

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Members' Briefing

CQC Assurance Framework Update 18th June 2024

1. What is the CQC Assurance Framework?

- 1.1. This is the regulatory framework enacted through the Health and Care Act 2022, which gives the Care Quality Commission the powers to assess how well Local Authorities are meeting their duties under Part 1 of the Care Act. Assessment is through the CQC Single Assessment Framework.
- 1.2. The Framework will assess Local Authorities across 9 Quality Statements mapped to 4 key themes:

| THEMES | QUALITY STATEMENTS |
|----------------------------|---|
| Working with People | 1. Assessing Needs 2. Supporting People to Live Healthier Lives 3. Equity in Experiences and Outcomes |
| Providing Support | 4. Care provision, integration and continuity 5. Partnerships and Communities |
| Keeping People Safe | 6. Safe systems, pathways and transitions 7. Safeguarding |
| Leadership | 8. Governance, management and sustainability 9. Learning, improvement and innovation |

- 1.3. Assessment of all Local Authorities in England is expected by December 2025. The 3 other Tees Local Authorities have already received their CQC notification, along with three other Local Authorities in the North East.

2. How is the assessment structured?

- 2.1. Once we receive notification from CQC:

- We will have **3 weeks** to return our Local Authority Information Return (LAIR) which includes a self-assessment and our performance data, strategies and policies).
- The CQC assessment team will be completing extensive offsite preparation work, including speaking to our partners and reviewing published data and our Local Authority Information Return.
- **An on-site visit will take place within six months** (we will have 6-8 weeks' notice of this).

Within 10 days of the on-site visit notification we must provide an anonymised list of 50 case files, from which CQC will select 10 for case-tracking. CQC will speak to the person and their care/advocate, and possibly staff ahead of the site-visit, to understand the person's journey and the impact of our services. Most weight will be placed on people's experiences and how people are given opportunities to be involved in shaping their care (Co-Production).

3. What preparation have we done for the CQC Assurance Framework?

- 3.1. The peer inspection with Carol Tozer in October 2023 identified key development areas in being ready for the assurance framework. These were put into an action plan.
- 3.2. A CQC Programme Steering Group has been formed, meeting monthly to oversee progress against the action plan, covering all areas of preparation.
- 3.3. An Assurance and Co-Production Manager started in post on 29th January 2024 to co-ordinate the work needed to prepare for the Assurance Framework, and alongside the Lived Experience Co-Ordinator to ensure that people's voices and their involvement is woven into what we do.
- 3.4. A Making it Real Board made up of people with lived experience, the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Council Officers was formed in January 2024.

4. What's going to be happening next?

- 4.1. We are taking part in a **Local Government Association (LGA) Assurance Peer Challenge on 9th-11th July 2024**. This is an opportunity to test out our systems and for us to experience what a CQC assurance visit will be like, with 6-8 Peers joining us on site for the week.
- 4.2. We are preparing for this as we would a CQC inspection. We are:
 - **Revising our Self-Assessment.** This has been shared with Senior Management Team, Corporate Management Team and our LGA Assurance Challenge Manager for comment. **The draft self-assessment is included with this briefing, for review and comment by ASCH Select Committee Members.**
 - Gathering information for the Local Authority Information Return and building our evidence library.
 - Identifying case files to be audited (we will present 24 cases from which 6-8 will be audited by a Principal Social Worker 2 weeks before the visit)

We will need to provide all of this information to the LGA Assurance Challenge Manager by 24th June 2024.

- 4.3. A programme to support staff in preparing for assurance is being put together. On 30th and 31st May, Partners in Care and Health (PCH, via NE ADASS and the LGA) delivered *Supporting Frontline Staff in Preparing for CQC workshop sessions*. These sessions will support staff to understand the CQC Assurance Framework, how their roles support delivery of the Care Act and how to describe this, and provide an opportunity to practise answering questions from assessors/peers.
- 4.4. A timetable is being finalised for the week of the LGA Assurance Challenge. The week will start with a presentation to the Peer Challenge Team on 9th July, and a series of interviews and focus groups with staff, people with lived experience and our partners during 9th and 10th July. Peers will speak to

frontline staff and will work their way back to managers and leaders over the course of the two days.

We have also built in visits so that Peers can visit some of our services. There will be a presentation by the Peer Challenge team on the afternoon of 11th July for the Leadership Team and those who have been involved in the Focus Groups and Interviews during the week.

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