

Governance, management and sustainability

Indicative score:

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

'People at the Heart of Care' was the social care strategy, which comprised 4 outcomes: people's voices, quality, independence and sustainability. This strategy set out how the local authority wanted to work to support people to live fulfilling and independent lives in Suffolk. The programmes linked to this included transforming the Customer First contact centre to improve the way demand and waiting lists were managed.

Staff talked confidently about the 'We Aspire Values', which linked to their model of practice. These were wellbeing, equality, achieve, support, pride, innovate, respect and empower. Underpinning this was the local authority practice approach, a 'signs of safety' model where the focus was on strengths and solutions for people. Staff were described as proactive, knowledgeable and motivated, with person-centred values.

There was a culture of collaboration and good engagement with staff. Staff were involved in the transformation and changes taking place at the local authority. For example, roadshows had been held in relation to the People at the Heart of Care strategy where staff focus groups had informed this work. Senior management updates were given regularly so staff were aware of any changes taking place and the local authority corporate staff survey scored highly at 79-86% for how leadership messages were received.

Staff described leadership as strong and visionary. Staff spoke highly of the management team, describing them as visible and approachable, thinking practically about what would work on the front line and what would not. There was a positive, supportive culture where people were open and honest with each other. Staff told us there was excellent support for wellbeing and in relation to areas such as diversity and inclusion, where staff were supported by the leaders and the equality networks. Staff vacancies had reduced from 13% to 5.6%, and the staff survey overall results were good.

Systems for governance and accountability were robust, including management of performance and risks. There were good structures within the local authority through to frontline teams, where leaders worked together to identify issues, gaps and solutions. A risk forum had been introduced to manage 'unmitigated' risk. This was chaired by senior staff and enabled workers to talk through risks to review actions taken and this supported workers. This approach had been widened across the county following its success and was reported to have developed staff confidence in changing perceptions around risk.

Oversight was provided by local authority members and the scrutiny committee. Regular meetings were held with senior social care leaders where they were able to share information in relation to performance data and risk and provide opportunities to discuss any emerging issues or answer questions. Feedback was that senior social care leaders were approachable, personable and knowledgeable.

Embedding consistency of approach across localities at a strategic level was one of the roles of the Quality, Engagement and Practice Board at the local authority. Learning from compliments and complaints was used to review and develop policy and guidance. Staff told us they would still like to develop this work further.

Partners told us they felt communication between them, and the local authority could further improve, and they could feel like the local authority was 'firefighting' at times to support people well. They told us individual local authority staff could be good, but there was less of a strategic approach to gather information in relation to understanding community issues.