

# Adult Social Care Peer Challenge

Key areas of focus



# Overview

The peer challenge process aims to help local government to help itself to respond to the changing agenda for adult social care. Undertaken from the viewpoint of a friend, albeit a 'critical friend', a peer challenge allows a team of people who understand the pressures of running a local authority to review the council's practices in a challenging but supportive way.

A peer challenge includes an assessment of current achievements and provides recommendations of how further improvements can be made. It is a constructive, collaborative and supportive process with has the central aim of helping councils improve. It is not an inspection, nor does it award any form of rating category.

The following sections set out the key area of focus for peer challenges in adult social care. They have been tested with the sector. The key areas of focus also can be used as a means of self-assessment.

They are centred on the following key themes:

- 1. Outcomes for people who need care and support to improve independence and wellbeing**
- 2. Participation**
- 3. Vision, Strategy and Leadership**
- 4. Working Together**
- 5. Resource and Workforce Management**
- 6. Service Delivery and Effective Practice**
- 7. Commissioning and Market Shaping**
- 8. Improvement and Innovation demonstrating notable practice**

Every council and partnership is different and the challenge team will ensure the challenge is individually tailored to the needs and priorities of each local authority. The intention is not to cover all the questions as they appear below. Instead scoping would be done with the individual authority to select the areas most appropriate to them.

These refreshed key areas of focus have been discussed and approved by the Towards Excellence in Adult Social Care (TEASC) Programme Board. TEASC is a programme to help councils improve their performance in adult social care, delivered by the sector on a regional basis. See [www.local.gov.uk/adult-social-care](http://www.local.gov.uk/adult-social-care) for more information.

## Key areas of focus with additional probes

1	<b>Outcomes for people who need care and support to improve independence and wellbeing</b>
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the council taking action to discharge its duty of wellbeing in line with the Care Act, and make sure that people who live in their areas receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious, or delay the impact of their needs?</li> </ul>
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is the council placing importance on achieving consistent outcomes for all residents who need care and support, as required under the Care Act 2014</li> </ul>
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How far do these outcomes reflect the priorities and needs of citizens and service users as set out in the Local Account?</li> </ul>
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the council use feedback from people who use services to improve outcomes?</li> </ul>
1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the strategic shared approach to improving health and well-being outcomes across the council, NHS and other partners?</li> </ul>
1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent can the council and its partners' partners demonstrate improved safeguarding outcomes?</li> </ul>
2	<b>Participation</b>
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the council actively involve people, carers, families and communities in the design, development, delivery and review of innovative care and support arrangements?</li> <li>To what degree has the council involved peer groups &amp; user-led organisations in the design and commissioning of services, with real control over the resources used to secure care and support?</li> </ul>
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the council provide easy access to users and carers of services to advocacy services, including independent advocacy support?</li> <li>How does the council provide access to translation services when these are required to ensure understanding between the person with care and support needs and the council?</li> </ul>
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What evidence is there that demonstrates coproduction is integral to commissioning activity at all stages in the cycle so that the range of support commissioned meets both identified need and people's aspirations for the future within available resources?</li> <li>How does this apply to both health and social care commissioning when people have personal health and social care budgets?</li> </ul>
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the council engage with and empower all aspects of its diverse community to explore issues honestly, and work together to identify new ways to support people who live in their communities with care and support needs?</li> </ul>
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What evidence does the council have that such engagement has affected the way in which services are delivered and improved outcomes?</li> </ul>

2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the council know that users of services and carers feel in control and safe</li> </ul>
2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the council ensure that its safeguarding processes puts individuals in control and this continues throughout all the stages?</li> <li>• How is safeguarding personalised to the needs and circumstances of the individual?</li> </ul>

<b>3</b>	<b>Vision, Strategy and Leadership</b>
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there recognised and active leadership by all statutory partners on promoting wellbeing and safeguarding?</li> <li>• How do managers and leaders communicate clearly the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act?</li> </ul>
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board exercising collective leadership and steering the development of integrated and personalised services to meet population needs, with clear and resourced strategies and plans?</li> </ul>
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective are the council's decision making processes, including scrutiny arrangements, in relation to shared priorities &amp; accountability between local leaders?</li> </ul>
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does the council focus on cultural change, just as much as systems change and engaging solutions beyond social care, including NHS?</li> </ul>
3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is risk to achieving strategic aims for adult social care identified accurately and managed effectively and do leaders create a climate where risk is openly and constructively discussed?</li> <li>• What risk identification mechanisms are in place and processes to manage risk?</li> </ul>
3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the leadership of the council demonstrate that it values diversity and that the principles of equality and diversity are incorporated into all the council's functions?</li> </ul>
3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is adult social care leadership positioned in the council to be able to secure internal co-operation from other departments, and services including housing, to support a strong family and sustainable community focus, as well as smooth transition from children's services for people with disabilities?</li> </ul>

<b>4</b>	<b>Working Together</b>
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are strategies and plans for social care at all levels developed in partnership with people who use services, their carers and other interested citizens, the voluntary sector, health, housing, and other relevant organisations / stakeholders?</li> </ul>
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are operational health and social care processes, systems and resources integrated to avoid duplication and provide more accessible and joined-up multi disciplinary commissioning and delivery arrangements?</li> </ul>
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do the partnerships, including the health &amp; wellbeing and safeguarding adults boards, have appropriate governance arrangements, clear roles and accountabilities with joint performance management frameworks to promote effective information sharing, joint assessments &amp; care planning, and are they resourced adequately?</li> </ul>

4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the council evidence that partnership working is supporting an integrated delivery system as well as adding value and producing efficiencies?</li> </ul>
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a system and culture of constructive challenge between partners?</li> </ul>
4.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is safeguarding embedded in corporate and service strategies across the council and partner organisations?</li> <li>• How is the adult safeguarding policy informed by the Mental Capacity Act including Deprivation of Liberty Standards</li> </ul>

<b>5</b>	<b>Resource and Workforce Management</b>
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What services is the council providing that help to prevent or delay the development of care and support needs, or reduce care and support needs (including carer's support needs)?</li> </ul>
5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively is the council understanding and managing its financial and physical resources effectively to meet its current requirements and future challenges?</li> <li>• How are resources re-allocated to tackle changing priorities or inadequate performance?</li> <li>• How are resources re-allocated to tackle changing priorities or inadequate performance?</li> </ul>
5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the council transforming services to ensure all resources are optimised across the health and social care system and eligible needs met, in the wider context of financial challenges within the NHS as well as local government?</li> </ul>
5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the council and its partners actively making evidence-based interventions to identify priorities for investment and manage all system resources (including the Better Care Fund), efficiently and effectively to promote wellbeing, including adult social care?</li> </ul>
5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the council actively addressing the workforce issues (both internally and externally i.e. service providers, and including personal assistants employed by service users) in its area relating to the provision of Adult social Care, to ensure that people who use health and care are treated with respect, dignity and compassion by staff who have the skills and time to care for them?</li> </ul>
5.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the council ensuring that its workforce and culture supports the achievement of its goals and which embraces the introduction and implementation of change?</li> <li>• Does the council have a robust workforce plan for adult social care to ensure there are sufficient trained and competent staff to meet future requirements?</li> <li>• How far is the workforce strategy concerned with sustainability, including the financial stability of providers and the coordination of health and care workforce planning?</li> </ul>

6	<b>Service Delivery and Effective Practice</b>
6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the council ensure that people have a positive experience of care and support, co-producing solutions and providing choice and flexibility of care and support to achieve outcomes?</li> <li>• To what extent has the council adapted its approach and systems to respond to the needs of people who lack mental capacity?</li> </ul>
6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do the services delivered meet quality standards, deliver improved outcomes, treat people with respect, dignity and compassion and keep them free from harm?</li> </ul>
6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What range of quality services are in place that meet the diverse needs of the local population and respond to changing needs and expectations, and how does the council monitor quality standards?</li> </ul>
6.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there evidence that the organisation and its partners are meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty?</li> </ul>
6.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the mechanisms to access to easy-to-understand information and advice about care and support, and range of this, for all residents, regardless of whether or not they have eligible care needs, including financial advice?</li> </ul>
6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do the council and its partners work together to deliver a personalised community- based care and support system, with smooth transitions between services and agencies?</li> </ul>
6.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are personal budgets, as set out in the Care Act, available to all those eligible and can the council demonstrate the difference that they make to someone's life?</li> </ul>
6.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is there a personalised response to harm and abuse that enables people to identify and improve outcomes, reach resolution, justice and recovery and address what has caused the harm?</li> <li>• To what extent can partners and providers demonstrate that they use Mental Capacity Act including Deprivation of Liberty Standards to safeguard people's rights?</li> </ul>
6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the council fulfilling its obligation to meet carer needs for support as set out in the Care Act?</li> <li>• How is the council fulfilling its obligation to meet self-funders' needs for support as set out in the Care Act, including establishing Care Accounts?</li> </ul>

7	<b>Commissioning and Market Shaping</b>
7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the council leading an integrated approach to commissioning with NHS and other partners to make best use of all system resources to ensure there are services available that prevent people’s care needs from becoming more serious, or delay the impact of their needs and ensures provision of services to meet needs in line with local priorities?</li> <li>• How does it promote health and wellbeing, including physical, mental, emotional, social and economic wellbeing?</li> <li>• To what extent does this include effective commissioning and performance reporting requirements from providers for specific groups of vulnerable people? For example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with challenging behaviour</li> <li>• People with continuing health care needs</li> <li>• People who lack mental capacity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are the assets and services that reduce, delay and eliminate demand worked into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and how well does the council understand the needs of the whole population, including health and care inequalities, and the impact of the way specific groups of people use resources?</li> <li>• To what extent does commissioning provide value for the whole community not just the individual, their carers, the commissioner or the provider?</li> </ul>
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do people have real control over the resources used to secure care and support to meet agreed outcomes, with commissioning strongly guided by their decisions?</li> </ul>
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is commissioning person-centred and focuses on the outcomes that people say matter most to them? How does it empower people to have choice and control in their lives and over their care and support?</li> <li>• To what extent is commissioning Coproduced with people, their carers and their communities?</li> </ul>

7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there flexible integrated care and support?</li> <li>• What range of commissioning approaches does the council use to achieve the most effective balance between diversifying the market and managing within resources?</li> <li>• How is the council building capacity to optimize use of community resources, including the sector?</li> <li>• How does the council encourage providers and commissioners to work together throughout the commissioning process as a shared endeavour?</li> <li>• What is the council doing to develop and shape a vibrant diverse and sustainable market of quality assured evidence based provision for people with care and support needs or for early intervention and prevention?</li> <li>• How is the market position statement used to inform service development and diversification?</li> <li>• How is the council ensuring the quality of care commissioned, and what mechanisms are in place to regularly review services, and take appropriate action?</li> <li>• How does commissioning ensure a good balance of quality and cost to make the best use of resources and achieve the most positive outcomes for people and their communities?</li> </ul>
-----	---

<b>8</b>	<b>Improvement and Innovation demonstrating notable practice</b>
8.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the council built its capability to innovate, take advantage of learning from good practice and learn from things that didn't go well?</li> </ul>
8.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the council constantly challenge its models of service delivery?</li> </ul>
8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the council built its capability to innovate and take advantage of learning from good practice, including from regional, national and international perspectives, and learning from enquiries into poor practice such as Winterbourne View?</li> <li>• To what extent is change managed through formal programme management approaches?</li> </ul>

If you have any queries or would like to discuss the Adult Social Care peer challenge, please contact:

**Marcus Coulson**

Programme Manager

Local Government Association

Telephone: 07766 252 853

Email: [marcus.coulson@local.gov.uk](mailto:marcus.coulson@local.gov.uk)





**Local Government Association**

Local Government House  
Smith Square  
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000  
Fax 020 7664 3030  
Email [info@local.gov.uk](mailto:info@local.gov.uk)  
[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)

© Local Government Association, February 2015

For a copy in Braille, larger print or audio,  
please contact us on 020 7664 3000.  
We consider requests on an individual basis.