

# **Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee - 7 March 2023**

## **Report from the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health**

### **Preparedness for CQC Assurance**

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#### **1. The new assurance framework**

The Health and Care Act 2022 puts CQC assessment of local authorities and Integrated Care Systems on a statutory footing. The new assurance process commences in April 23. It aims to:

- Provide clarity about what we are doing well
- Offer constructive suggestions about where we could improve
- Be informed by what matters to people who draw on care and support
- Provide an independent view of our capacity to improve
- Rate local authorities against a set of standards as inadequate, requires improvement, good or outstanding

The assurance process covers all the local authorities' responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, which impacts all parts of our directorate: adult social care operations, integrated commissioning and some aspects of public health, as well as corporate support across HR, data and performance, ICT and digital and communications, and NHS organisations to whom we delegate some of these responsibilities. Our responsibilities under the Care Act include:

- promoting wellbeing
- preventing, reducing, or delaying needs
- information and advice
- market shaping and commissioning of adult care and support
- identifying needs
- financial assessment
- person-centred care and support planning
- safeguarding
- integration and partnership working

The Care Act links to the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act - meaning that CQC will also assess our performance in these areas.

CQC's assessment framework is grouped into four key themes with a series of quality statements linked to them:

- *How councils work with people* – assessing needs, care planning and review, direct payments, charging, supporting people to live healthier lives, prevention, wellbeing, information, and advice.
- *How councils provide support* – market shaping, commissioning, workforce capacity and capability, integration and partnership working.
- *How councils ensure safety* – safeguarding enquiries, reviews, Safeguarding Adults Board, safe systems, pathways and continuity of care.
- *Leadership* – culture, strategic planning, learning, improvement, innovation, governance, management and sustainability.

There are nine quality statements against which we will be required to provide evidence of how we are doing, how we know, and what we are doing to improve:

- Assessing needs
- Supporting people to live healthier lives
- Equity in experiences and outcomes
- Care provision, integration and continuity
- Partnerships and communities
- Safe systems, pathways and transitions
- Safeguarding
- Governance, management and sustainability
- Learning, improvement and innovation

Our understanding of the likely approach by CQC is that an initial review will look at nationally held data sets and benchmarking across our comparator local authority groups. A review of the data related to the ICS is likely to be undertaken at the same time, because the assessment approach will consider the local authority's role as a system partner as well as delivery of its adult social care functions as set out by the Care Act.

CQC's review of data will be supported by a self-assessment process whereby the local authority will be able to provide its own account and narrative of improvement. On site activity is expected, which may take the form of specific thematic reviews or a large-scale on-site review. Further information from CQC on its approach is expected, but at time of writing no information has been published.

## **2. Our approach to preparedness**

Oversight of our preparedness for CQC assurance is through our Adults' Transformation Board which meets monthly to agree strategic plans, unblock any challenges, and monitor progress. The board is chaired by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, Wellbeing and Communities.

Ongoing management of our preparedness is through a monthly Assurance steering board which is chaired by the Director of Quality, Performance and Strategy. Membership of this

board comprises senior leads from operations and support services, integrated commissioning, finance, HR and performance and data teams. A transformation manager and project manager are assigned to this portfolio of work. The steering board has identified four key workstreams:

- Self-assessment (how are we doing)
- Data (how do we know)
- Improvement planning (what are we doing to improve)
- Communications and engagement

The LGA has provided a set of guidance documents and templates to support a three-stage approach to self-assessment, which we are using to support our preparation:

- Self-assessment checklists for evidence
- Self-assessment reflective template
- The formal self-assessment (for submission to CQC)

In October 2022 we started the completion of checklists based on the CQC Quality Statements and assessment guidance, to identify strengths and areas for improvement, using the evidence available. We have supported this process via a series of bi-monthly workshops involving senior representatives across the directorate.

From January 2023 we have started using the LGA self-assessment reflective templates, with the aim of supporting a thematic view across the directorate. The CQC quality statements touch on all aspects of our service delivery, so we are using this process to promote collaboration across teams. The self-assessment templates aim to help us describe our context, supported by the evidence and insights from the checklists, to answer three core questions:

- 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?

We have set up a Data task group which reports into the Assurance steering board. This is chaired by the Director of Quality, Performance and Strategy. This group looks at our self-assessment approach (described above) through a lens of data and insight. The self-assessment process will enable the task group to undertake a gap analysis, looking at where we use data to evidence our statements and strategic planning, and where we do not. This will help inform decision making and prioritisation on our overall data use and inform our aspirations to become more data led (see section 4).

The Data task group is also looking at the template for our final self-assessment and drafting a version of our narrative based on the data we have available. This will include all the

nationally available data. On the assumption that CQC will take a data led view of local authorities and integrated systems before conducting any on site activity, it is important that we are able to set out our understanding of the story that our data is telling us.

We are being supported regionally via ADASS. The Executive Director for Adult Social Care, Well Being and Communities and the Director of Quality, Performance and Strategy are linked into peer groups with Devon and Somerset Councils which is a source of support and benchmarking for our approach, including how we might approach an introductory session with CQC in the event of an onsite visit, and preparing our self-assessment.

In February we held a workshop which reviewed our progress towards our self-assessment and planned for our next stage of preparedness. Key findings from that workshop were that we needed more time to develop our evidence collection and to develop a collective view of our self-assessment across the directorate.

### **Next steps**

- Small group workshops will be held in early March 2023 to review our narrative against the CQC quality statements and to inform our self-assessment
- Our first draft self-assessment will be produced for the end of March 2023
- A period of engagement across the Council, people with lived experience and our partners will take place from April 2023
- The self-assessment will go through a series of iterations from April 2023 onwards
- From June 2023, we will focus on the development of our strategic plan arising from CQC preparation and on preparations for an external view ahead of any CQC visit. The LGA are offering a “CQC style” peer review, and we have arranged an initial scoping session (17 February 2023) to find out more.

The first draft (version one) of the self-assessment will be developed drawing on the findings from the stages, setting out our current performance in context. It will reflect the feedback we have received and draw out the key themes relating to current performance. It will be subject to a process of ongoing review and development thereafter.

### **3. Early indications**

Feedback from the LGA on early CQC style peer reviews has told us that across local authorities:

- CQC Inspection will change the culture of adult social care
- Capacity and capability will need to be developed to meet data requirements
- Ongoing creation of the self-assessment framework will be needed

- Case file audit and lived experience interviews are a valuable focus
- Councils need a consistent and authentic narrative for their adult social care service driven by data and personal experience
- This narrative needs to be shared with those with a lived experience, carers, frontline staff, team leaders, middle managers, senior adult social care staff, corporate centre, politicians, partners in health, and the voluntary and community sector.

From our workshops, evidence gathering to date and buddy sessions with other south west local authorities, we know that our strengths and challenges in respect of CQC assurance are similar to other local authorities:

- We are not used to being asked to provide an assessment of ourselves, and the ongoing implications of this will require a change in culture and adaptation to ways of working
- We need to improve the way we collaborate across our directorate
- We are doing great work in many places, but do not always have a strategic plan to guide our direction of travel
- Access to and use of data to inform our performance is a significant challenge
- We need to improve how we seek feedback from people with lived experience
- We have good evidence of a strengths based approach in front line practice
- Our partnership arrangements are strong in many areas and where they are not we are taking action to improve them.

#### **4. Our strategic plan**

We are using our preparedness for CQC Assurance as a lever to develop our strategic approach to quality assurance, improvement, prioritisation and transformation. CQC assurance will remain a key portfolio in our two-year plan for transformation, and will drive four key areas. These are:

- Data strategy
- Improvement strategy
- Prioritisation approach for our Transformation programme
- Development of a local account or annual report for adult social care

Data is vital for answering the question “how do we know” about our performance and standards. It supports us to measure improvement and tells us where to look for emerging issues. The quality and use of data are a known challenge for adult social care. Technical infrastructure and culture are two important elements to address when considering how to move to a data driven or intelligence led approach. A gap analysis arising from our self-assessment will help us to understand the root causes of our challenges in more detail, which will enable us to develop a strategic approach to data. This will set out how we use our technology and support services as well as helping us identify what data we need and how to measure our impact and performance effectively. We will develop this strategy from July 2023.

An improvement strategy is vital for answering the question “what are we doing to improve?”. The self-assessment process will support the identification of our priority improvement areas, and will support the development of an ongoing, proportionate quality assurance process. The improvement strategy will set out this approach, design the governance and processes we need to support this. We will develop this strategy from July 2023.

Many of our improvements are already recognised and being developed by local teams or through our Adult Social Care Transformation programme where large scale, systemic or transformative change is needed. Our Transformation Programme will be flexible to accommodate local and national priorities over the next two years and will be subject to ongoing review and alignment with the ICB programmes. Our improvement strategy will support prioritisation and ensure we are working on the right areas at the right time. At the same time, our Transformation Programme is our main vehicle for addressing large scale, systemic or transformative improvements that arise from the self-assessment and CQC assurance process. Our Assurance process and our Transformation programme will therefore develop an ongoing relationship of review and iteration. Our Strategic Lead for Transformation and Head of Quality and Performance, reporting to the Director of Quality, Performance and Strategy will lead this work.

To help embed self-assessment, assurance, transformation and data into our ways of working, a local account or annual report will be produced on an annual cycle. This will enable Adult Social Care to bring our self-assessment, assurance, transformation and data activities to life, tell the story of what we do well and where we are improving. It will support ongoing engagement with the public and with our system partners, helping us to explain who we are and what we do, and support strategic planning across the directorate and wider system. The timeframe for the production of a local account or annual report will be agreed following the sign off of our first draft of our self-assessment.

