

Governance, management and sustainability

Score 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

The local authority commitment

We have clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. We act on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and we share this securely with others when appropriate.

Key findings for this quality statement

Governance, accountability and risk management

There were clear and effective governance, management and accountability arrangements at all levels within the local authority. There were clear processes in place which utilised data and performance metrics as well as examples of people's experiences to bring to life the reporting of outcomes and performance. These provided visibility and assurance on the delivery of Care Act duties, quality and sustainability of services as well as people's experience. For example, the ASC Assurance Board reports provided good oversight with detailed analysis looking at variations in data and targets. Overdue progress was clearly tracked with a risk management approach taken.

There were clear and effective risk management processes in place. The risk register was reviewed and updated regularly. It was clear that the issues identified on the risk register matched those identified as priorities within the relevant strategies, for example, the need for additional supported accommodation. The senior leaders said that they were confident in the performance data that they were provided with and that this supported them in effective decision making.

There was a stable adult social care leadership team in place, all of whom were passionate about providing good outcomes for people. The leadership team was led by a very committed and motivational Director of Adult Social Care (DASS). The culture of the local authority was one which senior leaders, including the Chief Executive were proud of. The culture was clearly understood by staff at all levels and one which they found to be positive and empowering.

Staff told us that leaders at all levels were visible, capable and compassionate. Staff felt able to speak up and escalate risk. They told us that they regularly reviewed risk on their caseloads with their line managers and that the management of this was a shared responsibility. They described a flexible, safe and supportive culture. We heard that directors attended workshops with staff to hear about their views and that the DASS had been out on visits with the frontline staff teams. Staff told us that the senior leaders had been open with them in discussions about the current budgetary challenges and that this made them feel included and able to understand decisions that had to be made.

The local authority's political and executive leadership were kept informed of the risks and the strategic priorities. There were good relationships between political parties and effective challenge took place, including at scrutiny panel. There was confidence in the leadership of the DASS and senior leadership team.

Strategic planning

The local authority used information about risks, performance, inequality and outcomes to inform its adult social care strategy and to allocate resources. There was a real focus on hearing the views of people who use services, including unpaid carers and people with a learning disability. There were 8 co-production boards in place, each co-chaired by a person with lived experience. Information from these boards informed the strategic co-production board.

Information security

The local authority had clear policies and procedures in place in relation to the security of information. This included the training requirements for staff to ensure they fully understood their responsibilities. The Caldicott Guardian role was held by the Director of Planning and Resources and they sat on the ASC management board. A Caldicott Guardian is the senior person responsible for protecting the confidentiality of people's health and care information.

The local authority and NHS had worked together to enable staff to access health records and vice versa as part of the ICB arrangements for the Hertfordshire and West Essex Shared Care Record. This was a result of excellent partnership working with the joint aim of improving care for people and making the system more efficient. Staff told us that this really helped with reducing the number of times someone had to repeat their story and also to improve integrated working.