

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

The leadership of the local authority was stable, which enabled longer-term plans to be put into place with time to embed. Monitoring activity ensured the effectiveness of new ways of working, which enabled the management team to make decisions about whether further improvement was needed.

The governance arrangements were effective in providing oversight of the provision of assessment, ongoing care and support to people. This included effective challenge at the Scrutiny Committee by councillors. For example, the Quality and Safeguarding Board was responsible for overseeing safeguarding, quality of services, complaints, and market risk. There were clear lines of accountability and reporting to the senior leadership team. Frontline teams told us that the Director of Adult Social Services and Assistant Directors regularly spoke to them about their views and that they were confident that they were listened to as they could see that action was taken to address issues.

There were effective working relationships between the leadership team and partner organisations, which had led to the development of a high number of partnership ways of working.

Whilst we did not speak with many people with lived experience about the leadership of the local authority, we did hear from one person who assured us that they were able to contact the Director of Adult Social Services. They told us they had done this and were very happy that they had been listened to.

Feedback from partner organisations, as well as internally within the local authority, was that the Director of Adult Social Services has excellent communication skills with a real focus on developing partnerships in order to meet people's individual needs. They were all positive about the culture of the local authority being set by the Director and that culture was being embraced throughout the teams. Frontline staff teams told us that they felt well supported by the management teams and able to discuss challenges and issues with them.

An audit of the local authority's risk management processes had recently been carried out by an external organisation and the outcome was that there were comprehensive and effective risk management processes in place with clear leadership from the senior leadership team.

The local authority had invested in developing its own workforce and that of partner organisations involved in providing services as a way of maintaining sustainability. In recent years, the ratio of qualified staff in frontline teams compared with non-qualified staff had increased. There were processes to enable staff to be trained through apprenticeship and other schemes to become qualified social workers. This had helped with staff recruitment and retention. While there were some vacancies across the teams, these were not high in number, and the majority were in the process of being recruited to.

Work had taken place with the provider forum which had been supported financially to take on the role of rolling out training to the providers of homecare and residential/ nursing care homes to assist with recruitment and retention of staff. There were also processes in place to ensure that the risk to people using services was minimised if a regulated service failed. There were procedures to deal with interruptions to service and learning from the pandemic had been taken forward in plans to deal with any future similar situations.

The local authority was proactive in seeking out the views of people with lived experience to gain their views about the care and support they were receiving. In addition, they involved people in the co-production of strategies for how services could be developed. Work is currently taking place to review the co-production by the local authority and partner organisations against national guidance relating to co-production best practice.