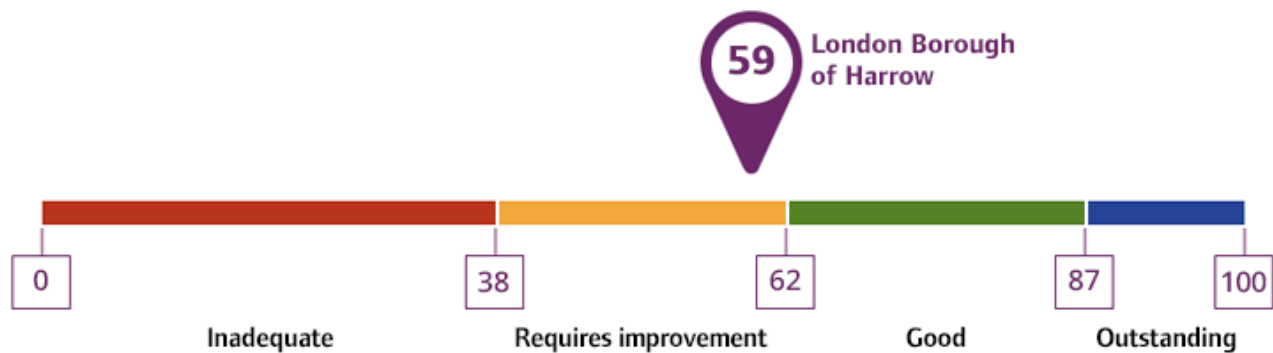


Overall summary

Local authority rating and score

London Borough of Harrow

Requires improvement



Quality statement scores

Assessing needs

Score: 2

Supporting people to lead healthier lives

Score: 2

Equity in experience and outcomes

Score: 3

Care provision, integration and continuity

Score: 2

Partnerships and communities

Score: 3

Safe pathways, systems and transitions

Score: 2

Safeguarding

Score: 2

Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 2

Learning, improvement and innovation

Score: 3

Summary of people's experiences

We received mixed feedback from people who used services about their experiences of contact with and receiving support from Harrow local authority. There were a number of ways in which people could access support from the local authority, including the contact centre, Access Harrow, which was the local authority's initial point of contact and the Conversation Café which people spoke very positively about, where they receive support and are signposted to other services they may need. Some unpaid carers struggled to find information about local authority support services and often found them by chance.

People told us their preferences were taken into account by the social worker and assessments had been holistic. People also told us requests for reviews have been made at an appropriate time and responded to in a timely manner. We heard from some carers who had not been offered an assessment or were awaiting an overdue review. The local authority had a strategy for carers to make improvements.

The front line staff teams had a very good understanding of the diverse needs of the communities within Harrow and there were specialist teams to support people across the Borough. Interpreters and translation services were readily available.

People told us they received support to maintain their independence and they had experienced good partnership working with health partners. Other people told us they had experienced poor communication between health and social care services.

Summary of strengths, areas for development and next steps

The London Borough of Harrow is a local authority which has seen significant change at a senior level over the past 2 years. This has included a change of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS), which was an Interim role at the time of our assessment. The adult social care senior management team were working to create stability and a clear sense of direction.

There was a positive culture across the organisation and staff said the senior leaders were visible. Staff enjoyed working for the local authority and spoke about the learning and career development opportunities available for them.

The senior leaders told us of the challenges to maintain a stable workforce was recognised by the senior leaders. This was being addressed by the development of a Workforce Strategy to be launched in Spring 2024. The workforce development in adult social care was underway and an action plan was in place. A learning and development officer had been recruited to support learning and development programmes.

The three conversation assessment model was promoted by the local authority and staff were given the confidence to move away from this model, whilst still using a strengths based practice approach if it was more effective for that person.

The local authority were aware of the need to reduce waiting times for care assessments, which was addressed by social work teams working with Access Harrow, (local authority initial contact and screening service) to carry out routine information and advice work. This initial screening lessened the impact on the numbers then being referred to the integrated neighbourhood teams, who worked in designated geographical areas throughout the borough.

Further improvements needed to make unpaid carers aware of the services, support available to them and how to access information. This was being addressed in the Carer's Strategy and through partnership working with voluntary organisations.

The local authority recognised the need for further provision of care and where there were gaps in service. An Extra Care service was due to open in 2024. On the whole the quality of care provision in Harrow was good. There was a low uptake of Direct Payments as most carers were unaware of it, although we heard positive outcomes where it had been used to maintain cultural practices. Staff were encouraged to discuss direct payments with everyone during assessments and reviews to promote awareness of it and how it could be utilised.

The local authority recognised the need to invest in new technology, which would need to align with an understanding of data and can be used to improve and shape services to meet the needs of the population.

We found the local authority worked well with the voluntary sector. We found this view was shared by most partners, whilst there were still further opportunities for Harrow to work with the harder to reach communities. A co-production strategy was in development to strengthen this work further.

A review of the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board was undertaken in 2023 and in January 2024, the Harrow Safeguarding Adults Board set out its aims and objectives to ensure adult safeguarding was delivered effectively.

Harrow had a good awareness of the areas they needed to develop and improve. They saw continuous improvement as integral throughout their work and had a number of improvement plans and strategies to address these, to ensure the people of Harrow received services of the highest quality.

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