

CABINET BRIEFING REPORT

Adult Social Care Improvement Plan



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our vision for the delivery of Adult Social Care in Plymouth is for our advice, support and services to have a tangible impact on the lives of those we work with and care for:

Gloriously Ordinary Lives

Social Care Futures

“People living their best life doing the things that matter to them. Living in a place they call home and supported by their own thriving connected community, able to access high quality advice, information and timely local services and support, where appropriate, in a way that they choose.”

In delivering our statutory duties under the Care Act we want to work alongside people and communities at the earliest opportunity, to understand what they feel are their strengths and challenges in planning for the future, underpinned by the following principles:

- Test and learn;
- Strength based model of practice;
- Trauma informed approaches;
- Person centred care;
- Promoting independence;

Recovery, reablement, rehabilitation;

Flexible long-term care for those who need it.

We want to make sure that our teams are empowered to work creatively with people, supported by a joined-up offer from the whole of the Council and commissioned health and care providers alongside the voluntary community sector.

Adult Social Care in Plymouth is delivered jointly with Livewell Southwest, with a number of functions delegated to Livewell, with others retained by the Council. This arrangement has been in place since 2015 and aims to support a more integrated response for people with social care and health needs.

The Council delivers	Livewell Southwest delivers
Contact Centre	Referral and Support Service
Commissioning	Care Act Assessments of need
Direct delivery of services including Independence at home, Colwill Lodge, the Vines and the Community Outreach Team	Care Act reviews of need
Disabled Facilities Grants	Occupational Therapy
Brokerage and Direct Payments support	Community Crisis Response Team
Court of Protection Deprivations of Liberty (DOL's)	Community Deprivation of Liberty (DOL's)
Safeguarding	
Complaints and compliments	

2. OUR APPROACH TO IMPROVEMENT

In autumn 2024 to support our approach we carried out a self-assessment of Adult Social Care, which describes our view of our strengths and areas for improvement. We have then further reviewed the self-assessment in January 2025.



The self-assessment identifies the following areas of strength:

- Strong partnerships focused on integrated working;
- Clear political and whole system leadership with a focus on improving outcomes for our population (driven by the Plymouth Plan);
- Our relational approach to Commissioning with care providers as partners in delivery;
- Strong improvement focused governance;
- Good staff retention in a committed workforce across the Council and Livewell, supported by our Caring Plymouth partnership to future-proof a focus on careers in Adult Social Care;
- Community partnerships underpinned by empowerment, building resilience and an understanding of relationships and trauma;
- Integrated approaches to hospital discharge, reablement and admission avoidance;

We also recognised the areas where we want to focus on further improvement:

- Reduce waiting times for assessments and reviews, so people access support when they need it and are safe and confident while they are waiting;
- Redesign our system operating model to reduce, prevent and delay the need for statutory intervention and support;
- Develop and consistently embed our approach to co-production and engagement;
- Improve our arrangements to support young people transition into adulthood;
- More actively seek out, listen to and respond to people who are most likely to experience inequality in experience or outcomes;
- Develop more integrated arrangements for safeguarding and brokerage;
- Ensure that carers are consistently included in discussions about the person they care for and provided with high quality information;

Peer Review – January 2025

In order to test our assumptions, we requested a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review of Adult Social Care, which took place in January 2025.

The peer review team spent three days with the teams, were given access to over 300 documents, 10 case files, and held 40 meetings with 180 different people from across Adult Social Care and our partners. The team also tested our readiness for CQC inspection of Adult Social Care.

The key messages from the peer review were:

- We know ourselves well in our strengths and areas of improvement;
- There is a clear commitment to integration and partnership working, but this does not always reach all frontline staff;
- There is a perception amongst some staff that the balance between managing health and social care needs at times is more focused on health;
- A clearer social care practice model is needed, to focus on a strengths-based approach;
- Improvements are needed in how we record equality and diversity and inclusion in practice and case recordings;
- People need to wait less long for assessments and reviews and be given clearer information while they wait;
- Commissioning arrangements are “robust and proactive” with strong relationships with providers;
- Hospital discharge is well supported by teams and services, but reablement could be further extended to the community;
- Ensure greater oversight of Occupational Therapy practice and performance in relation to Care Act duties within Livewell;
- VCSE partners are well-led, “professional, skilled and actively engaged in helping shape the future”;
- Wellbeing Hubs are “excellent” and could be part of reaching more Adult Social Care clients in their communities;

CQC inspection – June 2025

We received notification of our CQC inspection of Adult Social Care in January 2025. This required the submission of files to CQC, to provide data and qualitative information about the delivery of Adult Social Care in Plymouth. In April we received formal notification of our date for the face-to-face inspection, to take place 10th-12th June.

Prior to the face-to-face inspection we delivered a three-hour presentation to the inspection team, supported by the Council Chief Executive, Lead Member and the senior leadership team from both the Council and Livewell. This was to set the scene about life in Plymouth and our areas of strengths and areas for development. The inspection team also spent some time having virtual meetings with external partners including commissioned providers such as the carers service. They also had direct conversations with some people with lived experience of receiving support from Adult Social Care.

The CQC inspection has now concluded and we will receive initial feedback later in July, with the full inspection report to follow. This may take between 3-6 months to be received. In the meantime, we are using the feedback gathered during the inspection to further refresh the improvement plan to ensure that we maintain a robust approach to key priority.

3. IMPROVEMENT PLAN

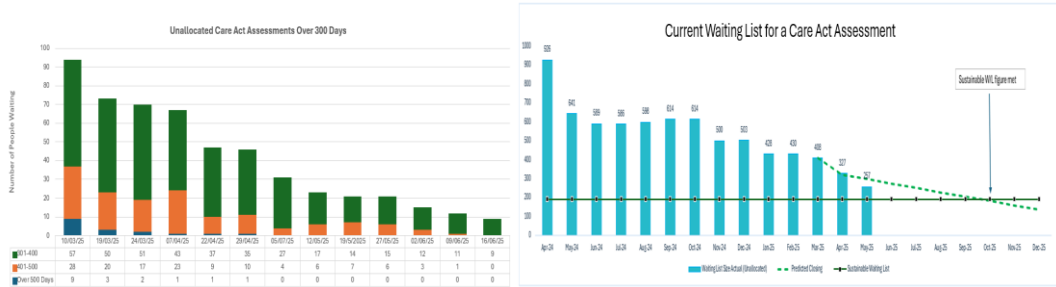
Following the LGA peer review in January, an evaluation of the transformation programme was undertaken to refresh the key priorities into eight distinct programmes of work for **Phase 1**:



Progress against phase I of the improvement plan is shown in the table below and driven by the following principles:

- Driving change at pace to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people we serve;
- Supporting cultural change in our social care workforce;
- Embracing innovation, including in the use of technology;
- Ensuring there are links between the Adult Social Care improvement plan and the transformation of Children's Services, to support transitions for families;
- Maximising connectivity with city-wide programmes of change, including City-wide Help and Prevention and the development of Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (NHS initiative);




ADULT SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – PHASE I

Programme	Objective	Progress to date	Key target/ Completed by	R A G
Improving Waiting Times and experience SRO: Livewell Chief Operating Officer and Head of Adult Social Care	Enhance the experience and timeliness of people awaiting Adult Social Care assessments and reviews	Care Act Assessments <p>A clearly defined pathway has been created with a target of 85% of Care Act assessments to be completed within 35 days from receipt of the referral.</p> <p>A revised governance framework has been implemented to enhance the recording of activity and to provide clear definition of waiting list positions. This includes a targeted approach to prioritising people with the longest waiting times. Over the past three months, efforts have been concentrated on those waiting more than 301 days, resulting in a reduction to nine individuals at the time of this report. Following a review of capacity, we anticipate that Care Act assessment will reach a sustainable waiting list position in October 2025.</p> 	<p>Phase 1 - Waiting list at sustainable levels by (30th October 2025)</p> <p>Phase 2 – to reach defined pathway time frame (31 January 2026)</p>	Green
		Care Act Reviews <p>In alignment with national CLD data sets 58.5% of people have had a review of their needs completed within the last twelve months, which is an improvement of 22% over the last twelve months. Our current KPI is to meet the regional benchmark of 60.7%, to support our continued plan Livewell Southwest have a dedicated review team to support continued improvement in this area.</p>	When do we aim to achieve 60.7% (1st November 2025)	Yellow
		Waiting Well <p>A Waiting Well policy has been implemented to ensure we have a consistent approach to managing risk and prioritisation while people are waiting. This is embedded across teams and ensures people awaiting an assessment have clear and regular information regarding what is happening with their referral.</p>	<p>Phase 1 - 50% of people referred receiving a supportive text message (30th August 2025)</p> <p>Phase 2 – 85% of people to be contacted by LRSS within 5 days on</p>	Green

		<p>As part of the Waiting Well programme, our initial objective is to ensure that upon receiving a referral, each individual is sent a confirmation text message. This message includes helpful information and guidance to support them during their wait. Currently, 13% of referrals receive this message and engage with the additional resources provided. Our goal is to increase this engagement rate to 50% by August 2025.</p> <p>To enhance risk stratification, the LRSS team proactively contacted every individual on the early waiting list to conduct a check-in. This was done to confirm that their risk status aligns with the Waiting Well policy.</p>	receipt of referral (30 November 2025)	
		<p>Occupational Therapy (OT)</p> <p>Following our Peer Review we have greater visibility of data relating to OT referrals which relate to our Care Act duties and timescales around waiting times.</p> <p>The next stage is to rapidly confirm improvement activities to reduce waiting times and manage risk. We will use similar methodology to that which was used for Care Act waiting times including the Waiting Well policy and have started to undertake demand modelling to review any workforce gaps.</p>	<p>Phase 1: have the waiting list on one system to improve visibility and clarity of the waiting list.</p> <p>Phase 1.1 clear understanding of waiting list position and visibility of data (30th April 2025)</p> <p>Phase 1.2: Development of recovery plan – to support understanding of improvement journey (30th September 2025)</p>	
<p>Communication & Engagement</p> <p>SRO:</p> <p>Director of Adult Social Services and Chief Operating Officer Livewell</p>	Enhance communication and collaboration	<p>The program focuses on creating a culture of open dialogue, improving interpersonal communication skills and fostering stronger connections between departments, leading to increased efficiency productivity, and improved understanding of the challenges we are facing together.</p> <p>This will address common communication challenges, siloed information, collaborative activities and the use of communication tools to streamline workflows and information-sharing.</p>	Ongoing with Livewell and Council staff	
<p>Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)</p> <p>SRO:</p> <p>Service Director for Adult Social Care</p>	Ensure equitable access to Adult Social Care in Plymouth by embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion	<p>We have improved our compliance in recording of Equalities data and continue to prioritise this.</p> <p>Delivered EDI training and updated our EDI training/resource tools available to practitioners.</p> <p>Included EDI measures in our case auditing and quality assurance processes.</p> <p>Set up an Adult Social Care Equalities Board with involvement from Public Health and Policy team to review EDI data and focus on areas for Equity of access to Adult Social Care.</p>	Ongoing with Livewell and Council staff	

<div>People & Practice</div> <div>SRO:</div> <div>Livewell Principal Social Worker</div>	<div>Strengthen the quality, consistency, and inclusivity of Adult Social Care practice across all social work teams</div>	<div>Our monthly practice-based audits are carried out by team managers and the community of social work practice team. Between April 2024 and April 2025, we have focused on the following areas:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Referral and triageCare Act assessment and ReviewMental CapacitySafeguarding</div> <div>The outcomes from the audits to date are shown below:</div> <div><div><div>Audits</div></div><div><div>Safeguarding</div></div><div><div>Referral and Triage</div></div><div><div>Care Act and Review</div></div><div><div>Mental Capacity</div></div></div> <div>Learning over the last year has led to focus on:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Mental Capacity and Best Interest: we continue to provide training each month around mental capacity assessments, leading to a 50% improvement in quality and contentCommunity Deprivation of liberty: we have provided training by our practice lead, as well as developed a resource page on SharePointMaking and evidencing defensible decisions - identified as an area for improvement, where staff needed to record steps taken and options considered in order to explain how the outcome/decision was reached. External training sourced with research in practice and attended by just under 50 staff, as well as resources shared and available on SharePoint.</div>	<div>Practice support and audit activity is ongoing</div> <div>Ratings</div> <div>2025 aiming for 85% of all audits being good or outstanding.</div> <div>2026 goal of 90%+ good and outstanding.</div> <div>Phase 1:</div> <div>Development of Practice Framework: Complete</div> <div>Understanding and Development of Training Opportunities: Complete</div> <div>Review of Quality Assurance Process: Complete</div> <div>Phase 2:</div> <div>Develop/Design method of tracking and monitoring care act and review assessments being shared with the individuals/their representatives: 30th June 2025</div> <div>Engagement with workforce – roll out of practice framework: 30th July 2025</div> <div>EDI data review to understand impact of training undertaken: 14th August 2025</div>
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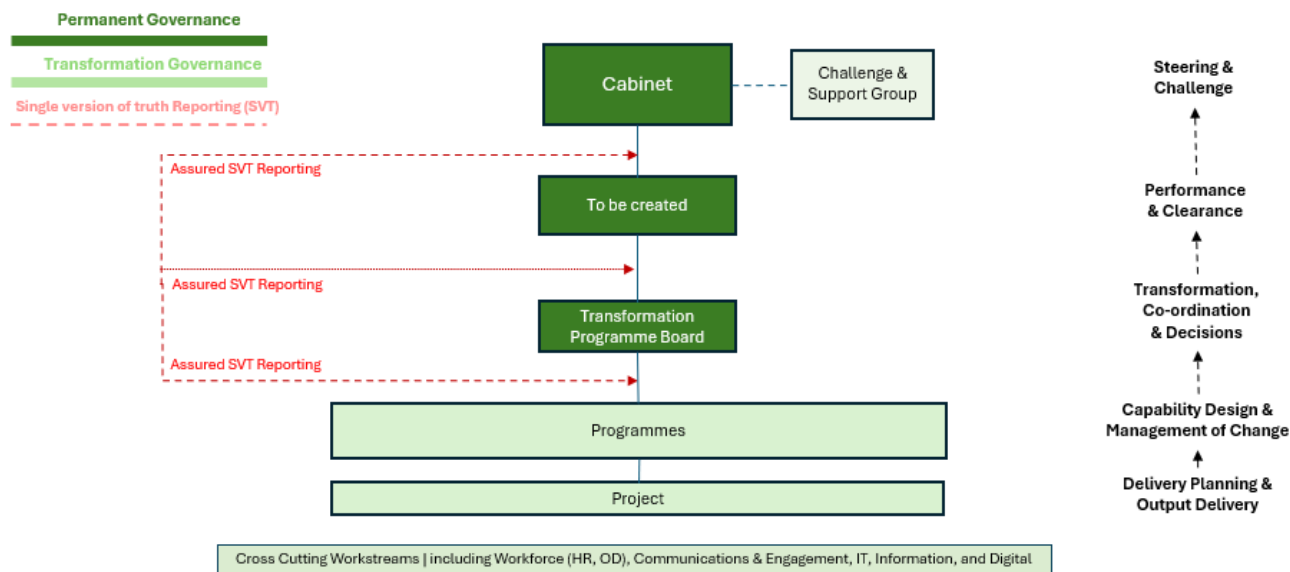
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality, diversity and inclusion: learning taken from audits and quality assurance, as well as dashboard reports. A guidance page has been produced with training sessions booked in with teams end of June/early July. Strengths-based practice - learning taken from audits and quality assurance, which led to a survey being sent out to staff, which fed back that staff feel they need to record assessments from a deficit point of view in order to evidence level of need. Resources shared on SharePoint around strengths-based practice, practice framework developed and aiming to go live in July, with commitment to training for staff. Safeguarding focus on providing feedback to the referrer and how we capture this. 		
Inspection SRO: Head of Innovation and Delivery, Strategic Commissioning	Ensuring that the CQC inspection is planned effectively and executed efficiently	<p>This programme is complete. Key outcomes are detailed below.</p> <p>Local Government Association Peer Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted a structured LGA peer review to identify an initial outcome understand our strengths and weaknesses prior to the formal CQC inspection. Undertaking 40 interviews over 3 days involving 180 people. Developing a clear and actionable improvement plan informed by the initial self-assessment and LGA peer review feedback. Development of Recoding of Waiting Times Guidance to improve overall clear understanding and visibility of waiting list positions across Livewell Southwest. <p>CQC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Onsite CQC inspection undertook 36 interviews involving 154 people. This included internal and external teams across a wide range of providers across the city, including people with lived experience. Submitted an Information Return which covered 38 themes of investigation and enquiry, inclusive of our Self- Assessment, which supported the development of a clear vision and key priorities within Adult Social Care. Delivery of 28 hours of bespoke internal training and preparation discussions with staff who were involved in direct interviews during the inspection. Delivery of a 3-hour Senior Leadership presentation detailing out Adult Social Care Service provision across the city. Delivered debriefing sessions across 138 people who attended the CQC inspection, allowing prompt and timely triangulation of information to support improved information being shared in ongoing interviews. 	Complete	

Vision & Strategy SRO: Director of Adult Social Services, Service Directors Adult Social Care and Strategic Commissioning	Co-design and deliver a future-ready adult social care system that is person-centred, inclusive, and sustainable	We have undertaken a comprehensive Self-assessment of Adult Social Care, outlining our perspective on current strengths and areas requiring improvement. In conjunction with this, we have developed a strategic vision, which has been effectively communicated and shared both internally and with external partners. 	Complete (Self-assessment to be reviewed January 2026)	
		We have worked in partnership with Changing Futures to develop a Commissioning Co-Production Tool Kit. The toolkit contains practical guidance on how to co-produce services with people with lived experience as well as case studies of where this has taken place. Training in how to use the toolkit is being rolled out to commissioners including those from our partner organisations, with the aim of 100% of commissioning staff being trained by the end of July. Training is also being offered to partners we co-commission with. 	100% of Commissioning staff to be trained in co-production by the end of July 2025	
The Meadow View SRO: Service Director for Adult Social Care, Strategic Lead for Adult Social Care	Consolidation of the Vine and Colwill services into a single, specially designed facility as a centre of excellence for people with learning and physical disabilities.	Building company now procured and began building work. New oversight board set up to provide whole programme governance. Planned the HR management of change process for staff moving from existing services into the new service. 	Main works on site commence: 18 th August 2025 Handover build period commences: July 2026 Practical build Completion: 27 th July 2026 Key Milestones to be planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CQC registration - Service Specification and workforce planning - Co-production engagement events 	

Digital Programme SRO: Service Director for Adult Social Care, Operations Development Manager	Using digital innovation and technology to support people to live independent and fulfilling lives	<p>The Eclipse system has been fully embedded to support comprehensive case recording and reporting. This cloud-based platform facilitates clear documentation and enables secure information sharing across partner agencies.</p> <p>Currently 12 organisations including Family Hubs, are actively utilising the system, with an additional 3 organisations in the process of onboarding. Looking ahead, the introduction of a financial portal within Eclipse will further enhance functionality. This development will expand access for community providers and support more accurate and efficient processes for payments and charging.</p>	Ongoing	
		<p>AI: We have entered into a partnership with Agilysys to pilot a transcription service aimed at enhancing the efficiency of Care Act Assessments. The pilot, offered at no cost, is being developed in collaboration with LWSW and will run for an initial period of one month. A small cohort of team members will participate in the pilot to enable a "test and learn" approach. Potential pilot areas include the Urgent Care or Care Home teams.</p> <p>Anticipated Benefits: Estimated time savings of 3–5 hours per week per social worker, contributing to increased capacity and improved service delivery.</p> <p>Consideration: Is the potential for increased costs. The pilot will therefore include an evaluation of the "invest to save" potential, assessing whether the time savings justify future investment.</p>	AI Test & Learn Pilot: 30 th September 2025	
		<p>Better Care Finance: The system is currently undergoing final accuracy checks. Once approved, a go-live date is projected for July 2025. The next steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data migration to ensure continuity and integrity of existing records. • Familiarisation sessions for social work teams, with resources embedded within the ECM system. • Integration with the Data Warehouse to support reporting and analytics. <p>The implementation aims to deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-informed care planning: Care packages will be aligned with a clear understanding of financial implications at the point of application. • Enhanced access to benefits information: People will be better informed about the financial support they may be eligible for. • Reduction in council-held debt: By improving clarity and communication, the system aims to decrease outstanding payments. • Increased efficiency for social workers: Time savings will be achieved through easier access to financial data, supporting quicker decision-making. 	Better Care Finance: Roll-out by 31 st July 2025	

Technology Enabled Care SRO: Livewell Chief Operating Officer and Service Director for Adult Social Care	To test the use of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) solutions to support individuals in maintaining their independence and continuing to live safely in their own homes.	<p>This pilot will explore how digital tools and assistive technologies can complement traditional care models and enhance outcomes for service users.</p> <p>‘Beanbag’ Test & Learn: We will be deploying 50 monitoring devices to people receiving a Reablement service</p> <p>The implementation aims to deliver the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test the use of Technology Enabled Care within ASC in Plymouth, including cultural changes to practice • Increase independence for people receiving a Reablement services following a hospital admission • Reduce risk of admission or readmission to hospital • Reduce reliance on domiciliary care • Support unpaid carers 	Bean Bag Test & Learn: 30 th October 2025	
Safeguarding Test & Learn SRO Service Director for Adult Social Care	An Integrated Safeguarding Team working to improve the timeliness and quality of support for individuals.	<p>We are developing integrated PCC and Livewell Safeguarding teams, trialling different approaches to ensure that teams are working and collaborating more closely and we respond to safeguarding referrals efficiently and quickly.</p> <p>We have reduced our backlog of Safeguarding enquiries awaiting allocation from 33 to 0 in the last six months.</p> <p>We have set up a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) management board with oversight of DoLS practice and reduction in waiting times.</p>	<p>Phase 1: Test & Learn – Complete</p> <p>Phase 2: Options Appraisal Paper (30th July 2025)</p> <p>Phase 2.1: two project streams to develop improved referral quality and feedback to people (30th September 2025)</p>	
Direct Payment Services SRO Service Director for Adult Social Care	To enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of the Direct Payments service, to support people to maximise their independence.	<p>Direct Payment numbers are increasing and currently at 605 (increase of 7). We are seeing an average of ten new Direct Payments every month and a lower number of people ending their Direct Payments.</p> <p>We have implemented simple user guides for all Direct Payment recipients, to support recruitment and employment of personal assistants.</p> <p>We have Direct Payments training planned for later in 2025.</p> <p>We are in the process of bringing our support for Direct Payments in-house meaning we will have greater control over how we can ensure that Direct Payments are easy to manage and effective.</p> <p>We have recently awarded a new contract for payroll services to ensure that Direct Payment recipients have access to expert financial support.</p>	31 st January 2026	

Tracking against the improvement plan is reinforced by regular joint meetings between the Council and Livewell to consider performance data, practice improvements and the learning from audits, complaints and compliments.



This approach will include the establishment of a quarterly quality and safeguarding Adult Social Care Assurance meeting.

Phase 2 of improvement plan activity will ensure greater focus on the following areas and also include any further learning or feedback from the outcome of the CQC inspection:

- Occupational Therapy – development of future service plan;
- Front door of Adult Social Care – from planning to initiation;
- Enhancing the community offer of reablement – broadening the offer from supporting hospital discharge;
- Technology Enabled Care (TEC) – the plan for innovation, pilots and staff training;
- Wellbeing Hubs – embedding the presence of Adult Social Care practitioners in Hubs;
- Brokerage – co-design of an integrated function;
- Transitions from Children to Adult Social care services – ongoing improvements with partners through a Transitions Board;
- Support for carers – ongoing monitoring through the multi-agency Carers Strategic Partnership Board, associated strategy and action plan;