

<p>Local Authority Test and Learn Report</p>	<p>Name of Local Authority: Hampshire</p> <p>Date of assessment: July 2022 (onsite 4 – 7 July 2022).</p> <p>Team:</p> <p>Laura Arnold, Inspection manager (team lead) Lella Andrews, Inspection manager Jackie Straw, Inspector Si Hussain, Inspector Leanne Colder, Inspection planner Amanda Stride, Head of Inspection Mary Cridge, Director of Adult Social Care Paul Najsarek, Subject Matter Expert Ian Redfern, Subject Matter Expert Debbie Bazzard, Research and Evaluation Manager Anna Wambach, Principal Analyst Javen Rahiman, Senior Analyst Ronald Morton, Policy Manager</p>
<p>Overall Summary:</p> <p>Hampshire County Council is a large local authority in the south of England providing long term adult social care support to around 22,000 people. This assessment was carried out as part of a ‘test and learn’ exercise, testing the assessment process to help to further develop the future methodology.</p> <p>A strong leadership team was in place who had led front line teams to adapt to new ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic, maximising the support available for people using services.</p> <p>Use of technology, innovation and co-production were a strength, however ongoing challenges remained in areas such as recruitment, management of resources resulting in some waiting lists, and support for carers.</p> <p>Overall feedback from staff and partners was positive and where areas for improvement were found during our assessment, these had been identified by leaders and plans were in place to address these.</p>	
<p>Strengths:</p> <p>There was a positive organisational culture where staff felt supported by leaders resulting in good opportunities for learning, development and career progression.</p> <p>Hampshire County Council’s focus on innovation meant they embraced the use of technology, working closely with technology partners to improve efficiency, whilst also maximising people's health, well-being and independence.</p>	

The feedback from staff was leaders were creative in trying out new ideas and approaches to learn and improve. Some successful initiatives supported the needs of the local community. For example, MIND Well-being Centres were a project commissioned jointly with the local authority across Hampshire, supporting people during periods of crisis and to help them regain skills and independence. Linked to this was a successful project working with local sports clubs, training 'Sports Ambassadors,' to support young people in relation to their mental health needs.

Work was being carried out in Rushmoor which was one of the more culturally diverse areas of the county, to develop stronger links with the Nepalese community and enable a better understanding of how to better meet people's needs. Linked to this work, research had been commissioned by the local authority to identify where resources could be better used to support people.

Staff worked using a person centred, strengths - based approach when assessing people's needs. A 'least restrictive practice' model for people with a learning disability, ensured staff were trained to support people in reducing restrictions to their care, supporting positive risk taking and maximising their independence.

Staff shared good practice with other local authority areas, including the successful use of additional COVID-19 funding for live in carers for people during the pandemic. This avoided the need for people to go into 24 - hour care, supporting both them and the system further.

A 'Proactive Enhanced Care' pilot for people aged 85 and over demonstrated positive outcomes in reducing the need for an increased package of care, by staff working more intensively with people from the outset.

Areas for improvement:

Risks had been identified in relation to workforce capacity, and some initiatives were in place to address this, including changes to recruitment practices to be more centralised to release manager capacity. Some senior staff we spoke with identified workforce as the biggest challenge for the local authority.

We received some mixed feedback about support for carers from staff and this was reflected within the current local authority annual survey feedback, however both leaders and partners told us about the work underway to address the issues raised.

High level of vacancies in the brokerage team and difficulties in recruiting staff meant there were delays at times in assessments being completed. Feedback was following this, there could then be further delays in people receiving their care and support.

Waiting lists were identified as a theme which both leaders and staff told us about, meaning assessments may not always be completed in a timely way. Strategies to manage waiting lists included an enhanced risk management process to assist to triage and prioritise assessments. Performance data relating to waiting lists was discussed regularly by leaders to identify actions to improve these. In addition,

workshops were held with operational staff to maximise their engagement with people and there remained a focus on ongoing staff recruitment linked to this.

Some improvements were identified as required between front line teams and some regulated care providers in relation to communication, and timeliness of and detail in, assessments.

Pre-assessment forms were completed when people started using services however cultural and protected characteristics were not included for staff to know people's specific needs. The local authorities' inclusion and accessibility action plan had identified this, that data quality needed to improve further, and this was being actioned.

It was recognised that IT systems used by health partners created a barrier for staff at times in carrying out effective assessments and this was being taken forward by management within local teams.

Quality statements, evidence categories, evidence sources

QS1 Assessing Needs

What people expect:

"I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me." "I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and goals."

The local authority commitment: "We maximise the effectiveness of people's care and treatment by assessing and reviewing their health, care, wellbeing and communication needs with them."

Key findings for this quality statement

- People's direct feedback to us about their care and support was positive in the small number of examples we were able to obtain during our assessment. However, feedback from people via the local authority annual survey results 2021/22 supported this further, along with evidence obtained from other surveys and case studies we reviewed.
- Some positive feedback was received from people evidencing effective assessment of their needs whilst involving them in the process.
- Staff we spoke with were committed to providing a holistic assessment of care needs and spoke passionately about keeping people at the heart of their assessments. However, identified that there were some high waiting lists for assessments.
- Leaders had identified where changes and improvements were required so that assessments could be carried out in a timely way.

People's experience

On completion of this assessment we have concluded we do not have enough direct evidence for the category of people's experience of assessment, care and support as we only spoke with a small number of people directly. In addition, we

do not have evidence of the impact on well-being of people who have not been assessed yet or are not eligible for services. However, for the purposes of this assessment we have scored based on the feedback we have obtained.

Positive feedback was obtained from surveys, case studies and some meetings we attended. For example, one case study showed a joint approach between two teams which led to a positive outcome for one person in giving them a reduced level of care and support which they wanted.

In the 'Independent Futures' meeting, comments from one carer about the assessment and care support they received with their family member included, "Hampshire have been brilliant, I cannot fault [staff member] and their teams, it was the smoothest transition (between services)."

Evidence from Hampshire County Council's annual survey results 2021/22 showed people overall felt safe, were positive about their personal safety, social contact and ability to find information. However, the carers feedback showed less positive results. For example, the overall satisfaction of carers had decreased to 31% in 2021/22, from 44% in 2018/19 and 49% in 2016/17 (no survey was done in 2020).

In the carers survey results for 2021/22 we noted the return rate was quite low at 32%. Additionally, satisfaction results overall were lower for this year compared to previous years. However, we noted changes had been made to the local authority website, with an online carer's needs checker, developed in response to carers waiting to see if they were eligible for support.

At the Contact Assessment and Resolution Centre (CART) around 70% of calls or emails were resolved and we identified that call wait times were improving there. In March 2022 they conducted a survey to proactively seek more feedback and the results were the average satisfaction rating was 4.7 out of 5, with the lowest score being 3.7, for ease of getting in contact with the service.

Other evidence was provided as part of the data return information we received, with positive feedback from people, for example surveys relating to the 'Proactive Enhanced Care scheme' and short - term services which the local authority provided. In addition, we saw positive feedback about the MIND well-being centre and the West Street respite service during our visits, with evidence of people and carers thanking staff for the difference the service had made to them.

Feedback was received from people using telecare services where 90% rated the service good or very good overall. Comments made within the TEC board mid - year report 2021 included, 'This service has saved my life on many, many occasions' and 'I am grateful for all at Argenti and the Adults team for funding this service.'

The use of the 'Cobots' technology was being trialled to support both people and care staff. Cobots is a piece of equipment worn around the lower back of care staff, to assist them when supporting a person to move, and can reduce the number of care staff a person requires. This led to one person feeling this had provided them with further dignity when receiving care now from only one carer

instead of two. Whilst the reablement team had used this technology to help identify further risks to people's care.

The Annual Customer Care Report 2021/22 reviewed compliments and complaints. A total of 630 complaints were received which was an increase of 20% on the previous year. Themes were a lack of service, communication, the quality of service being delivered, fulfilment of duties and invoicing. Of these 10 were referred to the LGSCO (Local government and social care ombudsman) which is an increase from six in the previous year. Outcomes were found to be an equal split between complaints being upheld or partially upheld, and complaints not upheld. The biggest increase in complaints was for the learning disabilities community team from 14% last year to 21%. By contrast, in the same period 148 compliments were recorded which is a slight decrease of 7.5 % from the previous year.

Learning from complaints included giving feedback to staff and using these to inform reflective practice. For example, several complaints about communication led to changes in staff handover practices to ensure messages and key information was accurately recorded and passed on. Complaints training for team managers was also refreshed.

Score for category: 3

Feedback from staff and leaders

Staff reported high levels of waiting lists, particularly in older people's teams and said that they were doing 'a good job' despite some high caseloads. Staff told us to keep people safe they would make short term arrangements to support people whilst waiting for long term allocation for assessment. Staff worked together to try to address these issues locally, including working overtime and with use of agency staff, telling us they did feel empowered to take the initiative to manage this.

We received mixed feedback in relation to support for unpaid carers. For example, feedback from one carers group described excellent joint working and a positive picture. However, some other staff were concerned there was not enough to offer carers in terms of choice.

Staff we spoke with were passionate and kept people at the heart of their assessments. Consistent feedback from staff was they were focused on the individual needs of the person and were empowered to be creative in how people's needs could best be met, not just to 'slot' people into existing services.

One example involved the use of advocacy and related to a person at risk of domestic, financial and emotional abuse. Staff expressed their philosophy of 'think safeguarding first' when supporting this person yet explained how the person's wishes had been at the forefront in them jointly deciding the next steps.

People were supported to access direct payments to maximise their choice and control to meet their needs. One example given was the creative use of direct payments in supporting one person to attend university.

Staff feedback about the local authority was consistently good, and whilst they acknowledged there were challenges such as numbers of referrals and workload, their commitment to people was clear. Staff were keen to tell us about their work and said the culture at the local authority was that they felt able to raise concerns.

Links with local GP's were developed well in some areas however were considered 'a work in progress' in others. Some teams such as the 'Short Terms Services' team felt they had a good working relationship with health services, and we saw this working well in practice to facilitate discharge planning from hospital.

Senior leaders showed a good understanding of the key strengths of the local authority, areas for improvement and opportunities. Key strengths included co-production, communication and engagement. In addition, their approach to innovation, technology, commissioning (extra care) and culture of the organisation.

A local authority overall strategic plan was in place for 2021 to 2025 and a new strategy for adult social care was being developed. Priorities included the introduction of the new care assessment system, impact of major changes in legislation (such as social care reform), an increase in demand for services, delays in assessment and significant workforce challenges. Opportunities included further improvement of co-production and technology advances which were a key part of their planned transformation.

Evidence was there was a cohesive senior leadership team in place with quality as the primary focus. It was positive there was a long-standing executive member in place for Adult Services and Public Health to support consistency.

Score for category: 2

Feedback from partners

Support for people was co-ordinated across different agencies and services. There was evidence of the local authority working with partner agencies to provide a holistic and integrated approach to assessment and care planning. For example, joint sharing of information between the Single Point of Access team and health teams, plus good links with some GP practices in local areas. One new initiative was the 'Delirium pathway' linked to the Single Point of Access team which showed positive working with health partners supporting people with a cognitive impairment.

Some local authority engagement had taken place with regulated care providers in February 2022 to seek feedback about challenges, changes to needs of people and their working relationships. A further provider event held in July 2022 had identified some areas which needed improvement linked to the assessment process.

Feedback we received from providers identified some areas of good practice and other areas where improvements were needed. For example, good communication, engagement and relationships were reported with some local authority services and staff. However, concerns raised related to the quality of assessments at times with a lack of detail and containing inaccurate information.

Reviews and re-assessments were not always completed in a timely way which impacted on providers and people using services. We gave this feedback to local authority leaders.

Key health partners provided positive feedback about their relationship with the local authority. Good feedback from professionals (both from the hospital and community teams) was also seen in relation to the public accessing information from the 'Connect to Support Hampshire' website.

Healthwatch gave positive feedback about their relationship with the local authority whilst also noting that improvements could be made in relation to support for carers and carers assessments, however confirmed a working group had now been set up linked to this work, although this was in its early stages.

Other good working relationships were identified such as with the Voice Ability advocacy service and through working with partners such as Argenti (linked to use of technology).

Score for category: 2

Feedback from processes

Some challenges of the 'AIS' current IT care system were highlighted to us by staff, however there was positivity about the new co-produced Care Director system being introduced next year. Staff told us the emphasis was on this system supporting the function and not the other way around.

The 'Connect to Hampshire' website contained information in relation to assessment including financial assessment and the eligibility framework. Positive feedback had been received about this in terms of accessibility.

A Power Bi dashboard was introduced in June 2022 to enable further overview and analysis of data to inform decision making by staff and leaders, linked to practice. An increase in safeguarding and more complex cases was evident from data provided in the data return and feedback we received from staff supported this.

A new risk assessment and escalation process was being launched in September 2022 to prioritise people waiting allocation.

The local authority SharePoint site enabled staff to access key information and policies they required for practice, for example information about mental capacity assessments and finances.

Score for category: 3

Outcomes

The Proactive Enhanced Care (PECs) pilot showed initial positive outcomes for people aged 85 and over in reducing their need for higher levels of long - term care. This pilot was implemented following an analysis of data which identified issues with packages of care doubling within the first two years for people. The

pilot gave staff the opportunity to reduce or delay this, by building better support and trust with people early on, for example, signposting to other services.

There was a large in-house provision of local authority care services with the majority of these rated as 'good' overall, indicating people receiving these services were happy with the care and support provided.

Positive feedback was received about short term services, for example, people using the discharge to assess service. In this service 1516 people were supported in 2021 and 36% of people returned home either with some care or without the need for any at all. Feedback from staff there was some delays in people moving on from this, related to accessing the provision from other care agencies.

The wide use of technology at the local authority evidenced innovations were encouraged to support staff and support people to remain independent, whilst also being cost - effective. An overall approach to innovation was not documented, however several examples were provided showing greater independence from the use of technology and the difference this had made for people.

Some examples we found included technology such as the Oysta watch app. One case study was of a young person with multiple health conditions where the Oysta monitoring system had enabled them at age 17 to have more independence from their parents meaning their confidence and skills had now grown. In addition, a 'You care, We care' app had been developed for carers so they could view and book available support such as a short break or respite.

The 'Connect to Hampshire' website showed continuing increase in users for 2021 with the highest visited page being 'carers support' evidencing the work being undertaken to improve this area.

Score for category: 3

Total score: 13 - Quality statement score 65

QS4 Learning, improvement and innovation

The local authority commitment: "We focus on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across our organisation and the local system. We encourage creative ways of delivering equality of experience, outcome and quality of life for people. We actively contribute to safe, effective practice and research".

Key findings for this quality statement

- Consistent feedback received and evidence obtained, supported that learning, innovation and improvement were embedded across the organisation.
- We received feedback that there was a positive empowering culture for learning. Staff told us they felt valued and gave examples of opportunities for career progression in the organisation.
- Co-production was a core part of the philosophy of the local authority and this was being developed further with training for staff in co-production. Feedback about this work was positive and showed a commitment to learning alongside people with lived experience.

- The use of technology and innovations were encouraged to improve people's health and support positive well-being outcomes.

Feedback from staff and leaders

Staff were appropriately trained with the experience and knowledge necessary to carry out assessments, including specialist assessments. A specialist social worker lead role had been introduced to further enhance practice. We received feedback that there was a positive empowering culture for learning and for sharing learning.

An 'Excellent practice validation' was an annual evaluation of practice completed to support staff development and learning further. Staff told us they had good opportunities for training and career development with leadership programmes and training pathways available to them.

There was a focus on the wellbeing of staff. Roadshows had been held by senior leaders to engage with staff further to hear their feedback directly. Following the annual staff survey feedback, an action plan was in progress which focused on retention of staff and improving recruitment.

Equality and Inclusion initiatives were highlighted by staff such as newly launched 'Zero Tolerance' campaign in response to staff feedback helping staff to raise concerns and challenge discrimination, harassment and bullying at work.

Positive feedback was given about the Principal Social Worker, linking this role to embedding social work values and helping staff with their continuing professional development. Ongoing engagement with staff included a recent social work conference and a 'social work health check' where feedback had been sought.

Key themes came through from our conversations with staff of an increase in referrals of people self-neglecting and hoarding. Following a serious incident linked to this and one person's death, a serious adults review had been undertaken. The commitment to learning from this by staff and leaders was strong with an action plan including 'Serious incident review' training for staff and the redesign of the MASH (multi – agency safeguarding hub) being two outcomes.

Feedback from the senior management team was that joint working between them had been enhanced further during the pandemic and they were now benefiting from these stronger working relationships across departments.

An automated system of well-being checks had been used successfully during the pandemic and the feedback from leaders was that this was the type of approach they wished to develop further.

Score for category: 3

Feedback from partners

Co-production was a core part of the approach of the local authority. Feedback we received about co-production was positive and showed a commitment to learning alongside people with lived experience.

The need to improve co-production further had been identified in the local authorities' Co-production survey, November 2021. Consequently, training for staff was planned in July 2022 to increase skills and confidence on how to effectively do co-production, a toolkit developed, and some training planned for providers. Further ongoing work was planned over the next 12 to 18 months.

Some successful examples included the LAMA (leisure activities made accessible) project and Second Transitions model. The LAMA project was a bespoke service developed at the request of carers for people with learning disabilities. This group gave positive feedback about the local authority support and what this meant for people. The Second Transition model was developed to support older carers when those they cared for were often over 50 themselves. This meant changes were made to the support planning processes and the local authority allocated worker system following feedback from carers.

Co-production had taken place with people in 2021 linked to short term services at the local authority where 'Nothing about me without me' was the ethos of this work.

One carers group told us they felt senior leaders were supportive and passionate about co-production. The carers strategy from 2018 had not been co-produced at that time, however they were now getting involved with this work. For example, they had been involved in looking at carers assessments to further understand the barriers to these being completed. Additionally, they had contributed to giving feedback on the carers needs checker the local authority had developed on their website.

We noted from the data return an assurance visit from the Office for the Public Guardian was undertaken. Positive feedback was received where staff were deemed to be working in line with good practice. They described a culture of continuing to improve and feedback was decisions and records were clear, up to date and risks identified by staff.

Score for category: 3

Feedback from processes

New initiatives had been developed such as the introduction of training dashboards for managers to monitor staff progress with required training and learning.

The improved MASH service was relaunched in July 2022 with a new triage system and training of staff aiming to increase capacity and ensure a more consistent approach. Since further training in safeguarding had been completed by staff in 2021, section 42 enquires relating to self - neglect had increased from 21 cases in the first quarter to 69 cases in the fourth linked to this learning. In addition, a safeguarding leads forum was held to help improve practice and share learning.

A number of initiatives and reviews were taking place in relation to taking learning from the pandemic, including a review of how safeguarding referrals were managed during this time.

A quality assurance framework (QAF) was in place comprising an online questionnaire for practitioners to complete quarterly. This was to support learning and improvement about assessments. However, improvements were still needed to reach this target currently. Topics such as safeguarding and positive risk taking were covered. Positive feedback from staff was these reviews opened up further conversations which enhanced their practice.

There was a clear programme of internal audit plans to drive improvement for 2022/23. Audit logs evidenced who was responsible for these actions along with a timeline for completion.

Score for category: 3

Total score: 9 – Quality statement score 75

Conclusions and recommendations

In summary, consistent overall feedback was positive in relation to the two quality statements assessed as part of this test and learn assessment. Where areas for improvement were identified from feedback or evidence received, for example in relation to supporting carers, recruitment and waiting lists, we raised these areas with leaders who acknowledged these as areas where improvement was required. We found actions were being taken to address these areas and these could be evidenced. However, there was some impact on people, staff and partners reported.

Further consideration could be given to the leadership oversight and level of challenge offered corporately and politically in relation to assessment and improvement.

Whilst we found there were some positive outcomes for people in relation to individual pieces of work, in some cases further evaluation of projects would be beneficial in being able to further gauge the success of these in practice.

Next steps:

The local authority have confirmed that further work is being done to meet the existing carer's strategy and refresh this with a plan of action working alongside the local Carer's Forum.

A continued campaign of staff recruitment remains ongoing with further work being undertaken to maximise this, including a values - based recruitment campaign planned.