### **Adult Social Care CQC Self-Assessment: Key Message Briefing**

### Context

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) notified Adult Social Care on 24 June that they will be assessing our services. The first requirement is the submission of documentation and evidence, which we have now completed. A key part of this is our self-assessment. This sets out our understanding of where we are in Adult Social Care, including our strengths and areas of focus.

When inspectors visit Camden towards the end of the year, they will look for further evidence to assess our services. This will be gathered from various sources including people’s experiences, feedback from staff and leaders, observation of care, feedback from partners, processes and outcomes of care. This document summarises the key messages in our self-assessment, to help us to align these two parts of the CQC assessment process.

### Our vision and strategy

[Supporting People Connecting Communities](https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/0/Supporting%2BPeople%2BConnecting%2BCommunities%2BStrategic%2BPlan.pdf/05bd179a-e8a7-6599-9784-1000dceecb91?t=1613666252299) (SPCC) is our council-wide strategy for living and ageing well in Camden. It responds to the expectations of our Health and Care Citizens’ Assembly and is informed by our Camden Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework. It sets priorities based on what residents told us about their experience of care.

SPCC is founded on [What Matters](https://ascpractice.camden.gov.uk/understanding-what-matters-to-people/what-matters-three-conversations/), Camden’s strengths-based model of Adult Social Care. This includes our three-conversation approach to assessments, relational commissioning and a variety of tools and interventions for practitioners to draw on including Adult Family Group Conferencing, Team Around Me, and our Adult Social Care Artist in Residence. It places the person at the centre of their care and commits our staff to working with partners in the community, providing early help and connecting people to the things that matter to them.

### Our key strengths

**Strong core services as the foundation for our ambitions:** Supported by routine performance monitoring, quality assurance, resident insight and stable leadership. We challenge ourselves to do better, innovate and respond to challenges such as the rising cost of living, refugee crises and the proliferation of rough sleeping.

**Our commitment to prevention and early help:** Camden has prioritised investment in prevention and early help for many years. The family early help model provided the test bed for relational practice and enabled Camden to start building an organisational approach that spans the life course. We are focused on more effectively preventing problems from worsening and improving lives.

**What Matters, our approach to Adult Social Care:** Camden’s What Matters practice model guides everything we do in Adult Social Care, including commissioning activity and direct practice. It is underpinned by practice guidance, supervision, learning and development and quality assurance. Additional specialist capacity has been provided to our learning and improvement work through the practice development lead model.

**Place-based partnership working:** Camden has a long history of integrated working across health and care. We are particularly proud of our Learning Disability Service and our strong integrated hospital discharge teams. Adult Social Care teams are joining forces with counterparts in community health, mental health and primary care to become Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. We are also working with health partners and anchor institutions as part of our Mission approach.

**Our collaborative approach to commissioning:** We see our external providers as strategic partners and invest significant time and resource into nurturing those relationships. This enables us to build a culture of transparency, learning and continuous improvement. We approach service development and transformation opportunities in partnership and across sectors, delivering a diverse, flexible, and responsive offer for residents.

**Innovation and sector engagement:** Insight, data and a commitment to co-production enable us to create a culture of possibility and belief in the future. We have developed innovative models of care and maintain close connections with our research partners to evaluate impact. Examples include our Adult Family Group Conferencing model, our work around self-neglect and hoarding, and our in-house extra care sheltered accommodation at Charlie Ratchford Court.

### Our key areas of focus

**Managing the demand and flow of work:** More people are approaching us for support and with greater complexity of need, resulting in people waiting longer than we would like for support. Over the past 12 months, our management plan has significantly reduced the number of people waiting for a review of their care and support and stabilised waiting lists for Care Act assessments, despite high demand. We are reviewing our processes to alleviate delays and investing additional funding into our new neighbourhood teams. We are focused on maintaining the best quality of care and drawing on the capacity of providers to support more reviews where possible.

**Strengthening our offer for people experiencing multiple disadvantage:** We are seeing a growing number of people experiencing multiple disadvantage and continue to see a high prevalence of serious mental illness, drug and alcohol issues and people with co-occurring needs. The Council is leading a combined effort with partners to deliver enhanced support for those experiencing the greatest disadvantage. We have co-produced new specialist capacity within Adult Social Care, and are strengthening integrated approaches with Substance Misuse services, Housing, and our supported accommodation pathways.

**Supporting and empowering our workforce:** Our goal is to support, develop and retain our workforce so that everyone can flourish. In a 2023, an organisation-wide pulse survey 81% of staff told us that they feel they belong (up 26%) and 89% feel we are making progress to becoming an anti-racist organisation. We are investing a further £1 million in the bottom of our pay scales to ensure a minimum earnings guarantee above London Living Wage; being open and transparent with our pay and pension gap; and the first council to gain accreditation as a ‘Bloody Good Employer’, a workplace that is inclusive to people who menstruate. To support staff impacted by the conflict in the Middle East, we have set up dedicated wellbeing pages on our intranet and extended the trauma support in place.

**Comprehensive support for unpaid carers:** We recognise the importance of unpaid and family carers and are committed to improving carers’ lives. We know too many carers are waiting for a Carer Conversation or Carer Review and we are working to change this. We have a strong relationship with Camden Carers and invest significant resource to ensure carers have access to their wide range of services. A year of co-production to develop our Carers Action Plan culminated in its launch in July 2024. This has been a whole-council response, with inaugural meeting of the Carers Partnership Board scheduled for Autumn 2024.

### Assessment Themes

CQC assesses Local Authorities based on how they work across four themes, which are set out below. More detail on these themes can be found online [here](https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-regulation/local-authorities/assessment-framework). Alongside the key strengths and areas of focus outlined above, it is important that we understand our performance in the context of these themes. What follows is our headline response to each theme, alongside our strengths and areas of focus.

## Theme 1: Working with people

### Headlines

* We have effective arrangements for assessing, reviewing, and addressing people’s needs in line with our Care Act duties. We take pride in our integrated approaches to providing more specialist interventions. Our ability to join-up enables a collective focus on what really matters to people.
* Our new Adult Social Care Neighbourhood service structure went live in June 2024. This will deepen our connections with local communities and foster closer relationships between social care, residents, community partners and other council teams.
* We closely monitor disproportionality to tackle inequality and seek to engage with people from all communities; making sure we assess and meet need in a culturally competent way.

### Strengths

* Our effective practice model, What Matters.
* Our award-winning integrated support for people with learning disabilities.
* Our integrated arrangements to support people who are being discharged from hospital.
* Innovative approaches to working with residents, including our emerging Adult Early Help offer.

### Areas of focus

* Managing demand and reducing how long people wait for assessments and reviews.
* Pioneering a community-based neighbourhood model to improve workforce experience and deliver better outcomes.
* Developing a new model of social work in mental health services.
* Improving the confidence of all services to support people with Autism.

## Theme 2: Providing support

### Headlines

* We know our population well and have developed shared strategies that respond to local need. We have a high-quality provider market that encourages open dialogue about what is working effectively and what needs to be addressed. We manage risk in a way that is relational, supportive, and effective.
* We value everyone employed in our local care sector and invest well in our provider workforce, supporting sector growth and workforce wellbeing. We nurture our regional and subregional partnerships to focus on the tasks that are best done at scale. Our longstanding approach to co-production ensures that our services strive to meet need in culturally competent ways.

### Strengths

* Our strong relationships with high quality providers, including our in-house services and the voluntary and community sector, underpinned by effective monitoring and assurance processes.
* Our effective market shaping and co-production with residents, providers and partners.
* Our robust approach to risk management, including investment in the provider market and care workforce through market sustainability and our Workforce Strategy.
* Our strong offer for young adults with care and support needs, or those at risk of developing care and support needs.

### Areas of focus

* Preparing for our changing population’s future needs through our Accommodation Plan and reimagining care and support at home.
* Refreshing key resources that support our provider partners, including our Market Position Statement and our approach to quality assurance through our dedicated provider page.
* Better understanding of the needs and concerns of people who draw on our services but report lower levels of quality of life and satisfaction in our surveys than we aspire to.

## Theme 3: Ensuring safety

### Headlines

* Our duty to safeguard adults is central to all that we do. We efficiently manage demand and currently have no waiting lists for Safeguarding or Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). Risks are addressed proactively across services and partners, including through our Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board.
* We ensure people’s safety through rigorous monitoring, reporting, and case sampling. Our robust quality assurance arrangements include audits, practice development, and training. We are committed to learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs). We work with our Children’s Services to ensure seamless transitions to adult services.
* We recognise the need to do more joined-up work to safeguard people facing multiple disadvantage. Our new Multiple Disadvantage team, our involvement in Camden’s Homelessness System Transformation, and our re-designed mental health social work arrangements are important steps towards this.

### Strengths

* Our safeguarding practices, processes and pathways are clearly defined and understood by staff and partner agencies with multi-disciplinary working at its core.
* Our clear corporate commitment to adult safeguarding with strong governance and assurance around how people are safeguarded from harm.
* Our joint leadership with Children’s Services to ensure young people transition safely to adult services.
* Our work to support refugees and asylum seekers.
* Innovative practices such as Adult Family Group Conferencing and Team Around Me.

### Areas of focus

* Strengthening the connection between the learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and our quality assurance work and building this into our everyday practice.
* Transformation work to safeguard people who may be experiencing multiple disadvantage.

## Theme 4: Leadership

### Headlines

* We pride ourselves on strong, courageous, and authentic leadership. We lead from the front, empowering staff to deliver strong and effective core services whilst pushing the boundaries of innovation and change.
* Politicians and executive leaders work with staff and residents to bring about change in line with We Make Camden. Our Mission-led approach sets a clear direction, and cross-council investment in data, participation, and design is supporting Adult Social Care to test innovative approaches. It’s also helping the vision of *Supporting People Connecting Communities* to reach across services in a new way. We want to ensure that living and ageing well is a priority for housing, employment, community and environmental services, just as much as for Adult Social Care.
* Adult Social Care has played an important leadership role across the organisation by pioneering new strengths-based and relational approaches. This has made an important contribution to our journey to become a truly relational council. Our philosophy as a Council has been shaped by social work practice and is evolving into a courageous leadership model that is purpose-led.

### Strengths

* Our strong leadership ensuring robust risk management and delivery of effective core services.
* Our strategic leadership of Camden’s Health and Wellbeing Board within the Camden Borough Partnership, enabling Camden’s ambition to introduce Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.
* Our effective governance structures maintaining service standards, quality assurance and improvement of our Adult Social Care services through a robust transformation programme.

### Areas of focus

* Implementation of our new Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy to harness the potential of our workforce through wrap-around support.