

People & Health Overview Committee

17 October 2023

Adults & Housing Directorate Peer Review and Action Plan.

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Somper, Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: V Broadhurst, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report Author: Amy-Jane White
Job Title: Programme Lead- Quality Assurance
Tel: 01305 225394
Email: amy-jane.white@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

In May 2023, the Adults & Housing Directorate invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to complete a peer review. This peer review, and a parallel safeguarding review, was designed to support Dorset Council and its partners assess its current achievements, areas for development and capacity to change, as part of its preparation for the future Care Quality Commission (CQC) Annual Assurance regime.

The report with findings has now been received and a subsequent action plan has been developed to drive forward the LGA's recommendations. The report and action plan are being shared with the People and Health Overview Committee at its meeting on 17 October for consideration.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the People & Health Overview Committee:

- i) acknowledge the LGA Peer Review report and findings.
- ii) endorse the action plan which has been prepared in response to the recommendations set out in the peer review report.

Reason for Recommendation:

The LGA peer review was an important undertaking for the directorate to assess and scrutinise itself ahead of any formal CQC inspection. The directorate wish to share this report and action plan with the People and Health Overview Committee to support the directorate in delivering the LGA peer review report recommendations.

1. Executive Summary

In May 2023, The Adults & Housing directorate invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to complete a Peer Review.

- 1.1 This process consisted of a peer review team being on site for 3 days to undertake interviews with focus groups of council colleagues, our key stakeholders, and partners. Prior to the site visit, the peer review team also completed a review of practice through a casefile audit and interviews with a cohort of individuals with lived experience and their carers. The team were also provided with a self-assessment document that provided more information on the directorate's strategies, initiatives and approach to delivering its services.
- 1.2 The peer review team reviewed and collated the information it received and produced a report with its findings. The report, as set out in appendix 1, highlights some of the directorate's strengths and recommends areas to improve.
- 1.3 Since receiving this report and recommendations, the directorate has been progressing activity to drive improvement. This has been set out in appendix 2 - action plan, which shows how the Directorate is responding to the findings and its recommendations.
- 1.4 Overall, the directorate were extremely pleased with the feedback it has received from the LGA peer review team. As set out in the report (appendix 1), the peer review team highlighted many positives, some of which were described as national best practice.
- 1.5 A parallel peer review took place into our safeguarding practice. This was conducted by Seona Douglas, who is an Independent Consultant and a former Director of Adult Social Services (DASS). The additional and specific focus on Safeguarding was to provide clarity and assurance around our internal decision-making processes, including threshold for

safeguarding enquires and the service quality in meeting the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' principles.

- 1.6 Feedback from the safeguarding review was very positive and highlighted the passionate and caring practice and the strong approach to risk management. The review also highlighted some helpful recommendations that is supporting the directorates overall improvement journey.

2. **LGA Peer Review – background, report and action plan**

- 2.1 The Health and Care Act 2022 provided CQC with new powers to complete an independent assessment of care at a local authority and integrated care system level from April 2023. This programme of assurance has been introduced following a period of 13 years without inspections of adult services and a reliance on sector led improvements for scrutiny of services. The LGA have supported adult service departments, as part of an inspection readiness programme, by completing a programme of peer review challenges throughout 2023 and 2024.
- 2.2 Peer challenge is a proven tool for improvement that the Local Government Association (LGA) provides. It involves a team of local government officers and councillors spending time at the council as peers to provide challenge and share learning. The process involves engaging with a wide range of people connected with the Council and those who access our services.
- 2.3 The Peer Team followed the assessment framework developed by CQC for Local Authorities as part of their assurance programme and provided feedback on the four themes:
- 2.4 The Review Team was made up of experienced officers and councillors from authorities across the Country. The peers involved in the challenge were:
 - i. Martin Farran, Ex- Director of Adult Social Care
 - ii. Councillor David Fothergill, Leader of the opposition Somerset Council & Chair of LGA Community Wellbeing Board
 - iii. Julie Phillips, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, West Sussex County Council

- iv. Faye Pemberton-Crow, Assistant Director, Worcestershire County Council
 - v. Bev Johnston, Principal Social Worker, Bury Council
 - vi. Abbie Murr, Challenge Manager, Local Government Association
- 2.5 Appendix 1 contains the full Peer Review Report from May 2023 setting out the Directorates strengths and recommendations from the Peer Team.
- 2.6 The peer review found a great deal for the directorate to be proud and our assessors were particularly struck by the overall ambition passion and commitment they found when talking to partners and colleagues. Among the notable observations were that the directorate has:
- i. A clear political direction and strong senior leadership team.
 - ii. An ambitious and committed workforce that understands the clear vision, values and key priorities of the directorate.
 - iii. Strong budget management and ownership, with positive use of data to support.
 - iv. Innovation in many areas and market leading initiatives highlighted as national best practice.
 - v. Good safeguarding practice and outcomes (highlighted by recent safeguarding review).
 - vi. A clear commitment to the development of Housing.
 - vii. A very good Technology Enabled Care (TEC) offer which should be showcased as national best practice.
 - viii. Numerous good news stories of supported living for people with learning disabilities, which should be showcased.
- 2.7 Appendix 2 contains the action plan showing how the Directorate is responding to the recommendations that were set out within the report.
- 2.8 Progress in delivering the actions will be monitored and reported with our Directorate Quality Assurance (QA) Board. Our quarterly QA Board, chaired by our DASS, will review the action plan alongside our other inspection readiness work as standing items on the agenda.

3 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

4 Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

There are no direct environmental implications from this report.

5 Well-being and Health Implications

None

6 Other Implications

None

7 Risk Assessment

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

8 Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 - LGA Peer Review Report.

Appendix 2 - Overview of Recommendations and Action Plan.