help alleviate some of these pressures, they continue to present a significant risk to the budget, particularly in respect of the inflationary, demographic and contractual pressures.

4.4 There is a strong culture of financial management, control and reporting in place. This aims to ensure that spend is within the allocated budget requirement. Where there budget pressures are identified, management actions are identified to contain the budget pressure by year end.

4.5 As the Council shapes a response to the peer challenge, any further specific resource requirements that are identified as part of strategic planning processes will be considered as and when required to support delivery, and in the context of the Council’s overall financial position and delivery of Council Plan priorities.

4.6 As set out in the Autumn 2022 Budget Statement, the expected adult social care funding reforms have been pushed back to October 2025. The Council will continue to monitor and respond to changes in social care funding and factored into the MTFS.

5. Legal

5.1 The Care Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the appointed regulator for all health and adult social care services and its powers are contained within the Health and Social Care Act 2008.

5.2 In 2022, the CQC announced a new approach to its assessment and inspection framework. This was originally set to be implemented in early 2023, however is now planned to be delivered from the end of 2023, with the approach fully implemented from April 2024.

6. Value For Money

6.1 Adult services continues to have a focus on maximising value for money for all of its services, in the context of continued unprecedented demand for services, in working closely with the social care market, through the delivery of the Better Lives practice model and the management of demand for services. Further strategic planning will continue to seek to maximise value for money.

7. Sustainability Impact Appraisal

7.1 As strategic planning is undertaken including taking account of findings from the LGA peer challenge, officers will have regard to the Council's overall approach to sustainability, including refreshing the overall vision for adult social care ensuring alignment with sustainability principles for the wider organisation.

8. Risk Management

8.1 As adult services progress further strategic planning, taking account of the LGA peer challenge, there will continue to be a range of risks to manage which include ongoing unprecedented demand for services and financial pressures created, and national challenges associated with recruitment. The department will continue to use appropriate project and programme management approaches to manage and mitigate risks around future strategic planning including through engagement across the Council and with partners.

9. Community Safety

9.1 There are no community safety implications

10. Links to the 3 Key Priorities for the Borough

10.1 As adult services develops strategic plans going forward, including taking account of the findings from the LGA peer challenge, there will be a focus on enabling residents where possible to access good jobs, and volunteering opportunities, including those with learning disabilities, ensuring that we maximise and maintain the independence and quality of life of our residents and wider communities.

11. Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion

11.1 As adult services progress future strategic planning in response to the peer challenge any significant policy or service changes arising from the future vision and priorities will be subject to equalities assessment and meet the public sector duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

12. Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications

- 12.1 The peer challenge report highlights a range of positive aspects of workforce planning in Ealing as well as the training and development offer for Ealing staff. The report also recognises the national challenge in recruitment and retention for adult services. As the Council develops strategic plans, it will build on it's workforce strategy, including a continued focus on recruitment and retention of social care staff across the sector, and seek to develop innovative ways to attract and retain high quality social work staff.

13. Property and Assets

- 13.1 There are no property implications of this report.

14. Consultation

- 14.1 A range of partners, and service users participated in the peer challenge exercise, feeding into the overall appraisal of adult services provided by the LGA. As adult services respond to the findings of the peer challenge, including refreshing a future vision and strategic priorities, the principles of co-design, consultation and engaging communities will be at the forefront.

15. Timetable for Implementation

- 15.1 The peer challenge report, alongside the Council's adult services self-assessment and the Council Plan, will inform a refresh of a vision for adult services and development of future strategic plans and priorities. This will include engaging with service heads, team managers and frontline staff in the department as part of further staff involvement, alongside residents and partners. The outputs of future action planning will be reviewed at regular intervals by senior officers and the Cabinet member for Healthy lives.

16. Appendices

- 16.1 Appendix 1: The report of the LGA peer challenge conducted in February 2023

17. Background Information

National policy ambitions for Social Care:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-system-reform-next-steps-to-put-people-at-the-heart-of-care/next-steps-to-put-people-at-the-heart-of-care>

CQC Assessment and Inspection approach: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/news/our-new-single-assessment-framework>

Consultation

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
Internal				
Kerry Stevens	Strategic Director of Adults and Public Health	5 April	17 May 2023	Comments incorporated in report
Adenike Tilleray	Assistant Director, Commissioning and Use of resource	5 April	28 April 2023	Comments incorporated in report
Jacky Yates	Assistant Director, Adult Social Care operations	5 April	4 May 2023	Comments incorporated in report
Jumoke Adebisi/Russell Dyer	Senior Finance business Advisor	5 May	17 May	4
Justin Morley	Head of Legal Services (Litigation)	1 June 2023	1 June 2023	5
Emily Hill	Strategic Director of Resources	1 June 2023	1 June 2023	4
External				
Not applicable				

Report History

Decision type:	Urgency item?
Non-key decision	No
Report no.:	Report author and contact for queries:
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