

Report to: ADULT SERVICES PANEL
CABINET

Date: 20TH JANUARY 2009
22ND JANUARY 2009

Subject: CSCI ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2007/8

Report of: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEALTH & WELL BEING

Contact officer: HEAD OF SERVICE, PERFORMANCE & CONTRACTS
PAUL STEVENSON 01942 827800

Purpose / summary: To inform members of the outcome of the Annual Performance Assessment of Social Care Services for Adults Services

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: None

Recommendation / decision: That members note the Report.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision will be made as a result of this report and will be published within 48 hours.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	Social Care
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	N/A
Wards affected:	All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?	Yes
Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	No

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X		X
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	X

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
22 nd January 2009			

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Bernard Walker

Date 8th January 2009

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet and Adult Services Panel of the outcome for Wigan of the Commission for Social Care Inspection's (CSCI) annual evaluation exercise for Councils' Adult Social Services responsibilities (CASSR).
- 1.2 Wigan Council has been awarded 2 stars by CSCI for the exercise of these responsibilities, from a possible rating of between zero and three stars. This translates to a CPA score for the Adult Services 'service block' of 3 stars. The period covered is the municipal year 2007-8.
- 1.3 The judgement confirms that the Council is delivering 'good outcomes' and has 'promising capacity for improvement'. The Summary Report from CSCI (see Appendix) lists the key strengths and areas for improvement and overall it is positive, noting that we are moving in the right direction.

The table below sets out the grades awarded for the seven outcomes assessed compared to 2006-07. The Council's overall performance has been maintained at delivering good outcomes with promising capacity to improve, though has improved on two specific outcomes. It is now considered to be 'excellent' as far as economic well-being outcomes are concerned, and rated 'good' for freedom from discrimination and harassment.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE JUDGMENTS FOR 2007/08 and 2006 / 07

Areas for judgment	2006 / 07 Grade awarded	2007/08 Grade awarded
Delivering Outcomes	Good	Good
Improved health and emotional well-being	Good	Good
Improved quality of life	Good	Good
Making a positive contribution	Good	Good
Increased choice and control	Good	Good
Freedom from discrimination and harassment	Adequate	Good
Economic well-being	Good	Excellent
Maintaining personal dignity and respect	Adequate	Adequate
Capacity to Improve (Combined judgment)	Promising	Promising
Leadership	Promising	Promising
Commissioning and use of resources	Promising	Promising
Performance Rating	Two Star	Two Star

1.4 Specific quotes from the report on strengths in each of the outcome areas are as follows:

- “Leadership ensures that planning and overall strategic development is well linked to the national agenda and is appropriately focused on increasing personalisation and prevention.”
- “Promoting healthy lifestyles is embedded within the council’s service provision. There are structured links between provider services for people with learning and physical disabilities and active living teams that support personalised approaches to promoting health and wellbeing.”
- “The council can demonstrate that assistive technology is having a beneficial effect on people’s quality of life and contributing to positive outcomes for people who are at risk of falling.”
- “An effective approach to involvement within Adult Social Care Services is supported by a wider commitment by the council as a whole and by partners under the Local Area Agreement to ensure that all groups of people who use services and the local population as a whole have opportunities for engagement.”
- “The use of the Single Assessment Process and good performance in relation to the provision of statements of need are positive aspects of the Council’s approach to care management.”
- “Eligibility criteria are clearly set out, well publicised and available in a range of formats. There is no indication that race or financial status is a barrier to assessment.”
- “A range of pathways to employment is available to help all groups of people who may require support to access and retain employment. Options include support from a service rated as excellent by Ofsted.”
- “Preventative services are contributing to people’s protection through schemes to enhance personal safety.”

1.5 However, the many positive comments identifying strengths in service provision and support are accompanied by areas where improvements need to be made. Key areas for development include:

- A need for further developments around safeguarding;
- Increasing access and availability to advocacy services;
- Improving the waiting time for major adaptations;
- Ensuring carers are receiving appropriate support, assessments and reviews;
- Ensuring an appropriate approach to referral and assessments

- Improving the timeliness of assessments.

1.6 These and other areas highlighted in the body of the report will form the basis for the performance improvements to be targeted in the next year.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 To take account of the issues highlighted as areas for development, an action plan has been drawn up and monitoring arrangements on performance and development reviewed and strengthened. A Health and Social Care Evidence Bank is also under development. This will enable us to systematically collect examples of good practice across the Department with demonstrable outcomes

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDED OPTION

3.1 None

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The improvement in performance in certain outcomes is welcome, though it is important that performance continues to improve for the municipal year 2008-9 and beyond. The star rating system for assessing services will be replaced this coming year by a flag-based system based on green and red flags to indicate good and poor performance respectively and the aspiration is to achieve green flags in all areas of our performance.

4.2 The areas for improvement highlighted by CSCI will be a priority over the coming months and will be an essential factor in seeking to achieve further improvement.



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Mr Bernard Walker
Director of Adult Services
Wigan Social Services Dept
Civic Centre
Millgate
Wigan
WN1 1AZ

27th October 2008

Our ref: DM/DL

Dear Bernard

**PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT of 2007-08 ANNUAL
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES FOR
ADULTS SERVICES FOR WIGAN COUNCIL**

Introduction

This performance summary report summarises the findings of the 2008 annual performance assessment (APA) process for your council. Thank you for the information you provided to support this process, and for the time made available by yourself and your colleagues to discuss relevant issues.

Attached is the final copy of the performance assessment notebook (PAN), which provides a record of the process of consideration by CSCI and from which this summary report is derived. You will have had a previous opportunity to comment on the factual accuracy of the PAN following the Annual Review Meeting.

The judgments outlined in this report support the performance rating notified in the performance rating letter. The judgments are

- Delivering outcomes using the LSIF rating scale

And

Capacity for Improvement (a combined judgement from the Leadership and the Commissioning & Use of Resources evidence domains)

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The judgment on Delivering Outcomes will contribute to the Audit Commission's CPA rating for the council.

The council is expected to take this report to a meeting of the council within two months of the publication of the ratings (i.e. by 31st January 2009) and to make available to the public, preferably with an easy read format available.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE JUDGMENTS FOR 2007/08

Areas for judgment	Grade awarded
Delivering Outcomes	Good
Improved health and emotional well-being	Good
Improved quality of life	Good
Making a positive contribution	Good
Increased choice and control	Good
Freedom from discrimination and harassment	Good
Economic well-being	Excellent
Maintaining personal dignity and respect	Adequate
Capacity to Improve (Combined judgment)	Promising
Leadership	Promising
Commissioning and use of resources	Promising
Performance Rating	Two Star

The report sets out the high level messages about areas of good performance, areas of improvement over the last year, areas which are priorities for improvement and where appropriate identifies any follow up action CSCI will take.

KEY STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT BY PEOPLE USING SERVICES

Key strengths	Key areas for development
All people using services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and support of health and well-being • An effective approach to the implementation of the National Service Framework for long-term conditions. • Good levels of intensive support for adults (aged 18-64) • People are not left waiting in hospital whilst the council arranges services. • The contribution made by people who use services and by their carers to care planning, the provision of information, and service development • Effective systems to recruit and support volunteers • Information from complaints continues to be used to inform improvements to service provision • Full implementation of the Single Assessment Process • Timely provision of statements of needs to people using services • Reductions in permanent admissions to residential or nursing care • Increased take-up of direct payments and progress on individual budgets • Clear and well publicised eligibility criteria • The council has implemented Level 3 of the Local Government Equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the number of reviews of people receiving services • Ensuring an appropriate contribution to minimising alcohol related harm • Improving people's sense of safety • Increasing the profile of the contribution of people who use services in strategic documents • Continue to ensure an appropriate approach to referral and assessment • Continue to monitor information for the public to ensure it is appropriate • Increasing the availability of advocacy services • Continuing to increase use of adult placement schemes • Increasing the use of direct payments for higher levels of need • Ensuring that people are receiving appropriate information • Developing monitoring systems addressing the overall quality of the safeguarding response and assess the effectiveness of training and awareness raising in all services

<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no indication that race or financial status is a barrier to assessment • The use of continuing care funding is increasing and disputes are rare • There are successful initiatives to support people into employment. • There is support with financial affairs for people who use services • Multi agency safeguarding arrangements have improved and awareness of safeguarding issues is improving • More staff have been trained in safeguarding adults. • A high level of allocation of single rooms for people going into permanent residential or nursing care. 	
<p>Older people</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving services for older people with mental health needs • The introduction of a re-ablement service • The provision of assistive technology • Good levels of accessible non-care managed support providing preventative services in the local community • The availability of extra care housing • Timely provision of services following assessment • Developing links with older people from BME communities • Equality impact assessments of the Partnerships for Older People Projects (POPP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further increasing provision of intermediate care. • Improving the timeliness of assessments

<p>schemes have addressed issues of discrimination based on age and race</p>	
<p>People with learning disabilities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Action Plans for people with learning disabilities • Providing a very good level of support at home • Active engagement with people with learning disabilities and carers - opportunities for engagement include involvement in drama and input to training Improving specialist services • Improvements to transition planning • Tackling barriers to employment 	
<p>People with mental health problems</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing very good levels of support at home • People who use mental health services and their carers have a demonstrable impact on service development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the accessibility of, and retention in, drug treatment services
<p>People with physical and sensory disabilities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a good level of support at home • Introduction of self assessment for equipment • Timely delivery of equipment • Timely commencement of minor adaptations • People have been involved in the development of Occupational Therapy and equipment services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving waiting time for major adaptations
<p>Carers</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency support for carers • Support for education and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to make progress on the development of carers' services including attention to the needs of carers of older people and BME carers • Ensuring that all carers of people with learning

	<p>disabilities are receiving an appropriate assessments and reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging more carers to use direct payments
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KEY STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT BY OUTCOME

Improved health and emotional well-being

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is good.

This is an area of continuing good performance and the implementation of existing plans can be expected to result in further improvement. The council has ambitious plans for the creation of a joint service centre with health and other partners and in the longer term this will help ensure that information for healthy lifestyles is more easily available. The council is working with partners to further increase the available levels of intermediate care. The need for additional resources in this area has been recognised and there are no barriers to further development. The availability of re-ablement will increase as efficiency savings are generated and the PCT have contributed to additional intermediate care provision. Investment in an integrated approach to information technology will help monitor the overall effectiveness of the approach. The council has recognised the need for an improvement in the number of people whose care needs are reviewed although service restructuring may mean that plans to address this will not have an immediate effect. Crisis resolution/home treatment teams have been reviewed and restructured, in a context of improving relationships with the local mental health trust, and can confidently be expected to demonstrate a contribution to minimising hospital stays in 2008-09. A comprehensive approach to reviewing hospital discharge arrangements in partnership with both the PCT and the local acute NHS trust, can also be expected to deliver improvements in future. Work in relation to the National Strategic Framework for long term conditions is progressing well but has not yet demonstrated an impact on hospital stays, however systems are in place for information gathering and the approach is integrated with other support systems. The council has appropriate plans to review its contribution to minimising alcohol related harm.

Key strengths

- Healthy lifestyles for older people have been effectively promoted by initiatives under the POPP scheme and the launch of a public health strategy has been used as a vehicle to promote access to these initiatives.
- The council is supporting older people to create and run a dedicated website which includes information on health and well-being.
- Promoting healthy lifestyles is embedded within the council's service provision. There are structured links between provider services for people with learning and physical disabilities and active living teams that support personalised approaches to promoting health and wellbeing.
- There is specific evidence of increased physical activity amongst people with mental health needs.
- The council can demonstrate that work with partners under the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is having an impact on the health of the population.

- There have been improvements in services to meet the mental health needs of older people.
- All users of learning disability services have been offered health actions plans and the level of support for people with learning disabilities to access health services has increased.
- A re-ablement team has been introduced and the use of intermediate care has increased. In addition to this improvements in understanding of the role of intermediate care are contributing to an improved experience for people who use services.
- There is an effective approach to the implementation of the National Service Framework for long-term conditions.
- People are not spending unnecessary time in hospital whilst the council arranges services.

Key areas for development

- The overall usage of intermediate care remains lower than comparators and further development is needed.
- Performance in relation to numbers of people receiving a review remains adequate and the council has not met its target for improvement in this area. Particularly low numbers of people with physical and sensory impairments receiving reviews require attention.
- The National Treatment Agency has reported areas for development in relation to drug misusers remaining in treatment, and access to residential rehabilitation and the council should work with partners to address this.
- The council's plans to review its contribution to alcohol related harm should contribute to an improved service.

Improved quality of life

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is good.

This is an area of continuing good performance. Within it there is a changing pattern of service delivery with the use of assistive technology and the increase in the use of continuing care funding both resulting in reduced levels of care managed support (including intensive support) to older people. In fulfilling its responsibilities the council relies heavily on ensuring that good quality direct services are available to meet people's support needs and this means that it is important that these services are well engaged in all aspects of the social care development including safeguarding, personalisation and carers support.

Achieving a demonstrable impact from falls prevention work was identified as a key area for improvement last year, and the council is now confident that assistive technology is helping reduce the risks to people at risk of falls. The lead on falls prevention work is with the PCT and the development of a holistic approach to monitoring the effectiveness of the falls prevention strategy is in hand. The council will need to continue to make progress on existing plans for developing services to meet specialist needs.

Key strengths

- Although the level of care managed support to older people has decreased and is below the level rated as adequate the council can demonstrate that easily accessible, good quality direct access services contribute to an overall level of support that ensures needs are met.
- Numbers of older people accessing grant funded services are nearly double those in comparator councils. A single gateway into these services helps promote accessibility. There is a good range of schemes, a robust approach to monitoring the effectiveness of the services provided and evidence that the schemes are effective in promoting quality of life.
- Evidence in relation to intensive support continues to demonstrate a good focus on adults (aged 18-64) with high levels of need.
- The level of care- managed support for people with learning disabilities continues to be rated as very good.
- People with physical disabilities and sensory impairments receive good levels of support and their quality of life is promoted by the timely delivery of equipment.
- People with mental health needs continue to receive very good levels of support.
- The council can demonstrate that assistive technology is having a beneficial effect on people's quality of life and contributing to positive outcomes for people who are at risk of falling.
- The availability of extra care housing is sufficient to meet current needs.
- Planning is increasingly ensuring that services are available to meet specialist needs. These services have been enhanced through an increase in specialist housing provision and market management.

Key areas for development

- Current performance in providing timely access to major adaptations is behind that of comparator councils, making this an area for improvement.
- Comparatively low levels of carers of older people are receiving support and this is an area of concern. Overall performance in relation to carers' support is rated as adequate. Developmental work has taken place in relation to carers' services and plans are in hand for further improvement. Carers are making use of grant funded services and there are evident benefits from this, but the overall use of grant funded support by carers does not appear sufficient to cover the comparatively low levels of support provided following assessment. The council has recognised the ongoing development of carer support and should ensure that there are robust systems for monitoring its

effectiveness. Attention is also needed to ensure the needs of BME carers are met.

- There are effective projects for promoting safety at home, but despite these the available evidence is that safety at home is an issue of concern for people in the council area. The council is committed to working with partners to improve this.

Making a positive contribution

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is good.

This is an area of continuing good performance. An effective approach to involvement within Adult Social Care Services is supported by a wider commitment by the council as a whole and by partners under the Local Area Agreement to ensure that all groups of people who use services and the local population as a whole have opportunities for engagement.

Key strengths

- The use of self-assessment in relation to the provision of equipment is well established and has resulted in faster provision. People are increasingly offered options to contribute to standard assessment processes through self-assessment.
- There are initiatives to enhance the confidence and skills of users and carers to contribute to service development and a range of routes for this to take place.
- There is evidence that local people feel involved in developments demonstrating an effective commitment to engaging local people, including those who use services in all aspects of service development.
- A number of projects are enhancing the ability of people with learning disabilities and their carers to make a positive contribution. These include creating community links to encourage volunteering, use of drama to enable people to express their views and the development of skills to enable people to contribute to training others.
- The involvement of people with physical disabilities is embedded in the development of equipment and occupational therapy services.
- People who use services and their carers are part of a coalition of stakeholders in mental health services that has had a demonstrable impact on service development.
- Whilst not directly facilitating the involvement of people who use drug and alcohol services the council can demonstrate their input to service development, with a particular example being a recent focus on employment services for this group.
- There is evidence of an effective and inclusive approach to the recruitment of volunteers.
- There are numerous positive examples of changes that have arisen as a result of feedback from people who use services. An annual survey of people who use services has taken place for a number of years. This is now used more as a general

consultation mechanism than a measure of satisfaction.

Key areas for development

- The council can demonstrate that its commissioning strategy has been informed by the views and experiences of people who use services, however this is not apparent from the document itself. The council should aim to give a higher profile to the ways in which people's views are influencing overall commissioning.

Increased choice and control

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is good.

- This is an area of continuing good performance however within this overall assessment there are areas of deterioration, areas of improvement and areas where more effective monitoring is needed in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the council's approach. In this last category is the council's approach to information provision and the effectiveness and adequacy of out of hours support. An improvement in timescales for complaint investigations addresses a specific area for development identified in last year's performance assessment.

Key strengths

- Good performance in relation to admissions of older people to residential care, and very good performance in this respect in relation to younger adults indicate that preventative services make an effective contribution.
- The use of the Single Assessment Process and good performance in relation to the provision of statements of need are positive aspects of the council's approach to care management.
- The speed with which services are provided following assessment has also deteriorated but remains a strength.
- An overall review of the approach to Occupational Therapy assessments has resulted in a more stream-lined approach and the provision of additional resources. Waiting lists have been significantly reduced, addressing an area for improvement identified in last year's performance assessment.
- The current existence of an emergency support service means the council is well placed for the further development of emergency support to carers.
- The council can evidence changes arising from of complaints.
- The council reports that progress on its plans for the implementation of individual budgets is on track and that it will be able to calculate an individual budget allocation for everyone who uses services by March 2009. An initial emphasis on young people in transition has been successful and the council is working to extend its resource allocation scheme to older people.
- There has been a demonstrable improvement in the approach

- to transitions that has included input from health partners.
- Overall there is now good performance in relation to direct payments.

Key areas for development

- There has been an increase in waiting times for assessments and the service is no longer rated as adequate. The council has not succeeded in achieving a planned improvement in this area. The council has acknowledged the need to recover lost ground in terms of the timeliness of assessments. Improved monitoring and reporting arrangements, together with resolution of any data capture issues affecting performance in this area, should facilitate this.
- Changes in numbers of assessments leading to the provision of services reflect, at least in part, an increase in inappropriate referrals and the use of social work assessments as a gateway to health resources. The council is working to ensure an appropriate approach to assessment.
- Advocacy remains an area for improvement, but the council has made progress in identifying gaps and putting plans in place to address them.
- The council ensures that information is widely available in accessible formats, but there is no overall approach to ensuring that everyone receives key information and no system for monitoring whether information needs are met.
- Arrangements need to be put into place to ensure that all carers of people with learning disabilities receive an appropriate level of assessments and reviews.
- Although there has been a small increase in the use of adult placement schemes, scope for further development remains.
- The council has identified barriers in relation to use of direct payments to meet higher levels of need and is working to address both this area and the comparatively low use of direct payments to provide carers' support. Further progress is needed.

Freedom from discrimination and harassment

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is good.

This is an area of improved performance for the council. A key factor in demonstrating improved performance has been the achievement of level three of the Local Government Equality Standards. Progress in understanding the needs of older people from black and ethnic minority communities has also been demonstrated.

Key strengths

- Eligibility criteria are clearly set out, well publicised and available in a range of formats. There is no indication that race or financial status is a barrier to assessment.

- Improvements in monitoring information demonstrate an effective commitment to promoting equalities.
- Information in relation to grant-funded services indicates that these schemes make effective use of equality impact assessment to promote access to services.
- Work to increase the understanding of older people from black and ethnic minority communities is progressing and has resulted in the development of a central point of contact for information exchange that will also form a route for further consultation.
- The council has now achieved level three of the Local Government Equality Standards. This demonstrates that targets and monitoring systems are in place to monitor the council's approach to equality and diversity.

Key areas for development

- The council has a good focus on ensuring that information is provided in appropriate formats, but is not at present able to demonstrate that everyone is receiving appropriate information. Monitoring mechanisms need to be introduced.

Economic well being

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is excellent.

This is an area of improved performance for the council. Performance last year was identified as good, and no specific areas for improvement were identified. Demonstrable improvements this year include the increasing use of continuing care funding and Ofsted's recognition that the approach to supported employment is excellent.

Key strengths

- Continuing care protocols operate smoothly and increasing numbers of people are accessing continuing care. This means that people are not inappropriately charged for services to meet health needs and ensures that council resources are released to address social care needs.
- A range of pathways to employment is available to help all groups of people who may require support to access and retain employment. Options include support from a service rated as excellent by Ofsted.
- The approach to tackling barriers to employment for people with learning disabilities is a particular strength.
- Support for carers to access employment is well-established.
- Effective partnership working results in a proactive and successful approach to providing support with financial affairs.

Key areas for development

- None.

Maintaining personal dignity and respect

The contribution that the council makes to this outcome is adequate.

Although there is an improving picture in relation to safeguarding the improvement is not yet sufficiently clear or well established to result in a judgement of good. The council is confident of further improvement and indications are that this confidence is well founded.

Key strengths

- An increase in adult safeguarding referrals indicates that awareness of safeguarding issues is improving.
- Good proportions of council staff are trained to identify and assess risks to vulnerable adults.
- The provision of single rooms and policies in relation to personal and sexual relationships and data protection are all areas of strength.
- Preventative services are contributing to people's protection through schemes to enhance personal safety.
- There is an improving picture with regard to the operation of safeguarding systems including significant progress in relation to multidisciplinary involvement. The commitment of partners is demonstrated by the inclusion of safeguarding targets in the Local Area Agreement.

Key areas for development

- Levels of safeguarding referrals remain lower than in comparator councils.
- Further progress is needed to improve the proportion of staff in independent sector services who have had some training on the protection of vulnerable adults.
- Monitoring information needs to improve to enable the council to understand the effectiveness of training and awareness-raising in relation to safeguarding in all areas of service provision including preventative services.
- The council's annual safeguarding report for 2007-08 indicates a need for further development of quality monitoring systems to cover the way safeguarding needs were met, including the response to referrals in terms of strategy meetings, timescales for investigations and the quality of practice.

Capacity to improve

The council's capacity to improve services further is promising.

Capacity in relation to both leadership and use of resources is regarded as promising.

A key area of focus for the council's leadership at present is the impact of major restructuring within the council. This has led to a wider area of commissioning and operational service becoming the responsibility of the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) and an increasingly corporate

approach to the provision of support services. The new structure creates opportunities for an increasing alignment between for example, leisure services and social care, but also has a short-term impact in terms of the effect of change on individuals. There is an ambitious vision to promote easy access to all local services and a joint service centre covering council and health services is expected to commence operation late in 2010. An incremental approach to the development of a joint commissioning agency is an element of these plans and demonstrates the increasing strength of partnership working between the council and the PCT.

Key strengths

Leadership

- Leadership ensures that planning and overall strategic development is well linked to the national agenda and is appropriately focussed on increasing personalisation and prevention.
- The success of alternative forms of support for older people and low levels of admission to residential care for both adults (aged 18-64) and older people, together with good performance in relation to delayed transfers of care, demonstrates the effectiveness of the approach.
- Partnership working is being used as a route to further service development with the current LAA having a good emphasis on social care issues.
- The council reports that it is making progress in the implementation of changes in response to the Department of Health publication "Putting People First". Plans have been made covering use of the available funding and the council is working with the PCT and voluntary sector groups on implementation. The council has clear plans for the involvement of staff and stakeholders in these developments.
- Figures in relation to recruitment and retention present a comparatively positive picture in relation to human resource management.
- Implementation of an action plan in response to an Investors in People assessment covering leadership and management has led to improvements in clarity in relation to individuals' contributions to organisational objectives, the development of career pathways and the introduction of competency frameworks.
- There is effective monitoring of equal opportunities and a demonstrable input to the development of the social care workforce. Systems are in place to monitor professional and occupational standards in both council and commissioned services.
- The development of a public health strategy has included a focus on the needs of people with learning disabilities with a resulting increase in resources for this group. The public health strategy has also supported the need for a focus on issues relevant to health and wellbeing within the Local Area

Agreement.

Commissioning and use of resources

- Work on a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is progressing in line with plans and there is a commitment to ensure that the shared data is used to inform all partners' planning processes.
- The Audit Commission identified financial management as a strength.
- The proportion of households receiving intensive home care demonstrates a focus on those most in need.
- Unit costs of home care have decreased and this can now be regarded as a strength.
- The success of the POPP schemes and a collaborative approach to commissioning with other councils demonstrate capacity for collaborative commissioning.
- Skills in market management have been demonstrated through the outsourcing process in relation to domiciliary care services and there has been a planned increase in fees for residential care for older people with mental health needs with the aim of addressing gaps in the market.
- Plans for increasing personalisation include an appropriate and demonstrable focus on developing a social care market that will provide appropriate support.

Key areas for development

Leadership

- There are some areas where performance targets have not been met, or where performance has deteriorated. The council has recognised the need to ensure that performance targets are aligned with business plans. Continuing work on data accuracy is also required to contribute to improved performance, as is the implementation of proposals to develop an evidence bank.

Commissioning and use of resources

- The council has not achieved a planned reduction in the costs of intensive social care and needs to make further progress in this area.
- The council has not achieved its planned level of efficiency savings within the year. However many of the initiatives designed to deliver these savings are expected to have a longer- term effect, so progress is expected in 2008-09.
- The council can demonstrate that its commissioning strategy has been informed by the views and experiences of people who use services, however this is not apparent from the document itself. The council should aim to give a higher profile to the ways in which people's views are influencing service development.
- The council is in the process of reviewing its approach to incentive payments and information from regulated services suggests that this is an appropriate area for development.

Yours sincerely

Alan Jefferson

Alan Jefferson
Regional Director
Commission for Social Care
Inspection
North West Region

Copy: Joyce Redfearn, Chief Executive