

Our Strategy for Adult Social Care

– Living well, aging well

2025-2029

Status: DRAFT

(V3 - partner feedback update)

DRAFT

1. Introduction

This strategy sets the direction for Adult social care in the City of London. The core purpose of this strategy is to ensure that our residents can lead healthy, safe and independent lives, supported and empowered by an experienced adult social care workforce.

Our ambition for adult social care is:

To enable residents in the City to live and age well in the City, leading healthy, independent lives, supported at the right time by a compassionate and inclusive workforce.

The delivery of this ambition is underpinned by **four strategic commitments** through which we will:

- 1) help people meet their own needs and aspirations in a safe and supportive way
- 2) provide our communities with a skilled, supported, and adaptable workforce dedicated to delivering high-quality care
- 3) work collaboratively with our partners to provide people with the right support, in the right place at the right time
- 4) provide a wide range of high-quality, accessible care options to meet people's needs.

These commitments provide the framework for our strategy to deliver better outcomes, with more efficient and effective services. The commitments will be supported by a strategy delivery plan and supported by an Adult Social Care Service Development Plan which will be continuously refreshed, so that it remains responsive to emerging needs, as well as political, policy and economic change.

2. Strategic Context

This strategy sits within the context of national and regional policy, as well as a range of City Corporation strategies and responsibilities.

National

The delivery of adult social care is underpinned by a range of policies, legal responsibilities, and strategic initiatives designed to support a diverse and aging population, and strengthen the collaboration of local authority, and health services.

For adults in need of care and support, social care delivery is rooted in key legislative acts, primarily the Care Act 2014. This act mandates local authorities to assess individuals'

needs, determine their eligibility for support, and arrange appropriate care services. It emphasizes the importance of promoting well-being, safeguarding adults at risk, and supporting people to maintain their independence.

A significant focus of national policy is the integration of health and social care services. The Better Care Fund, introduced in 2015, encourages collaboration between local authorities and the National Health Service to deliver joined-up care.

The future delivery and resourcing of adult social care services remains a challenge for government and has been the subject of successive reviews. While future policy direction continues to be debated and shaped, local authorities remain at the forefront of delivering this critical service.

Regional

Adult social care in London faces its own specific challenges and possibilities:

- **Younger but ageing:** While London's population is younger than England overall, it still has a growing number of older adults who need care.
- **High cost of living:** The high cost of living in London makes it harder to provide services, and for residents to afford care themselves.
- **33 local authorities:** London's division into 32 boroughs and the City of London requires close cooperation between them to ensure smooth care services across boundaries.
- **Integrated Care Systems (ICS):** London is divided into regional Integrated Care Systems for health and social care to deliver a partnership approach to deliver joined-up care based on local need. The City of London is part of the North East London integrated care system.

Local

At a local level, our ambition and objectives are shaped by the City Corporation's *Corporate Plan 2024-2029*. It recognises that supporting people to live healthy, independent lives and achieve their ambitions is dependent on excellent services – the provision of which is one of six key objectives.

Providing excellent services is a key driver of this strategy. It will also support and deliver in conjunction with key local strategies including the City Corporation's *Carers Strategy*, *SEND Strategy*, *Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy* and *Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy*.

The delivery of adult social care sits within the Department of Community and Children's Services. The Department is committed to being anti-racist in everything we do ensuring equity and inclusion are at the forefront of our services.

At a service level, our Adult Social Care model of practice is based on a strengths-based approach which shifts the focus from an individual's limitations to their abilities, skills, and resources.

Our delivery is shaped, strengthened and supported by close collaboration and partnership with neighbouring local authorities. We share a Safeguarding Adults Board with the London Borough of Hackney. We are part of the North East London Integrated Care Partnership, and the City & Hackney Placed Based Partnership - delivering the latter's strategic commitments to ageing well, living well and mental health.

The strategy is supported by excellent partnerships and the ambitions we share with key partners who play a role in a wide range of areas including support in employment, education, housing, health, children's social care, early help and community connectedness.

This national and local context has shaped this strategy and the ambition and commitments it sets out and will inform its delivery.

3. Background

The City of London is unique in its size and position; 8,600 residents living in the Square Mile that is surrounded by seven local authorities. The number of residents in the City of London has increased by 16% since 2011. The majority are working age but there are 1200 people (14%) who are aged 65 and over. Although the percentage of population aged over 65 has stayed the same between the censuses, the actual number of people has increased. Just over half (51%) of households in the City of London are single person households.

The City's population is diverse – with 42% from a black or global majority background. While it is associated with the wealth of the financial centre, there are pockets of affluence and deprivation in the Square Mile, particularly in the East of the City. Our adult social care users are predominantly White-British, comprising 53% (157 users). The second-largest group is White-Other at 13% (39 users), followed by Asian (12%), Black (5%), Other (2%), and Mixed (1%) – with a further 14% (41 users) who have chosen not to disclose their ethnicity.

Life expectancy in the City of London is better than both the London and England average - with females having a life expectancy of 90.7 and males 88.8 years.

The City of London experiences a high level of street homelessness – with 656 different people recorded sleeping rough across 2023/24.

Within the Square Mile there is only one NHS GP Practice – the Neaman Practice – where 75% of residents are registered. A further 20% are registered in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

There are no residential, nursing or supported living facilities within the City of London's boundaries.

Adult social care needs in the City of London

Key points:

- **133 new requests:** In 2023/24, we received 133 new requests for help, compared to thousands in larger boroughs.
- **Changes in demand:** Requests rose by 6% in the four years from 2019/10 to 2022/23, and by 73% among those over 65; however the headline figure fell 19% from 165 in 2022/23 to 133 in 2023/24.
- **Long-term service users:** 109 adults were receiving long-term service at 31 December 2024.
- **Types of care:** In 2023/24, 24 residents were placed in residential care and 69 received care at home. Almost half of those receiving long-term care were of working age.
- **Supporting carers:** We supported 34 unpaid carers at the end of December 2024.
- **Safeguarding adults:** 19 safeguarding enquiries in the City of London during 2023/24
- **Commissioned Services:** We commission 24 Adult Social Care services with an annual cost of just under £1 million, with 8 of them being from the voluntary sector.

Adult social care strengths

- An experienced and knowledgeable workforce, with good rates of staff retention, and a workforce who know our residents well and develop positive relationships.
- A Strengths Based Approach Practice model.
- Being strongly anti-racist in everything we do.
- A coordinated, multi-agency approach to the assessment and support of our residents.

- A strong hospital discharge model.
- Agile and flexible commissioning approach with the ability to spot purchase to meet needs.
- Well established integrated care models locally and established relationships with health, voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Robust and rapid professional response to safeguarding concerns, incidents and provider issues, ensuring safe and personalised responses.
- Strong and stable political leadership and engagement across the City of London Corporation, underpinned by robust and effective financial management.
- Clear visibility and access of senior management within the Department.
- Listening to service user views.

Adult social care challenges

- The diversity and range of need and the size of the City of London's population means there is not sufficient demand to develop a residential and /or nursing home.
- The City of London has no supported living placements within its boundary.
- Spot purchasing small amounts of care and support requires effective collaboration, to ensure value for money and quality.
- The size of the City Corporation's social care workforce, and the smaller demand for our services we respond to, does not allow for specialism of social work staff seen in other local authority structures.
- The small resident population of the City of London provides challenges of opportunity for co-design of services.

4. Developing this strategy

A core principle for the Adult Social Care service is to work collaboratively with residents and carers, to make sure how we work and what we do is shaped by the experiences and view of people who will use the services.

We have developed this strategy through the voice of those who use our services, through our commissioned services and community groups who work within the City of London.

To achieve this, a series of visits to community groups were arranged to listen to what was important to the attendees, both for the approach to co-production and to contribute to the development of this strategy. The information shared during these meetings with community groups has been incorporated into this strategy.

We will look to further co-production with residents and carers as we deliver the strategy

through the introduction of an Adult Social Care service user advisory group.

5. Our commitments

Commitment one: Help people meet their own needs and aspirations in a safe and supportive way.

The City of London Corporation believes in people's right to live their life the way they want. We are here to support those in our communities in leading a safe, healthy, and fulfilling life by putting their needs and goals first. We aim to prevent and delay the onset of care needs, with our communities empowered to remain independent or return to independence.

Our strengths-based approach means we focus on abilities and work with people in our communities to find solutions that fit their unique situation. This can include:

- **Direct Payments:** giving people the freedom to choose and manage their own care and support.
- **Technology:** using the latest care technology to improve people's quality of life in a way that suits them best
- **Housing adaptations:** to help people live as independently as possible in their own home, or in a home that best suits them.
- **Local community:** linking people with their local community so they can be actively involved and contribute to society.

To deliver this we will:

- Continue to promote a Strengths Based Approach across all our practice.
- Maintain the high levels of Direct Payments used to provide greater choice.
- Review our 'front door' service to deliver the right information and guidance from first contact.
- Build on our approach to severe weather guidance so people can stay safe and well
- Improve our progression pathways for children with learning disabilities from Children Social Care to Adult Social Care.
- Provide technological solutions that enable remote monitoring, telecare, and virtual consultations, allowing individuals to receive support and care in their own homes.
- Further expand the use of social prescribing to connect individuals to local community resources.
- Collaborate with individuals to co-create plans that reflect their unique circumstances and desired outcomes and regularly review and update these plans in response to changing needs.

- Offer a wide range of choice and control of placements wherever possible and ensuring access to information and advocacy services so that individuals and families can make the right choice that is best for them.
- Explore alternative approaches to managing personal budgets, including the opportunity to pool budgets.
- Always acknowledge the differences between people and treating people's values, beliefs, cultures, and lifestyles with respect.
- Work with our commissioned providers and engage with non-commissioned providers to share and develop best practice approaches and support in the delivery of care to City of London residents.

Measures of success:

- The percentage of Direct Payments being issued to eligible individuals year-on-year remains consistent and does not decrease.
- Reduction in the average time it takes for clients to receive a comprehensive assessment and personalised care plan after initial contact.
- Expand on the number of community groups that we socially prescribe people to.
- Increased variety of care technology being used to support individuals and families with their needs.
- Increase in the number of referrals made to social prescribing programs and the percentage of individuals who report positive outcomes from their participation.

Case study - Rough Sleeping Social Worker

An adult was rough sleeping in and around the City of London prior to the Coronavirus pandemic. They made a claim for asylum, but this was declined.

The Adult was experiencing a mixture of mental and physical health problems and was assessed as having care and support needs under the Care Act (2014), and that the local authority had a responsibility to offer support under the Human Rights Act (1998). Following an Occupational Therapy assessment, temporary accommodation was organised.

The adult had a care package of support, which over time was reduced and later discontinued, as they readapted to living independently and their mental and physical health improved.

Our Strengths Based Practitioners supported the adult over time, building their confidence and relationship within the local community and with services.

The strengths-based practitioner helped them look into aspirational training courses which they had identified, such as security and forklift driver, following this lead to help them work out what they can and can't do rather than shutting doors. They also encouraged them to attend the local library to use their computers, so that they can do their own research.

Commitment two: Provide our communities with a skilled, supported, and adaptable workforce dedicated to delivering high-quality care.

We know that our dedicated team is at the heart of everything we do. To provide people with the best possible care, we are committed to supporting our staff through ongoing training and developing an environment that allows them to provide the best possible care. This means:

- **Skilled and knowledgeable staff:** Our team is equipped with the latest knowledge and skills to meet people's diverse and changing needs.
- **Compassionate care:** We believe in treating people with dignity and respect, and our staff and services provide an excellent standard of support.
- **Valued and motivated staff:** By valuing our team, we ensure they are engaged and fulfilled in their roles, leading to better care for those in our communities.

Investing in our staff is not only the right thing to do, it is also essential for ensuring that people receive the highest quality of care, now and in the future.

To deliver this we will:

- Deliver the Adult Social Care Workforce strategy.
- Develop a dedicated Adult Social Care training plan for all our Social Care staff.
- Implement mentorship and coaching programmes where experienced staff guide and support student Social Workers and agency staff to foster knowledge transfer and professional development.
- Create clear career progression paths within the service offering opportunities for advancement and specialisation.
- Support ongoing social work learning through workshops, conferences and professional qualifications to keep staff up to date with the latest practices and research.
- Promote critical analysis and reflective practice to create space to explore experiences, intuition and ways of knowing to enable learning to help transform our practice.
- Provide a positive workplace culture that values staff contributions, encourages open communication, and provides opportunities for feedback and recognition.
- Collaborate between different health and social care disciplines (such as social workers, nursing staff and occupational therapists) to provide a holistic approach to care and maximise positive outcomes for individuals.

Measures of success:

- Completion of a comprehensive workforce strategy, including clear goals, times, and assigned responsibilities.
- Increase in staff completing specialised training courses.
- Increase in the percentage of staff promotions, new specialisms or role changes into higher level of specialised positions within the City Corporation.
- Increase in the number of staff obtaining relevant professional qualifications or certifications.
- Improved staff satisfaction scores (via staff survey or other mediums)
- Our adult social care workforce remains stable whilst benefiting from fresh perspectives and new ideas from new members of staff.

Case study

We have a full-time stand-alone post of Principal Social Worker, and our Senior Occupational Therapist is a member of Principal Occupational Therapists Network. These practitioners enable local and national networking, share policies and guidance, and make improvements to our processes and practice.

We also have a “Staff Suggestions digital box” system, where our staff can make positive suggestions and share their views, and we learn from our exit interviews, which are reviewed by the Principal Social Worker.

We invite external guests and speakers to our events, to boost our engagement in the ASC national and local agenda, such as at World Social Work Day or visit by the previous Chief Social Worker, Lyn Romeo.

Staff feedback: “I think there is a well-balanced understanding of case workload and stress. I feel listened to and understood, for example if I ask for a little space/time to finish off work before new cases are allocated.”

Commitment three: Work collaboratively with our partners to provide people with the right support, in the right place at the right time.

We know that providing the best possible support means working together collaboratively. That is why we collaborate with a range of organisations, including:

- **Healthcare providers:** Ensuring smooth transitions between health and social care, such as when people are discharged from hospital.
- **Community and voluntary groups:** Connecting you with local resources and networks that can enhance your wellbeing and independence.
- **Other key partners:** Working together to tackle important issues like safeguarding and keeping people safe and protected.

By sharing knowledge and resources with our partners, we can understand people’s needs and provide support better than we can do alone. The services we provide you can be tailored to meet people’s unique circumstances and are delivered in a joined-up approach, regardless of which organisation they reach out for support in the first place.

To deliver this we will:

- Strengthen collaboration between health, children’s social care and social care providers to ensure seamless transitions and coordinated care pathways.

- Build on our strong partnerships with local GPs, community nurses, and other healthcare providers to ensure a joined-up approach to preventive care.
- Work with social housing providers to ensure that homes are safe, accessible, and adapted to meet the changing needs of residents.
- Work with our care providers to focus on the upcoming themes and trends related to the quality of care to enable us to identify issues at an early stage and share learning.
- Work with our neighbouring local authorities to deliver consistency in quality monitoring methods and improve good practice and avoid duplication.
- Maximise the use of community and voluntary groups to provide information and advice to service users.
- Work with partners across North East London Integrated Care System to deliver a systemwide approach to address health inequalities.
- Continue to work in partnership with unpaid carers in the City of London to deliver the Carers Strategy.
- Deliver new models of integration through the City & Hackney Strengths Based Partnership.

Measures of success:

- Delayed transfers of care between health and social care settings kept as low as possible.
- Increase in the number of individuals receiving preventative care interventions based on referrals from health partners.
- Increase in the number of adaptations carried out within homes to adapt them to resident needs.
- Increase in number of service users accessing information and advice through community and voluntary groups or commissioned local services.
- Reduction in health inequalities amongst specific target populations within the Northeast London Integrated Care System.
- Increase in the number of unpaid carers accessing support services and reporting improved well-being.
- Increase in number of referrals to social community groups and voluntary organisations.
- Positive feedback from our partners and local community groups.

Case Study – Hospital Discharge, Care Navigator

The Care Navigator from Age UK worked with an Adult in hospital who had been struggling at home for some time but had been reluctant to ask for help and to share information. However, working with the Care Navigator, the individual wanted to be fully involved in their discharge planning but had a difficulty hearing, so by using email, they were able to provide more information about needs and requirements to help with the discharge home.

The Care Navigator acted as a bridge to adult social care to create positive outcomes for the adult by ensuring equipment such as key safe and pendant alarm were in place to prevent delays and ensure a safe discharge. Finally, the Care Navigator ensured relevant details were shared with the GP including the arranged outpatient appointments.

Commitment four: Provide a wide range of high-quality, accessible care options to meet people's needs.

We are committed to building a strong and diverse care system that can meet the needs of everyone in our communities. This means commissioning the right care providers who can offer people different options for high-quality care and support, whenever and wherever they need it.

Our strong care system benefits people in several ways:

- **More choices:** People will have more options to find care that suits their individual needs and preferences.
- **Better quality:** Commissioned care providers are monitored to constantly improve their services.
- **Prepared for the future:** Our diverse care system will be more adaptable to changes in the population and unexpected challenges, ensuring long-term access to care.

As a smaller local authority, we carefully choose the best care providers and options to ensure you receive the most suitable and cost-effective care possible.

To deliver this we will:

- Work in partnership with local care providers to ensure we have a social care market that can meet the needs of City of London residents.

- Spot purchase care provision using commissioning arrangements that provide the best value and the right support.
- Work with providers to develop and test emergency plans for situations such as pandemics and unexpected closures to ensure continuity of care.
- Require providers to demonstrate cultural awareness so that they provide services that respect the diverse backgrounds, beliefs and preferences of service users.
- Update our market sustainability plan and market position statement on a regular basis to ensure we have the correct support available based on local need.
- Explore how we can maximise diversity in the care market through the development of new and innovative care models.
- Continue to undertake fair cost of care exercises and review the rates we pay care providers to make sure they are sustainable but also provide optimum value for money.

Measures of success:

- Increase in the number of commissioned care providers with fully developed and tested emergency plans, including contingency plans for alternative care arrangements in case of disruptions.
- Percentage of service users reporting satisfaction with the cultural sensitivity and responsiveness of care providers, based on regular feedback surveys.
- Yearly review and update of the City Corporation's market sustainability plan and market position statement.
- Increase in the number of new and innovative care models piloted or implemented within a specified timeframe, increasing the range of care options available to residents.
- Positive feedback from service users reported to us through the Adult Social Care Advisory group.
- Feedback from service users through the regularly commissioned questionnaires.

6. Implementation

This strategy has been developed amidst ongoing reforms to the adult social care sector and its funding landscape. It serves as a cornerstone for the City of London Corporation to achieve the objectives outlined in its Corporate Plan, working in synergy with the implementation of both the City Corporation's Carers Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This approach ensures a comprehensive and integrated support system for individuals in need of care.

The strategy will also be implemented by promoting its priorities with our partners, our workforce and with City of London residents.

This strategy also aligns and delivers priorities identified within the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan for 2024-29 and supports the objectives of the City Corporation's People Strategy to deliver a strong and stable workforce. Additionally, the strategy also aligns to the City Corporation's Adult Social Care Development Plan 2023-28, which is the main vehicle of delivery of the strategy's five identified priorities.

Oversight and accountability for the Adult Social Care Strategy rests with the City Corporation's Community & Children's Services Committee, which is responsible for its approval, renewal, and ongoing monitoring to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in addressing the evolving needs of the community. This dynamic framework allows the strategy to adapt and respond to emerging challenges within the sector, while maintaining a focus on person-centered care, strong partnership working, safeguarding the most vulnerable and promoting proactive and preventative approaches.