



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 12 MARCH 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor March – Chair
Councillor Cole – Vice Chair

Councillor Batool
Councillor Kaur Saini
Councillor Russell

Councillor Joannou
Councillor Orton
Councillor Sahu

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1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that no apologies for absence had not been received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair asked members to declare any interests in proceedings for which there were none.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair highlighted that the minutes from the meeting held on were included in the agenda pack and asked Members to confirm whether they were an accurate record.

AGREED:

It was agreed that the minutes for the meeting on Thursday 15th January 2025 were a correct record.

The following matters were arising:

- Information from actions of the previous meeting had not yet been received:
 - Members requested figures on how much additional money was needed for staffing.

- To provide figures on income to the Council for disability benefits. How much additional money has needed to be spent on staffing?

4. CHAIRS ANNOUCEMENTS

The Chair announced that there would be a short break during the meeting for those observing Ramadan.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

It was noted that none had been received.

6. PETITIONS

It was noted that none had been received.

7. LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL REABLEMENT SERVICE: CARE QUALITY COMMISSION INSPECTION

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report providing the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission with the Care Quality Commission's inspection report of the Leicester City Council Reablement Service.

The Service Manger for Independent Living Services gave an overview of the themes from the CQC Framework, points to note and matters to take forward. Key points to note were as follows:

- Achievements within the service sector were commendable with overall CQC ratings of 'Outstanding.'
- Inspection results were also awaited for the Integrated Crisis Response Service (ICRS).
- Regarding the Reablement service, of the 5 domains inspected, 4 were 'Outstanding' and 1 was 'Good'.
- Success was attributed to collective achievement over the past 20 years since the Council had won the Best Practice award.
- A breakdown of the key domain areas inspected was given as follows:
 - Safe – rated Outstanding. This had been achieved through multi-disciplinary team working
 - Effective – rated Outstanding. It was noted that 57% of those receiving Reablement services were fully independent, 26% required continued support at a reduced level and 83% continued to live at home. There was a 97% reported satisfaction rate.
 - Caring – rated Good. Feedback included a male service user who would have preferred continuous care from male staff. The diversity of the team was recognised though.
 - Responsive – rated Outstanding. The service was recognised for

it's Person centred approach, partnership work and medical discharges being immediately supported.

- Well Lead – rated Outstanding. The positive culture, commitment to staff well-being and diversity of workforce were recognised.
- Regarding next steps, it was felt that the recognition should be celebrated. There would be a month dedicated to sharing learning, working with the wider department and domiciliary partners. The aim was to create a learning hub and develop material. There would be a continued commitment to develop and value staff through succession planning.

In response to member questions and comments, the following was noted:

- The Chair recognised that this was a glowing report and recognised the importance of keeping services in house.
- A new framework spanning social work and education would build on existing learning. Resources could be utilised for cross cutting areas of improvement. More information and numbers on LPT discharges from their Reablement Unit could be provided to the commission.
- Co-production work had taken place to foster knowledge about the reablement service.
- For the 'Care' category, evidence had required strengthening. Feedback showed a 97% satisfaction rate.
- Scrutiny of the Integrated Care Service could be added to the next agenda.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) More information and numbers on LPT discharges from their Reablement Unit would be provided to the commission.
- 3) The Integrated Care Service would be added to the next agenda.

8. SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

The Director for Social Care and Commissioning submitted a report to provide an overview of the approaches the Adult Social Care Department utilises to support people so that they are less likely to be impacted by social isolation and loneliness. The following was noted:

- It was estimated that between 30,000 and 33,500 residents in Leicester experienced social isolation, with higher levels associated with deprivation.
- Adult Social Care services often provided opportunities for increased social contact for carers and people receiving support.
- The department was taking a strength-based approach through Adult Social Care services to enable people to connect within their communities.

- Commissioning arrangements were increasingly asset based, with service providers encouraged to do more to connect individuals to local community support.
- Key service delivery included supported employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autism, with plans to expand this to a wider cohort from April.
- The Leading Better Lives programme aimed to address broader issues of social isolation and had been discussed previously at the Commission.
- Work was also taking place with Public Health colleagues to support people with severe mental illness and explore links between physical and mental health, including through the Joy platform.
- It was acknowledged that a range of work was taking place across the department, although there remained scope to do more.

In response to questions from Members, the following was noted:

- Members noted that social isolation was not limited to those receiving care and support and could also arise from factors such as economic hardship. It was suggested that addressing social isolation required a whole Council approach.
- The Leading Better Lives programme brought together representatives from across the Local authority and partner organisations, along with people with lived experience and the VCSE, through a programme board to encourage wider participation and collaboration.
- Work to measure outcomes and impacts of interventions was still at an early stage, including work relating to severe mental illness. An outcomes framework was being developed to monitor impacts and understand demand on services.
- Work with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) was focused on understanding their role in supporting people experiencing social isolation. No additional funding had been provided at this stage, but partners had acknowledged that the Council alone could not meet all needs.
- Work was underway to improve access to information and support services. Feedback from previous engagement had indicated that many residents were unsure where to access help.
- Improvements were being considered to the MyChoice directory, alongside the development of the Joy platform, which aimed to provide a more accessible way for people to find local support.
- A previous community festival had highlighted that residents were often unaware of available services and support. Future events would seek to increase awareness and engagement.
- Preventative work was still in early stages and evidence was being developed to support future business cases. Members were advised that building the evidence base would be essential to demonstrate the long-term value of preventative approaches.
- The work linked closely with the Suicide Prevention Strategy and the NHS WorkWell programme, supporting people to improve wellbeing and

return to employment where possible.

- Social prescribers and local coordinators linked to GP surgeries were helping connect residents to community support rather than relying solely on medical interventions.
- Members raised the value of community based initiatives such as walking groups and warm welcome spaces in supporting mental wellbeing.
- It was noted that some individuals may choose to live in isolation. In such circumstances, services sought to work with consent and build relationships where possible while respecting individual choices.
- The Commission discussed potential challenges around demand on VCSE organisations and the importance of ensuring adequate capacity to support referrals from initiatives such as social prescribing.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) For more information/numbers on how challenges and barriers are addressed.
- 3) Information on Mental Health Cafes to be shared with Members.
- 4) Further information to be shared on new VCSE platform to be shared.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submitted a report setting out the Social Care and Education Department's improvement ambitions with regards to equality and diversity over the 2026-27 year. The following was noted:

- This was a long-term project allowing for continued conversation. The aim was to create a maturity matrix.
- It was recognised that the service was strong in the area of co-production but needed to improve, drawing on staff lived experience.
- An inclusive decision making forum would be open to all staff.
- Key focuses for training would include bias awareness.
- A survey had been conducted asking participants to consider what changes were required to make the council an anti-racist organisation. The Mission Diverse service were analysing responses.

In response to member discussion and questions, the following was noted:

- Members noted that, despite ongoing consideration of equality and diversity, corporate progress has been limited.
- Most of the 14 priority areas identified were cross cutting across social care for adults and children.

- The Vice-Chair noted that he would be pleased to assist with considerations and working to challenge culture and mindset.
- It was noted that within the Social Care Team, global majority senior managers (HOS and above) were not representative of local communities, particularly within the Children's sector.
- More consistent understanding was required regarding manager's awareness of staff with a disability or neurodiversity. Steps to increase awareness had included conversations with the chair of the disability group.
- Clearer outcomes and measurable indicators were required, including metrics to better understand how staff felt about working in the department.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted
- 2) For conversations to take place with the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education and the Vice Chair.
- 3) For the item to come back to scrutiny.

10. ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS AND COMMENDATIONS

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education submitted a report to provide Adult Social Care's Scrutiny Commission with a copy of the Annual Report for 2024/25 produced in relation to Adult Social Care's (ASC) statutory, corporate, Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman complaints and commendations. The following was noted:

- The report was presented annually to the Commission.
- It set out complaints activity over the year and how learning from complaints and feedback was used to improve services.
- Feedback from people drawing on services was recognised as a valuable source of information to help shape service improvement.

In discussion with Members, the following was noted:

- Discussion took place around how scrutiny could gain a clearer understanding of the wider range of feedback received by the service, including issues that did not reach the formal complaints threshold. It was explained that feedback was considered through existing oversight arrangements and that both positive and negative feedback were reviewed as part of practice improvement.
- Around half of complaints related to the care received, with the remainder relating to people's experience of staff and communication. Further work was underway to improve how wider feedback was analysed, including the potential future use of AI to identify themes within larger volumes of data. It was noted that a broader feedback report may be brought to the Commission next year to capture issues

that fell below the formal complaints threshold.

- Commendations were highlighted as an important part of the overall feedback process and were used to recognise good practice and support frontline staff. This included sharing positive feedback through internal communications and newsletters.
- Communication continued to be one of the most common themes within complaints. It was noted, however, that the overall number of complaints remained low when considered against the volume of contact and support provided by the department. In response, work had been undertaken to introduce language guides to support clearer, kinder and more accessible communication across the service.
- The discussion also highlighted the importance of recognising that written translation alone may not meet everyone's needs, particularly where literacy or education levels were a barrier. The diversity of the workforce was recognised as a strength, particularly where staff were able to communicate in a person's first language and understand cultural context. Verbal communication and accessible language were therefore seen as important elements in improving communication with residents.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That an agenda item on AI analysis of complaints data would be added to the work programme.

11. SCE PRIORITIES AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2026/27

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education gave a presentation displaying the fourteen agreed priorities for the Social Care and Education department for the 2026/27 financial year alongside performance ambitions which would be reported on periodically to track progress. Key points to note in addition to the slides attached were as follows:

- Regular progress reporting would come to scrutiny and could feed into the quarterly reporting.
- The aim was to have a strategy in place by the summer of 2026 for children's and adults supported living.
- The Leading Performance programme had been initiated in January. Each manager had a reflective workbook to improve leadership skills.
- Consideration was given on how to better use data and build manager skill sets to create leaders, culture and ethos.
- Significant work had taken place on quality assurance. Collaborative work with the Children's service were ongoing.
- Use of AI had been beneficial for the service.
- The recent White Paper on reforms to the schools and SEND systems in England was noted as potentially impacting Adult Social Care, with care plans already able to remain in place up to the age of 25. It was key to

- understand the pathways for transition from Children's to Adult Services.
- The Head of the Social Care Academy was now in place, with a formal programme launch coming in the autumn.
 - Quarterly updates would be provided for the performance ambitions.

In response to member discussion and questions, the following was noted:

- Members noted the importance of understanding the priorities from the perspective of service users.
- AI could be used to check quality and was not intended replace staff. It was acknowledged that AI could contain an inbuilt bias.
- Priorities for equality and diversity were considered but a separate strand was required.
- The new website would be available in different languages with a new manager for web content.

Cllrs Sahu and Joannou left during the consideration of this item.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.

12. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair reminded Members that should there be any items they wish to be considered for the work programme then to share these with the governance officer.

The following items were agreed to be added to the programme:

- 1) Consideration of use of AI for complaints.
- 2) Supported Living – possibly a joint item with CYPE scrutiny commission members.
- 3) Quality Assurance processes.

13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 19:49.