Leicestershire County Council

Meeting: **Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date/Time: **Monday, 3 March 2025 at 2.00 pm**

Location: **Sparkenhoe Committee Room, County Hall, Glenfield**

Contact: **Mrs. A. Smith (0116 305 2583)**

Email: **angie.smith@leics.gov.uk**

Membership

Mr. T. J. Richardson CC (Chairman)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC	Mr. L. Hadji-Nikolaou CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Mr. P. King CC
Mr. J. Miah CC	Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC

Please note: this meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's web site at http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk

AGENDA

Item   Report by

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025.   (Pages 5 - 10)

2. Question Time.

3. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

4. To advise of any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.

5. Declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

6. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

7.   Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order
     36.

8.   Peer Review of Pathway for Adulthood.   Director of Adults   (Pages 11 - 42)
                                                     and Communities

9.   Leicestershire County Council Adult Social   Director of Adults   (Pages 43 - 48)
     Care Regulated Services.   and Communities

10. Leicestershire Adult Learning Service Ofsted   Director of Adults   (Pages 49 - 66)
     Inspection Findings.   and Communities

11. Date of next meeting.

     The next meeting of the Adults and Communites OSC is scheduled
     to take place on 2 June 2025.

12. Any other items which the Chairman has
     decided to take as urgent.

QUESTIONING BY MEMBERS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The ability to ask good, pertinent questions lies at the heart of successful and effective scrutiny. To support members with this, a range of resources, including guides to questioning, are available via the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny website www.cfgs.org.uk. The following questions have been agreed by Scrutiny members as a good starting point for developing questions:

- Who was consulted and what were they consulted on? What is the process for and quality of the consultation?

- How have the voices of local people and frontline staff been heard?

- What does success look like?

- What is the history of the service and what will be different this time?

- What happens once the money is spent?

- If the service model is changing, has the previous service model been evaluated?

- What evaluation arrangements are in place – will there be an annual review?

Members are reminded that, to ensure questioning during meetings remains appropriately focused that:

(a) they can use the officer contact details at the bottom of each report to ask questions of clarification or raise any related patch issues which might not be best addressed through the formal meeting;

(b) they must speak only as a County Councillor and not on behalf of any other local authority when considering matters which also affect district or parish/town councils (see Articles 2.03(b) of the Council's Constitution).

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Leicestershire County Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Monday, 20 January 2025.

<u>PRESENT</u>

Mr. T. J. Richardson CC (in the Chair)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC	Mr. L. Hadji-Nikolaou CC
Mr. N. Chapman CC	Mr. P. King CC
Mr. J. Miah CC	Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC

<u>In attendance</u>

Fiona Barber – Healthwatch Leicester and Healthwatch Leicestershire

41. <u>Minutes.</u>

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2024 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

42. <u>Question.</u>

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 34.

43. <u>Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).</u>

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

44. <u>Urgent items.</u>

There were no urgent items for consideration.

45. <u>Declarations of interest.</u>

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

46. <u>Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.</u>

There were no declarations of the party whip.

47. <u>Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 35.</u>

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 35.

48. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2028/29.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Director of Adults and Communities and Director of Corporate Resources which provided information on the proposed 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as it related to the Adults and Communities Department. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed Mrs. C. M. Radford, Cabinet Lead Member to the meeting for the item.

Arising from Discussion, the following points were made:

Proposed Revenue Budget, Other Changes and Transfers

Growth

i. The current negative growth position of -£1.8million for 2025/26 was an unusual position to be in. However, this had been due to the substantial increase in the number of people approaching the Department for services in 2023/24, and the increase in size, scale and cost of care packages, which had resulted in the Council having to put in substantial additional growth for 2024/25. Over the past 12 months, the Department had contained that growth to manage costs, and had successfully negated the requirement for further growth for the current financial year. The Director highlighted, however, that whilst the Department would continue to work towards containing costs, the position was dynamic and could change over the next year.

ii. Members noted that with an increase in the number of people using services, it was expected that there would be an increase in income as people contributed to their cost of care, and income from the NHS to support people in receipt of services, which could be balanced against the overall growth figures.

iii. Members queried the older people demand budget and how modelling had resulted in a projected budget of £2million for the 2025/26 rising to £15million for 2028/29. The Director explained that modelling was based on information held at a point in time, and by using national models (Office of National Statistics (ONS), Poppi and Pansi) data, which provided an estimated figure over the four-year period. The growth averaged out at 2-3% each year which was in line with the demographic growth in the elderly population in Leicestershire. The budget for 2024/25 had not been over-modelled, but the Department had worked hard to mitigate demand and contain costs over the year.

iv. Members queried if the demand management target of -£4million was a control of costs by limiting services. Members were reassured that whilst the Department would seek to limit expenditure and contain growth through a series of initiatives, it had not been at the expense of services provided. For example, additional resources had been targeted into reviewing people's care needs to ensure the support being offered was meeting need in an equitable way, to ensure people had a fair outcome from the assessment process, and that people were as independent as they could be. In terms of eligibility of services, this was set nationally and had been laid out under the Care

Act.

v. Members heard there would be growth in the numbers of people requiring services as they moved from Children's into Adult Social Care placements, but numbers would potentially peak around the year 2030 following which they were expected to fall due to a decline in birth rates.

vi. Members questioned whether the impact of the Fair Outcomes policy had levelled off. The Director commented that the policy had been in place for around 10 years, and that a panel had been set up to provide added assurance to the Department that assessments and provision of services were being made in accordance with the policy. As the panel had been in place for just over 12 months, the requirement to attend the panel was being stepped down as teams were showing evidence that they were commissioning at the right level in terms of support packages for individuals. Performance would continue to be monitored over the course of the next few months to ensure progress was maintained.

vii. It was noted with concern that the previous year's growth was over 3.5% and this had been a level of growth not seen before by the Council. The Director highlighted that this outstripped the growth that was being seen by other councils at the time. The growth figure was now around 1.5% and this was consistent with other councils in the country.

viii. The Director reported the numbers of placements of older adults in residential care had seen a small increase from 868 for 2023/24 to approximately 880 for 2024/25. This was not considered an alarming figure. It was noted that the majority of people in residential care required 24-hour care, otherwise they would be supported to remain independent at home. In terms of people with higher support needs being able to move into Extra Care as an alternative was something being looked into over the next MTFS period. The majority of people in Extra Care, however, would not require a higher level of care.

ix. A Member queried if, with recent Government financial announcements of increased National Insurance contributions, future changes to taxation, and impending changes to inheritance tax, consideration had been given to people in isolated rural areas. The Director reported that the budget did not include uplifts in terms of the cost of care through inflation, and rising National Insurance, as the Council had a corporate reserve that was applied to the budget after this was set. This accounted for all inflationary increases across all departments. In terms of income, the status quo was assumed at the point of modelling the budget.

x. It was acknowledged that the National Insurance increase would be a big change for the next financial year, and all councils were tasked with modelling what might be an appropriate increase going forward based on intelligence of the local workforce.

Adult Social Care – Savings

xi. A Member questioned what support was in place to support Personal Assistants employed directly by a service user. It was noted that services were in place and if required would ensure cover, for example, for leave or sickness. The service was monitored on a regular basis to ensure people had the right support and were not put at risk. It was believed that having a personal assistant to a more traditional form of service could be beneficial in terms of well-being and gave people more control of

their services.

xii. A representative from Healthwatch requested service users be involved so far as possible when any review of services was undertaken. It was noted that the Department engaged with more people to support the co-production of future services and an engagement panel had been established which included people with lived experience which provided useful additional feedback.

xiii. It was noted that whilst some of the savings outlined in Appendix C might appear as being the same each year this was likely due to it being the last year of delivery, and so there would not be an increase each year going forward but had to be shown over the four years on the MTFS. The budget was assessed each year with the savings the Department needed to make, having regard to inflationary rises.

Communities and Wellbeing

xiv. A Member questioned under **AC16 (Eff) – Implementation of revised service for Communities and Wellbeing, if there was an end point whereby the Record Office in Wigston could no longer take any more records. The Director reported that the end point had already been reached, and there were many records being stored in other locations outside of the Record Office, in a non-compliant manner. The National Archive had given the County Council until May 2026 to show it had a compliant method of storage.

Health and Social Care Integration

xv. Given the Government's plan to speed up the throughput of people being treated in the NHS, members queried what impact this would have on adult social care services, for example, in undertaking assessments for people requiring onward care, or supporting people in their own homes. It was noted that regular conversations were being had with the NHS at a strategic level, particularly around the flow of people through the urgent and emergency care system, and how to improve outcomes for people to ensure they were receiving the right service on discharge. It was further noted that the city and county had the highest number of people in receipt of social care services across the East Midlands where the route of access was hospital which was managed as a system.

RESOLVED:

a) That the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2028/29 and the information now provided be noted;

b) That the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission for consideration at its meeting on 27 January 2025.

49. National Performance Benchmarking 2023/24 and Performance Report 2024/25 - Position at November 2024.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Adults and Communities, which highlighted the comparative performance position in 2023/24 through national benchmarking and presented an update on the Adults and Communities Department's performance at the end of November 2024. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were made:

i. A representative from Healthwatch questioned whether the low admission numbers into care facilities in Leicestershire were due to people having better health outcomes by remaining at home, and not needing as much hospital intervention as those in care. The Director reported a slight increase of approximately 2% in the number of contacts made to the authority from hospitals, but with the support of the Reablement Service approximately 90% of people receiving assistance had not required ongoing services after. It was noted that people in care homes would, by their very nature, have higher levels of ill health, disability and frailty and, therefore, were more likely to require additional health services.

ii. There were very specific services in place across health and social care to support people who lived in care homes, for example, additional medical services, additional nursing services and different ambulance protocols, to prevent the need for them to be admitted into hospital unless absolutely necessary, but inevitably because of their health conditions they were more likely to require health services.

RESOLVED:

That the National Performance Benchmarking 2023/24 and Performance Report 2024/25, position at November 2024, be noted.

50. Care Quality Commission Assessment of Local Authorities.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Adults and Communities, the purpose of which was to provide a summary of the latest position and process for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment of the County Council's adult social care service following receipt of the CQC assessment site visit notification on 2 December 2024. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

The timeline for the CQC's assessment report findings and feedback would be dependent on its moderation programme and would take into account the reporting restrictions in place during any pre-election period.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment of the County Council's adult social care service be noted.

51. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 3 March 2025 at 2.00pm.

2.00pm to 3.27pm   CHAIRMAN
20 January 2025

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Leicestershire County Council

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 MARCH 2025

PEER REVIEW OF PATHWAY FOR ADULTHOOD

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the actions taken following the recommendations from the Peer Review on the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood, with a focus on the Young Adult Disabilities (YAD) Team which is within the Adults and Communities Department.

2. The Peer Review took place in May 2024 by a team led by Andy Smith, Strategic Director of People Services at Derby City Council. The findings containing recommendations for improvement are presented as appendices to this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. The focus of the Peer Review links with the Council's Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) Strategy and Whole Life Disability Strategy.

4. A wider corporate review of PFA services - Corporate Preparation for Adulthood Review (CPfAR) - is underway and is relevant to some of the recommendations taken from the review. The CPfAR is due to complete in the autumn of 2025.

5. PFA is now a key theme within the Local Authority Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance regime. The CQC will consider the effectiveness of the pathways young people take as they move from children's services to adult social care services.

Background

6. Peer Reviews are an important part of sector-led improvement activity in the East Midlands and this is one of 10 such reviews being carried out in the East Midlands over a two-year cycle. The Peer Review process is designed to support the Council's performance by identifying its areas of strength and areas for development. The framework for this round of reviews focused on:

   • What is working well?
   • What does not work as well and why?
   • What areas for improvement are you prioritising and why?

7. It is also widely recognised that early preparation for adulthood is crucial for young people to have a positive experience as they into adult life. Successful preparation for adulthood focussing on the young person's strengths to enable independence has great benefits to both the Council and to young people receiving support.

8. The Peer Review Team was asked to consider the following Key Line of Enquiry:

   "*To review the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood for young people within Leicestershire to ensure timely independent outcomes for young people and Best Value for the authority are achieved.*

   Consideration for part of the review to focus on the current methodology for identifying the cohort of young people that will require an intervention?"

9. The Peer Review Team was chosen based on the skills, experience and interest in the chosen area, and included colleagues from the local authorities in Derby, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, and West Northamptonshire.

10. A range of documentary evidence including policy, process and guidance information, and key service performance data was provided to the Peer Review Team in advance.

11. The Peer Review Team had access to the Department's case recording system (Liquidlogic Adult System) and were supported to view care and support assessments, case records and support plans. The cases reviewed were a mixture of young people whose support from YAD was either concluded or part way through. This gave the Peer Review Team an opportunity to look at areas of practice, the journey of the young person and what outcomes were achieved.

12. On 7 May 2024 a 'Team to Teams' session took place. This involved members from the YAD Team meeting with their equivalents in Derby City Council. The teams explained what their current process for supporting young people involved, what was working well and things they would like to see reviewed.

13. On 13 and 14 May 2024, a series of meetings explored the views and experiences of a wide range of professionals from the Department's Adult Social Care teams, Children and Family Services, and key Health partner representatives. Meetings were also held to seek the views of young people and parent carers to understand their experience of the service provided.

Update of Actions

14. Below is an update on the actions following the recommendations from the Peer Review Team:

   a) **Whilst the managers from the YAD and Disabled Children's Service, managed within the Children and Family Services Department, meet on a regular basis and have strong working relationships, the review identified opportunities to bring together the front-line workers to share training and practice. Further opportunities to strengthen the relationship between YAD and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Team (SEND) managed within Children and Family Services were also identified.**

- The YAD Team now has monthly meetings with managers from the Children's Leaving Care Team and managers from the Special Education Needs service (SEN) within Children and Family Services.
- Quarterly meetings are in place with Independent Reviewing Officers who support Care Leavers post 18.
- The YAD Team are looking at a joint training event in April 2025 with the Disabled Children's Service to share learning, examples of excellent practice and to strengthen relationships between front line workers.

The impact of these meetings has proved very positive, in that it provides an opportunity to discuss well in advance young people who are transitioning to adult social care services and secondly they have served to strengthen partnership working.

b) **The Peer Review considered that the pathway for young people who do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was less clearly defined and this was identified as an area for future development. Families told the Review Team they did not feel informed about what to expect if the YAD Team was not involved and gave an impression of service that is not equitable for all where an EHCP is not in place.**

After some consideration it was deemed that this action be transferred to the CPfAR for progression as it will enable defining of all the pathways for Children and Family Services as part of the wider strategy for PFA.

c) **The prioritisation tool is not always accurate in determining the level of need a young person may have. During the case audit several young people had been rated as 'medium', but went on to require a significant intervention from the team.**

This action has been transferred to the CPfAR. Given the Peer Review feedback, it was imperative to consider immediate action and a business case for change has been developed with a clear recommendation. The business case is seeking to request the piloting of an alternative method for identifying young people who may require adult social care support.

d) **The case audits also highlighted that pre-assessments and the 'My Journey to Adulthood Plans' were not always being completed and care and support assessments often need to be updated before a young person turned 18. There is an opportunity to look at better ways of capturing the information required whilst continuing to meet statutory requirements.**

The Strengths Based model "3 Conversations" has now been implemented within the service. 3 Conversations is a way of working, which focuses on the person, their strengths, skills, and promoting their independence. It recognises that people are the experts in their own care. Central to the approach there are three distinct conversations:

- **Conversation 1: Listen and connect**. This is about listening hard to people and their families to understand what is important, and working with them to

make connections and build relationships in order to help them get on with their life independently.

- **Conversation 2: Work intensively with people in crisis** focuses on understanding what is causing the crisis, put together an 'emergency plan' and sticking with the person to make sure that the changes happen quickly and that the plan works for them.
- **Conversation 3: Build a good life** focuses on understanding what this good life looks like to them and their family and helping them to get the support organised so they can live the best life possible.

Using this approach has stimulated workers focusing on the person, their aspirations, strengths, skills, and promoting their independence and a move away from assessments being completed from a deficit approach.

Conversation 1 has now replaced the pre-assessment document and is used as a triaging tool for new cases where it is not appropriate to move straight to Conversation 3.

e) **The closure summaries completed by the allocated YAD worker at the end of an intervention did not always fully reflect and capture the work that had been completed with a young person regarding the achievements and outcomes they had achieved.**

The closure summary has been amended to include more detail about the intervention the young person has received from the YAD Team. This information is now readily available within case notes for future workers. All letters/emails to the young person advising of case closure are now more personalised and highlighting outcomes that have been achieved.

15. An action plan was devised following the Peer Review, to address the recommendations and has been progressed accordingly and has now been finalised. The YAD Team have embedded the changes and will continue to focus on continually developing their practice and performance in line with the operating model.

16. Remaining actions have been moved to the CPfAR where appropriate.

17. The CPfAR has the following vision:

"*To develop efficient and effective social care pathways to adulthood and work together with partners to deliver high quality services for children and young people.*"

18. The following highlights workstreams for the project are underway and progress is being reported to the PFA Board.
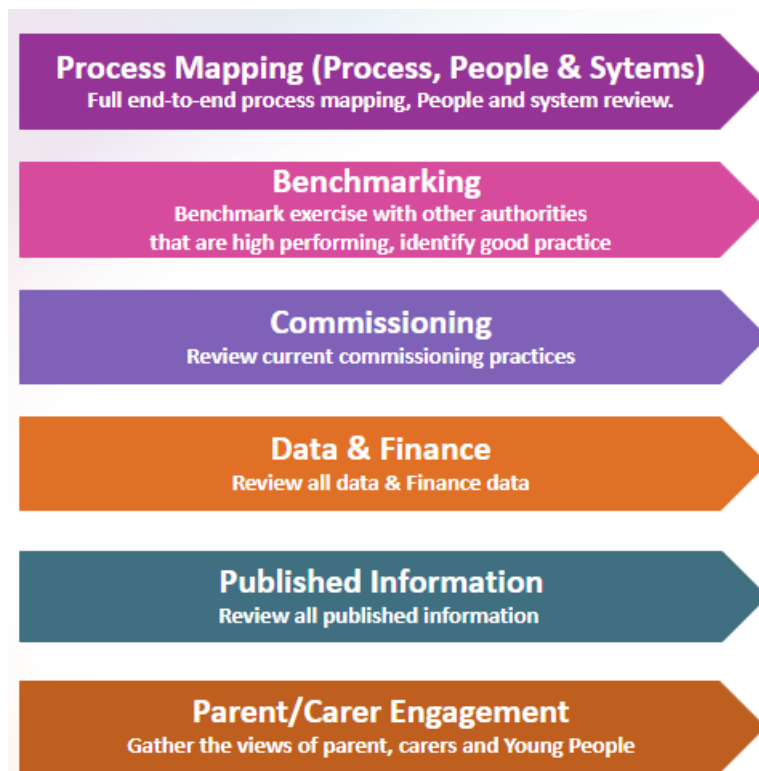
19. Process mapping for the YAD Team has been completed and is now underway with the Disabled Children's Service.

20. The timeline for completion and implementation of any recommendations from the CPfAR is expected to be in the autumn of 2025.

Consultation

21. A number of workshops took place on 13 and 14 May 2024 facilitated by the Peer Review Team and were held for staff from the Adults and Communities and Children and Family Services as well as for external participants including:

- Young people experiencing or have experienced transition.
- Parents and carers who have young people transitioning or transitioned.
- Health colleagues from Children's and Adults services.
- External and third sector providers.

22. The workshop for parent/carers was advertised by the Leicestershire SEND Hub.

23. Further consultation with young people and parent carers is planned within the CPfAR.

Resource Implications

24. The delivery of the action plan has been achieved within existing departmental resources.

Conclusions

25. The recommendations from the Peer Review Team have been progressed and outlined in an action plan that built on identified strengths and included specific

actions to address the areas for development with the aim of improving the experience of young people moving into adult social care services.

26. The action plan has been completed with remaining actions being progressed as part of the CPfAR.

27. The Committee is asked to note the progress on the recommendations from the Peer Review.

Background Papers

- Preparing for Adulthood Strategy - https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2019/2/1/Preparing-for-adulthood-strategy.pdf
- The Whole Life Disability Strategy - leics.sharepoint.com/sites/childrenandfamilyservices/Shared Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Fchildrenandfamilyservices%2FShared Documents%2Fwhole-life-disability-strategy%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Fchildrenandfamilyservices%2FShared Documents
- Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 2 September 2024 – Peer Review of Pathway for Adulthood - https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7818&Ver=4 - item 24

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

28. None.

Equality Implications

29. There are no equality implications arising from this report that require the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at this time. Ongoing consideration will be given to the completion of an EIA as the CPfAR progresses.

30. The Peer Review highlighted that the pathway for young people who do not have an EHCP may be less clear, and as such the Council needs to ensure that there are equitable opportunities and outcomes achieved for all young people transitioning into adult services. This will be progressed via the CPfAR as stated in paragraph 14 b) above.

Human Rights Implications

31. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Leicestershire Peer Review Findings Letter
Appendix B – Leicestershire Peer Review presentation

Officers to Contact

Jon Wilson, Director of Adults and Communities
Adults and Communities Department
Tel: 0116 305 7454 Email: jon.wilson@leics.gov.uk

Santokh Dulai, Assistant Director (Operational Commissioning)
Adults and Communities Department
Tel: 0116 305 1039 Email: santokh.dulai@leics.gov.uk

Claire McWilliams, Head of Service
Adults and Communities Department
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Derby City Council

Stronger Families, Resilient Children

Ofsted Outstanding Provider

Mr Jon Wilson	
Leicestershire County Council	
By Email	

Team	People Services
Contact	Andy Smith
Our ref	AS/SF
Email	andy.smith@derby.gov.uk
Tel	01332 643556
Minicom	01332 640666
Date	12 June 2024

Dear Jon,

Re: Leicestershire Peer Review

Can I start by thanking you for the excellent organisation and hosting of the recent peer review team. As you know as a DASS whilst challenging because we're all so busy it is always a pleasure and a privilege to be able to take time out to step into another council to look at their practice. The team were all impressed with the level of commitment, enthusiasm and honesty of your teams and I know they have all taken back learning into their own organisations.

As you know this is only the second of our revised regional process and whilst we have expanded our time on site and enhanced our pre site work we still do recognise that it is a point in time in your journey of improvement. I do hope that you find our insights useful, and they can assist in your thinking about the further development and progress around transition and pathways to adulthood particularly as it seems to be a key area of focus in CQC assessment.

I have enclosed copies of our presentation from the day, which includes more detailed feedback on the case audit and the team to team sessions and a short report highlighting the most prominent findings; hopefully this will assist in the preparation of your subsequent action plan and I look forward to hearing how things are progressing in a few months' time when we meet up again for our reflection session.

All the best,

Andy Smith
Strategic Director of People Services
Derby City Council

Leicestershire Peer Challenge Review
May 2023

The review was undertaken by a team led by Andy Smith Strategic Director People Services from Derby.

Review Team

- Andy Smith – Lead DASS Derby City Council
- Amy Brock – Assistant Director, West Northamptonshire Council
- Iris Peel – Group Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Liz Sagi – Moving into adults development manager, West Northamptonshire Council
- Margot Summerbridge – PSW, Derby City Council
- Oliver Bolam – Head of MH and Whole Life Disability, Nottingham City Council
- Sharon Buckby – Director of Learning Inclusion and Skills, Derby City Council
- Sue Wilson – Support role, EM ADASS

Background

The Peer Review process is one of the cornerstones of the East Midlands Branch approach to the Sector Lead Improvement and support offer to both support members to prepare for CQC assessment and review their existing offer. As a Branch we strongly believe that Local Authorities should work together to take collective responsibility for the performance of the sector with a focus on improving the experiences and outcomes of the people we serve.

This peer review is one of 10 reviews being carried out in the East Midlands over a 2-year cycle. Following the evaluation of the previous round we have decided to retain our simplified approach focusing on the 3 key questions:

- What is working well
- What is not work well
- Areas for Development

EAST MIDLANDS PEER CHALLENGE PROCESS

Following our evaluation of the previous cycle and ongoing learning from the CQC assessment process we have maintained our 3-stage approach but have strengthened our case audit through adding feedback from the person and/ or their family and allocated more time on site for the team to triangulate the information received before offering their formal feedback presentation.

The Key Line of Enquiry was agreed between the Host and Reviewing Directors and the review team was chosen based on their skills, experience and interest in the chosen area. Relevant key background information, polices and data were requested and submitted in advance for the review team to consider.

Frontline Teams from the Host and Review Local Authority met and had the opportunity to look at the Key Line of Enquiry from an operational perspective.

A number of individuals who draw on care and support were identified where the review team focused on the persons journey and the outcomes that were achieved via conversations and case file audits.

The onsite review consisted of a number of meetings with key relevant stakeholders identified jointly by the host and review teams.

Evidence was triangulated and the formal feedback presentation was prepared and delivered on day 2 of the review.

KEY AREAS OF ENQUIRY

To review the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood for young people within Leicestershire to ensure timely independent outcomes for young people and Best Value for the authority are achieved.

Consideration for part of the review to focus on the current methodology for identifying the cohort of young people that will require an intervention?

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

I think the first area to highlight is the focus of the review and information we received. Whilst we were asked to review the current pathway into adulthood most of our information and contacts related to the younger adults with disabilities team (YAD) and it became apparent quite early on day one that the YAD is only one of the pathways for young people to transition into support in their adult lives which meant we were unable to comment on the whole process.

The YAD Team

The team members we met both in the team to team and the interviews were passionate, highly motivated, and clearly focused on delivering good outcomes for the young people they worked with, many had been with the team for several years which shows the level of commitment and satisfaction in their roles. There was a strong sense of team, and they are highly regarded by the other stakeholders and both internal and external partners that we met. Caseloads were kept low and there was a focus on progression supervision and tracking which was evident in case records. There were some examples of great practice, joint working and flexibility and the reablement offer is clearly highly valued particularly by the young people and families we spoke to.

Whilst the team was well connected within their own patch and with identified special schools they linked with it was less evident beyond that e.g. SEND, welfare rights/benefits, virtual and mainstream schools. The review team felt that there were real opportunities to strengthen their relationships in particular with the EHCP team and virtual schools.

Practice and Process

There is a clear process in place for identification of young people who meet the criteria of YAD, and the team manager meets regularly with their counterparts in children's services to discuss upcoming young people. There is an agreed prioritisation tool, but the reviewing team questioned its effectiveness particularly for those young people who were identified as "medium" risk as during the case audit work it was noted that the young people had very different levels of need.

If a young person didn't meet the criteria for the YAD the young person's journey was less clear to both children's workers and parents, we heard of multiple pathways and staff spoke of it feeling like a "two tier "service; combine this with parents talking about a lack

of signposting or understanding of the pathways it did lead us to reflect on the equity of experience for young people between those who move through the YAD and those who don't which may be something to reflect on prior to CQC assessment.

Whilst there is clear process in place which included pre assessment and a journey to adulthood plan there wasn't much evidence of them being used and workers reported they were often missed, and they had some clear ideas and views on simplifying the process pathway by combining aspects of assessment and support planning.

We did see a couple of examples of more strength-based assessments and support plans but the majority we viewed were still quite deficit based; this may be addressed as part of the roll out of three conversations as it requires a different strength-based approach.

One of the areas we heard most about in the team to team was the application of the Target Operating Model (TOM) with its clear processes and timescales, whilst it has driven up performance it clearly is bringing some challenges and unintended consequences for the YAD staff. There was a sense that it had reduced professional autonomy and creativity and the dashboard was being perceived as a management tool that was creating additional anxiety and stress that clearly wasn't its intended purpose.

Other observations

Moving to a joint adults and children's OT team has had a significant impact around improving the waiting times for assessment for young people which is impressive.

There was a collective view that the Transforming Care Pathways was clear and working well and the arrangements with health around joint funding sounded value for money.

Whilst there is a clear systematic flow of information between children's services and the YAD this doesn't appear to be happening for those young people on other pathways for example between CYP, ASC and Health. This lack of visibility in both numbers and costs will impact on the local authority's ability to commission strategically.

Recommended areas for Improvement

Within the context of a future CQC assessment our key recommendations centre around taking the opportunity to take stock and reflect on the areas that with some focus could be clarified and/or strengthened. It was noted that the Council has scheduled a corporate review of adult social care and the reflections from this peer review could potentially assist this review in the following ways:

- Developing a shared understanding and definition of transition and preparing for adulthood (because transitions and PFA are related but also distinctively two different concepts and processes) which can be clearly articulated by all those involved from the young people and their families to the professionals around them. Working together to co-produce this will assist with strengthening the interface between teams and services around the young person.

- Reviewing the information already held within children's services to ensure you can take a strategic overview of all those young people who might transition into adult services identifying numbers, costs, current pathways and processes to ensure you can take a more strategic approach to meeting their needs. This might also inform single or joint strategic commissioning priorities.

- Reviewing the YAD to make sure you are making the best use of their considerable skills and experience of supporting young people on their journey to adulthood.

- Supporting gaining a better understanding of the experiences of those young people who move into adult services outside YAD to understanding their experiences of transition planning possibly through a joint PSW led thematic review.

In summary reviewing the KLOE we were asked to look at:

To review the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood for young people within Leicestershire to ensure timely independent outcomes for young people and Best Value for the authority are achieved.

- We can only comment on the YAD pathway which appears effective but this is only a limited proportion of the young people who are moving through services

- Evidence that the YAD team are striving to maximise independence but as this is only a proportion of the young people and they do not have costs prior to YAD we cannot comment on best value aspect.

Consideration for part of the review to focus on the current methodology for identifying the cohort of young people that will require an intervention?

- Methodology and criteria for YAD is clear but this is not effectively and consistently picking up all young people transitioning into adult services. The suggested areas for consideration above would help with this.

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13th & 14th May 2024

Leicestershire Review

Key Line Of Enquiry

- **To review the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood for young people within Leicestershire to ensure timely independent outcomes for young people and Best Value for the authority are achieved.**

-

- **Consideration for part of the review to focus on the current methodology for identifying the cohort of young people that will require an intervention?**

-

Case audit Working

- Young people stay within the team while cases are active
- There is a system for identifying young people
- Evidence of regular progression supervision in case files and target dates for activities eg closure . Most met the 3 weekly cycle
- • Some examples of good strength-based assessment
- Team manager meets regularly with children's services to highlight young people for YAD
- Caseloads are kept low and good use of reablement team members
- Named Links with schools in localities
- Good example of person centred "shared support " within a family

Case audit – Areas for development

- A lot of Assessments viewed were still based on deficit model not very strength based.
- EHCP plans were not all up to date . One we saw had not been updated since 2019
- Some evidence of great assessments and support plans but not always recorded correctly in line with the LCC process – Activity
  - not always recorded
- Processes referred to in team to team not evident on files eg pre assessments, journey to adulthood plan
- The prioritisation tool doesn't appear to be identifying well in the medium priority area . Saw young people identified as medium who were more complex and others whose needs appeared quite low
- Some files appear to still be open but not active or in need of intervention

Team to Team – Working Well

- A strong and passionate team , the majority of whom had been there for a significant time . One worker had been supported to undertake social work training within her role, agency workers reported the support she received was excellent " where there's a will there's a way"
- • New workers offered a buddy system which was highly valued
- Team morale is clearly very strong
- Multiple channels for sharing, support and joint working – weekly informal team catch ups ,group supervision , what's app group
- Clear process for allocation, activity and tracking progress
- Good understanding of the care act and role of preparing for adulthood
- Supervision was highly valued including individual and group
- Final EHCP plan offers an opportunity to catch up with young person and those involved in their support in final year of school
- Access to step through accommodation for young people
- Staff give young person and their families their one page profile

Team To Team – Areas for development

- Increased use of agency in social work posts but this is being addressed
- The TOM did feel prescriptive and may be reducing the workers ability to be creative as well as increasing risk of duplicating
  - work eg an assessment done at just 17 often needed to be repeated just before adulthood as needs and aspirations can change- "would like some autonomy back"
- Unanimously workers reported the use of the dashboard at GSM had The TOM had increased stress and anxiety levels – (it goes red) "Creates a sense of dread"

Working well within the YAD

The YAD service is helping young people prepare for adulthood and supporting them to maximise their independence to reduce the need for long term support

Young people we spoke to said they were involved in their support planning and choice of PA's

Communication works well where there are strong relationships eg with disabled childrens, review team and health

Staff spoken to were passionate about their work and colleagues and partners perceived that they were aspirational for their YP

Reablement workers were highly valued by staff and the families we met. Workers focus on progression with the flexibility to work with YP pre 18

The adult teams described an appropriate and proportionate handover

Link workers with special schools

Working well within the YAD

YAD operates within a multi agency approach

Effective working relationship between disabled children's team and YAD

Complaints numbers are reported as low

Recognition of the need for flexibility in approach where YAD skill set more appropriate to meet need– e.g. some young people referred to team not subject to EHCP.

Not working as well Yad

- **Whilst managers worked well together there was a missed opportunity to bring frontline workers (and other professionals) together to share training and practice**

- **Whilst relationship are strong with those in same patch the team appears to be working in a bit of a silo and doesn't appear to have links with teams eg SEND , benefits and virtual schools**

- **Opportunities to strengthen the relationship between YAD and EHCP team (linked to contributing to annual reviews)**

- **No link workers in mainstream schools**

Working Well – other pathways

- Our evidence and insight on other pathways is limited

- Joint adults and children's OT team has reduced waiting times for young people considerably

- Collective view that there are clear TCP pathways for children and adults

- Arrangement with health linked to joint funding for TCP is value for money.

- Positive Behaviour Support Team effectively working with providers to appropriately reduce levels of support needs for young people and therefore costs

- Learning for Independence Service (within Adult Learning) work with people with a learning disability with the opportunity to expand this to work with people with more complex disabilities

Not working as well- general

- *The transition and pathway for CYP referred to YAD is well articulated and understood but less so for young people who transfer via other pathways. This leads to a reflection about the equity of experience . If people don't go through the YAD pathway there is no pre 18 work done*

- *Confusion from parents talked to about lack of clear signposting and understanding of pathway*

- *Information pack and letter do not reflect what is on the website and no easy read versions*

- *Reflections from review and internal teams is that pathways feel like a 2 tier service*

Not working as well- Other pathways

- *Strategically children's and adult services working on developing a shared practice and value culture although this not fully embedded in teams especially outside DCS and YADT.*

- *For children not referred to the YADT there is not a systematic flow of information between CYP and Adult Services and Health*

- *Transition from Aspirations (Step Through) is often delayed due to lack of planning and/or suitable provision but perceived by some that it's a male only service*

- *General lack of joint commissioning although an ambition to do this.*

- *No visibility of costs of CYP care and support packages which impacts on ability to strategically commission*

- *The strategic positioning of PFA in key boards – e.g. SEND Board - in order to ensure focus on partnership responsibilities and outcomes.*

Refection's on Key Line Of Enquiry

To review the effectiveness of the current pathway to adulthood for young people within Leicestershire to ensure timely independent outcomes for young people and Best Value for the authority are achieved.

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- Evidence that the YAD team are striving to maximise independence but as this is only a proportion of the young people and they do not have costs prior to YAD we cannot comment on best value

Consideration for part of the review to focus on the current methodology for identifying the cohort of young people that will require an intervention?

- Methodology and criteria for YAD is clear but is this effectively picking up all YP transitioning into adult services ?

Areas of focus from Case and team to team

- **Closure summaries may be helpful particularly if further work may be needed at a later date or to assist review and audit**
- **Outcome letter could be expanded to include more information about the outcomes of contact with service inc decisions and next steps**
- **3 conversation's and revised paperwork may assist in improving strength based approaches**
- **Incorporating the journey to adulthood into assessment or support plan**
- **Would like to work more closely with leaving care PA's possibly invite to group supervision of talking about a young person they know**
- **Carrying out pre assessment on allocation and delaying full assessment to just before 18th birthday to allow for needs and aspirations to change**
- **More young people to have opportunity to work with reablement workers to enable them to maximise skills and independence**
- **Less focus on dates and more on outcomes and activities – " 3 weeks doesn't always give enough time to do anything or for significant "**

directors of
adass
adult social services
East Midlands

Recommendations areas for Improvement

- **Develop a collective understanding and definition of transitions and preparing for adulthood**

- **Strategic overview of those young people who might transition from CYP to adult services – Numbers, costs, pathways , processes and commissioning opportunities**

- **Information sharing agreement between childrens and adults services LA and Health**

- **Thematic audit (PSW LED) of young people that transition to ASC directly (not YAD) to understand transition planning and experiences**

- **Review of YAD to ensure you are making best use of their skills and experiences inc link worker role and prioritisation tool**

- **Strengthening the interface between YAD , EHCP team and virtual school**

- **Quick Win - Ensure website and information are up to date**

Questions and reflections

Leicestershire County Council

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3 MARCH 2025

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
ADULT SOCIAL CARE REGULATED SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on the progress and implementation of the action plan relating to Melton Short Breaks, the Department's in-house respite provision which is regulated and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

2. The Committee requested an update report offering assurance of progress made in respect of the action plan at its meeting in September 2024.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. Services highlighted in this report contribute to both the County Council's Strategic Plan and Adults and Communities Department 2020-2024 '*Delivering Wellbeing and Opportunity in Leicestershire*' Strategy, with associated Medium Term Financial Strategy savings targets.

4. On 2 September 2024, the Committee received a report outlining the County Council's Regulated Direct Service Provisions with an overview of all regulated activity and performance.

5. The above report detailed the most recent assessment completed by CQC in November 2023 for Melton Short Breaks that rated the service as "Requires improvement". An overview of an associated action plan was provided detailing actions being delivered to ensure future compliance.

In-House Regulated Services

6. The Council directly provides the following adult social care services which are all registered and regulated by the CQC:

   - Melton Short Breaks, Melton Mowbray;
   - Melton Supported Living, Melton Mowbray;
   - The Trees Short Breaks, Hinckley;
   - Carlton Drive Short Breaks, Wigston;
   - Waterlees Court Supported Living, Wigston;
   - Smith Crescent Supported Living, Coalville;
   - Leicestershire Shared Lives Scheme;
   - Homecare Assessment and Reablement Team (HART).

Short Breaks Services

7.   The Council directly manages and delivers overnight respite/short breaks and supported living services in the County for adults with autism and profound and multiple learning disabilities. The in-house workforce is trained in supporting people requiring positive behaviour support and administer a number of health-delegated tasks that are pertinent to the person's health and wellbeing. The services also provide an urgent response in cases of adult safeguarding and where there has been a breakdown in community based care packages.

8.   The service locations and current CQC rating for the Council's Short Breaks Services are:

Service and location	CQC rating	Date of last inspection
Melton Short Breaks Victor Avenue, Melton Mowbray	Requires Improvement	15 November 2023
The Trees Short Breaks Service Deveron Way, Hinckley	Good	25 October 2017
Carlton Drive Short Breaks Service Carlton Drive, Wigston	Good	14 October 2019

9.   There is no set schedule for CQC inspections to take place.

10. The accommodation at Melton is purpose-built offering level access throughout.   All locations offer single occupancy bedrooms, with most rooms providing ensuite facilities. The accommodation is suitably adapted for wheelchair access and maintains specialist equipment on site such as profile beds, ceiling track hoists to assist with the transfer of people who are non-weight bearing, and multi-sensory environments for stimuli, therapeutic interventions and relaxation. Facilities include the provision of specialist baths and shower facilities and equipment such as changing spaces/beds and shower chairs.

11. CQC inspected Melton Short Breaks in November 2023. The regulator highlighted some causes for concern and reported regulatory breaches. The Council has acted to address the issues, with a detailed action plan being produced that provides the activity and response to address the CQC's findings. A summary is given in the table overleaf of the updated actions**:**

Regulatory element not being met	Update of actions taken
Regulation 11 - Need for consent	• The Council has developed and delivered a comprehensive bespoke training programme in Mental Capacity and Liberty Safeguards for managers. • All service staff have undertaken refresher training in Mental Capacity Act/Best Interest Decisions. • Additional workshops in Mental Capacity/Best Interest Decisions have been held with staff to improve learning, understanding and application. • The service has adopted the Council's Mental Capacity Act Practice Guidance. • The service has completed all Mental Capacity Act/Best Interest Decisions for relevant people who access the service and have implemented a system of monitoring and review. • A robust system and process for completion of Mental Capacity Assessments/Best Interest Decisions has been implemented for all new referrals. • As good practice, the service continues to appraise staff on the principles of the Care Act to ascertain a wider understanding of the care system and objectives.
Regulation 12 - Safe care and treatment	• A full review was conducted of the Medication Pathway and Procedure. • Investment in securing a designated medication room was secured, work completed, and the designated room is now in operation. This has supported with reducing/mitigating risks in medication management, safety and organisation. • Medication errors since the implementation of the new medication room have significantly reduced *(1 recorded incident)* • New systems training has been completed with all staff at the service. This has been successful and shown significant improvement in the safe management of medication and accountability.
Regulation 13 - Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment	• Mandatory Safeguarding training has been completed by all staff as good practice to update and improve knowledge, understanding in this subject and how to raise any matters of concern.

	• Additional workshops in Safeguarding have been held with staff to improve learning, understanding and application – all staff at the unit attended a workshop session. • Enhanced training and deployment of train the trainer programme in safeguarding at the service has been completed. • All staff have completed learning in relation to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure and escalation reporting processes.
Regulation 18 - Staffing	• Full review of all mandatory and required staff training completed at the service. • Refresher training in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has been completed at the service. • Extensive programme of assessment and reviews completed with people who access services, incorporating the principles of inclusivity and personalisation. • Food hygiene and safety training completed and improved systems have been implemented to ensure effective delivery and handling of food.

12. The service has made improvements and completed the work identified in the action plan in remedying the reported breaches. The service continues to monitor and audit the improvements in the safe delivery of services and is ensuring that learning and improvements identified are implemented across all in-house provided short breaks and supported living services.

13. The CQC do not have a fixed timeframe for a return inspection but can, without notice, visit as and when they decide.

14. A new Care Services Manager has been appointed who has extensive experience in managing a social care provision for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities, and interim arrangements from within the existing management team is in place to support the transition in management for the period of induction/onboarding.

Feedback from those who access in-house Short Breaks Services

15. Below is some of the feedback received from parents, carers, commissioners and individuals who have received support from Short Breaks Services:

"Each time (name) stays he picks up extra skills, just little things mainly, but for him that's a big deal in such a short period of time. It makes me feel better about his eventual transition from home to his own accommodation".

"Just wanted to say thanks for giving (name) such a lovely time the last week. She really does love it and us knowing that makes such a massive difference to us as a family and lets us give the other two kids a holiday they wouldn't normally get".

"(name's) improvement has been remarkable thanks to the people who have worked with (name) this year. we appreciate all you have done".

"It's been amazing and lovely, I've had amazing dinners. (Staff name), she makes me smile, I am very happy I get my own key".

"Our two sons find change and new settings difficult due to their autism. We have found the staff at The Trees to be very friendly, very helpful and very accommodating towards us all as a family. We are grateful for all their patience and support".

"I wish to give recognition and positive feedback to all staff at The Trees who supported (name) during a difficult time in his life. From an adult social care perspective, working in partnership with The Trees has been a positive and productive experience. I have found staff to be knowledgeable, proactive and responsive in the face of adverse circumstances for (name). Their commitment to minimising (name's) emotional distress has ensued a smooth transition for (name)".

Resource Implications

16. Recruitment and retention of staff working in the direct care sector remains challenging, with the Council continuing to advertise a significant number of vacant posts. These include continuous recruitment of staff into the services.

17. A review is being undertaken of the Short Breaks Services as part of the cross-departmental Prevention Review and departmental medium term financial planning. The review is seeking to maximise the use of the short breaks accommodation and ensure an efficient use of resources.

Background Papers

- Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26 - https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-plans/the-strategic-plan
- Delivering Wellbeing and opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-24 - https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2020/9/30/Vision-and-Strategy-for-Adults-and-Communities-Department-2020-2024.pdf
- Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 2 September 2024 – Leicestershire County Council Adult Social Care Regulated Services - https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7818&Ver=4

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. None.

Equality Implications

19. There are no equality implications arising from this report. However if any changes are proposed from the Short Breaks Services review an Equality Impact Assessment and consultation will take place.

Human Rights Implications

20. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

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Leicestershire County Council

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 MARCH 2025

LEICESTERSHIRE ADULT LEARNING SERVICE OFSTED INSPECTION FINDINGS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of the Report

1   The purpose of this report is to share the findings from the inspection of Leicestershire's Adult Learning Service (LALS) conducted by Ofsted from 14 to 17 January 2025. The findings are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2   Further Education providers in England, including local authority delivered services, are subject to Ofsted regulation under Section 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3   The Education Inspection Framework (EIF) details how Ofsted inspects maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools, further education and skills provision and registered early years settings in England. The EIF includes the principles that apply to inspection, and the main judgements that inspectors make when carrying out inspections.

4   The LALS was graded 'Good' for Overall Effectiveness from the previous inspection undertaken in 2018.

5   On 5 June 2023, the Committee reviewed the Accountability Statement mandated by the Department for Education.

6   On 3 June 2024 the Committee considered a report on the closure of the Transitions Learning Programme (provision for young people with disabilities then provided by LALS). On 21 June 2024 the Cabinet approved the closure of the Transitions Learning Programme at the end of the academic year.

7   The Committee receives LALS learner participation and achievement data via the Department's quarterly performance report. On 20 January 2025 the Committee considered the latest performance data, as at the end of November 2024.

Background

8   LALS receives external grant funding of approximately £4m per annum from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the delivery of adult education provision across the County. A further £1m in funding is generated through tuition fee income, project funding and the apprenticeship levy.

9   The ESFA funding rules state the purpose of the Adult Education Budget is 'to engage adults and provide the skills and learning they need to progress into, or within, work', or equip them for an apprenticeship or other learning. It enables flexible, tailored programmes of learning to be made available, which may or may not require a qualification, to help eligible adults engage in learning, build confidence and/or enhance their wellbeing'.

10   The LALS enrols circa 7,000 adults per annum in 49 venues across the County. The curriculum offer is designed to support adults develop their basic skills, mental health, vocational skills, and wellbeing. The service delivers apprenticeships and runs a programme of English classes for adults being supported through the Vulnerable Person Resettlement Project and Homes for Ukraine initiatives. LALS is also leading the Council's Multiply Programme, a national project to improve adult numeracy skills which is due to end in March 2025.

11   The service employs 257 staff many of whom are sessional tutors who hold part-time contracts with the Council.

12   At the time of the Ofsted inspection there were 2,098 learners attending 348 classes at the 49 venues. Service areas selected for inspection included apprenticeships, English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), digital skills, learning for independence and learning for wellbeing.

13   The Ofsted inspection team included five inspectors who used evidence from visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, a review of performance data and service records to inform key judgements. In addition, an online survey captured the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders.

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework

14   The Ofsted framework uses a four-point grading scale to make principal judgements:

- Grade 1 – outstanding;
- Grade 2 – good;
- Grade 3 – requires improvement;
- Grade 4 – inadequate.

15   Inspectors make graded judgements on specific aspects of the service including the Quality of education, Behaviour and attitudes, Personal development, and Leadership and management. Findings from each of these focus areas, along with a range of other evidence, inform the final grade for Overall Effectiveness.

Summary of Grades Awarded

16   LALS received the following judgements:

- Overall Effectiveness   Good
- Quality of education   Good
- Behaviour and attitudes   Good
- Personal development   Good
- Leadership and management   Good
- Adult Learning Programmes   Good
- Apprenticeships   Good

Ofsted Inspection Findings

17   To establish the level of learner satisfaction, inspectors used direct feedback from adults during their class visits together with findings from the Ofsted survey. Of the 222 adults responding to the questionnaire, 97% agreed they would recommend the service to family or friends. Inspectors found that adults were extremely positive about their learning experience due to the inclusive environment which helps create a sense of belonging within a supportive learning community.

18   LALS has recently strengthened its governance through the introduction of the accountability agreement, reviewed by this Scrutiny Committee in June 2023. As a result, the service intent is clearly defined, and inspectors were able to clearly see the direct connection between course content and its relevance to delivery of the strategic outcomes of the Council. Inspectors recognised the role of elected members in providing oversight, support and challenge, and underpinning effective governance.

19   The Ofsted inspection team noted that the curriculum supports adults to develop skills to progress within their careers. In addition, the wider impact of learning is captured within the inspection report, for example, how social interaction, a sense of accomplishment and physical activity helps improve learners' mental health and wellbeing.

20   The overall judgement for the Quality of Education is Good and inspectors reported that, in most cases, tutors are using their expertise well to plan and teach effectively. Indeed, most of the feedback from inspectors following class observations was extremely positive throughout the inspection. The inspection report does highlight the need to further improve quality assurance to address inconsistencies with the quality of teaching and learner achievement rates. However, this relates to a few specific courses within ESOL and apprenticeship programmes.

21   Inspectors reported that learners and apprentices with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) progress well on their courses, noting that they develop confidence and social skills for living independently. Positive findings validate service investment into additional support measures to ensure all adults have an equal opportunity to achieve. Throughout the curriculum, learning activities are aligned to support independence and reduce need, central to the Adults and Communities Departmental strategy.

22　The service intent focusses on engaging adults, removing barriers to learning and supporting progression to next steps. Across most programmes inspectors recognised that careers advice is suitable with apprentices securing promotions and learners progressing to higher level study. However, the inspection report highlights the need for further work to ensure adults attending non-accredited courses receive appropriate career advice and guidance.

23　Scrutiny of safeguarding arrangements included a review of service processes for reporting concerns, a focus on the safe recruitment of staff, and effective use of the Disclosure and Barring Service to complete ongoing checks. Findings confirmed that safeguarding is effective, with inspectors reporting that learners and apprentices feel safe and are comfortable reporting safeguarding or welfare concerns.

Summary of Key Strengths

24　A summary of key strengths included:

- Learners feel welcomed and valued;
- Most learners and apprentices gain new knowledge, skills and professional behaviours that enable them to progress;
- Learners and apprentices feel safe and are comfortable reporting safeguarding and welfare concerns;
- In most cases tutors use their expertise well to plan and teach effectively;
- Learners with SEND and/or disabilities develop the confidence and social skills for living independently;
- Social interaction, a sense of accomplishment, and physical activity helps to improve learners' mental health and wellbeing;
- Governance arrangements are effective.

Areas for improvement

25　Areas for improvement included:

- Careers advice for adults enrolling on tailored learning courses;
- Quality assurance to ensure effectiveness across all areas;
- Teaching practice across ESOL and apprenticeship programmes.

Actions to address areas for improvement

26　A quality improvement plan (QIP) has been developed to address the specific areas identified for improvement and is attached to this report as Appendix B.

27　The QIP includes specific actions to increase the rigor of quality assurance across ESOL and the apprenticeship provision using good practice from other areas of the service with consistently high performance.

28　Improvement priorities will be monitored through the established monthly (officer) Quality Board, curriculum performance reviews each academic term, and regular Cabinet Lead Member briefings. Progress will also be monitored through the annual

self-assessment report, with the next report due to be submitted to Ofsted in January 2026.

29   According to the current guidance the next LALS Ofsted inspection is expected within the next five years. This will use a new inspection framework which is currently available for public consultation.

Conclusions

30   The Ofsted report findings confirm that LALS continues to provide a good quality of education. Learning programmes support adults to achieve positive outcomes, including progression in employment, further learning and/or benefit improved health and wellbeing. Learning activities are aligned to the Council's strategic outcomes demonstrating good use of the external grant funding. Effective governance and performance monitoring across most areas of the provision results in good standards and extremely high levels of learner satisfaction.

Timetable for Decisions

31   The findings from the LALS Ofsted inspection will also be presented to Cabinet on 18 March 2025.

Recommendation

32   The Committee is asked to note the report and comment on the findings of the Ofsted inspection and the proposed actions to monitor improvement.

33   A further report will be presented to the Committee on progress with the actions in the QIP.

Background papers

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 - https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents
- Ofsted Inspection Framework July 2023 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework/education-inspection-framework-for-september-2023
- Delivering Wellbeing and opportunity in Leicestershire – Adults and Communities Department Ambitions and Strategy for 2020-24 - https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/resource/files/field/pdf/2020/9/30/Vision-and-Strategy-for-Adults-and-Communities-Department-2020-2024.pdf
- Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26 - https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-plans/the-strategic-plan
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 5 June 2023 – Performance and Accountability Statement - https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7108&Ver=4
- Report to the Cabinet: 21 June 2024 – Outcome of the Consultation on the Future of the Transitions Learning Programme - https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7452&Ver=4

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

34   None.

Equality Implications

35   The proposed quality improvement actions do not include a significant change to the service offer that could affect protected groups.

36   The learner achievement rates and outcomes for different demographic groups will continue to be monitored through the service self-assessment process and QIP.

Human Rights Implications

37   The proposed actions within the QIP do not affect individual human rights.

Health Impact Assessment

38   Adult education plays an important role in supporting the delivery of health and wellbeing priorities. Measures proposed are designed to improve standards from good to outstanding and this will further improve health outcomes that engagement in learning supports.

39   The impact on health and wellbeing is captured within course evaluations completed by adult learners. This information is used to help inform programme planning and drive forward continuous improvement.

Appendices

Appendix A – Findings from Ofsted Inspection
Appendix B - Quality Improvement Plan

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Inspection of Leicestershire County Council

Inspection dates: 14 to 17 January 2025

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Adult learning programmes	**Good**
Apprenticeships	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Leaders at Leicestershire County Council offer education and training for adult learners and apprentices, the largest programmes of which are tailored learning, adult skills and family learning. Leaders offer courses online and in around 49 dedicated learning centres across Leicestershire, including community centres, libraries and schools.

At the time of the inspection, there were just over 2,000 adult learners studying a broad range of accredited and non-accredited courses, from pre-entry to level 3. Courses are offered in key areas such as English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employability and digital skills, learning for independence, well-being, family learning, mental health and languages, including British Sign Language.

Apprentices study level 2 adult care worker, level 3 payroll administrator, level 3 business administrator, level 3 team leader or supervisor, level 3 teaching assistant, level 3 early years educator and level 5 payroll assistant manager standards. There are 52 current apprentices, with fewer than five aged 16 to 18.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Due to the friendly and inclusive environment, learners and apprentices feel welcomed and valued. Learners are very positive about the sense of belonging that they experience, which makes them feel part of a supportive learning community. Apprentices benefit from tutors who provide the individualised help that they need to thrive.

Most learners and apprentices gain new knowledge, skills, and professional behaviours that enable them to progress to the next stage of their personal journey or future careers. Learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) on the learning for independence course develop the confidence and social skills for living independently. Most apprentices understand their study topics well and can confidently apply their new knowledge at work.

Learners build their confidence by engaging in community activities such as exhibiting their work at local museums and creating a video guide for the local museum to help visitors with neurodiversity prepare for their visit. Tutors design and plan the apprenticeship curriculum with employers to ensure that payroll administrator apprentices develop the skills to use complex payroll systems.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and comfortable reporting safeguarding or welfare concerns. They are confident that staff will take their concerns seriously and provide appropriate support.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a clear rationale for their adult learning and apprenticeship curriculum offer. They focus on developing courses that support the council's broader strategic aims related to improved opportunities, safety and well-being, building stronger communities, strengthening the economy and sustainability. For example, on ESOL courses, managers work with refugee resettlement teams to identify any specific language support that learners may need. They also offer a range of community programmes such as sewing and bhangra dancing to encourage a diverse range of learners to participate. As learners master new techniques and see their progress, their confidence grows. The social interaction, sense of accomplishment, and physical activity help to improve learners' mental health and well-being.

Most tutors plan their curriculums logically, allowing learners to build foundational knowledge before tackling more complex topics. For example, ESOL tutors organise lessons around specific topics, ensuring that learners understand key vocabulary and grammar before progressing to more advanced reading and writing tasks. Apprentices enrol on courses throughout the year. They receive good support from tutors at the start of their apprenticeship to determine the most suitable sequence of topics to study.

In most cases, tutors use their expertise well to plan and teach effectively. They make suitable use of presentations and demonstrations to provide clear and precise explanations. They use a range of methods to enable learners to learn more effectively and enhance their ability to retain information over time. For example, digital skills tutors use their expertise to provide personalised support, and community learning tutors plan engaging activities linked to cultural events and holidays. Tutors of payroll apprentices use a range of complex scenarios to illustrate contrasting approaches that apprentices can use to resolve payroll issues in different workplace settings.

Most tutors use a range of appropriate assessments and strategies to check learners' understanding and recall of knowledge. For example, in adult community tap dancing, tutors demonstrate steps to a particular dance while watching the class in a mirror to identify learners struggling with their technique and provide individualised support. In English and mathematics sessions, tutors set individualised tasks and use questioning effectively to check learners' understanding and reinforce key concepts. On apprenticeships, tutors do not consistently check apprentices' understanding well enough.

Most tutors use a range of effective activities to help learners practise their new knowledge and skills. For example, tutors in learning for independence courses use arts and crafts, games, and social activities to help learners improve their independence, practise and apply their learning. However, in a few cases, such as in ESOL and on some apprenticeships, activities are less carefully chosen or appropriate, which occasionally results in confusion among learners and apprentices about key concepts being taught.

Leaders have suitable arrangements to identify and support learners and apprentices with SEND. Tutors receive training and guidance from a SEND specialist to help them provide appropriate support to learners and apprentices. Tutors provide a range of suitable support mechanisms, such as in-class support and individualised learning resources. As a result, most learners and apprentices with SEND progress well on their courses.

Tutors support learners to make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills. Adult pottery learners produce work to a very high standard, using complex patterns, techniques and firing sequences. The focus and creativity involved in pottery provides a calming effect, helping learners to reduce stress and anxiety. Learners significantly boost their belief in their own abilities and reduce self-doubt. Apprentice payroll administrators can confidently apply what they have learned at work and take on more challenging tasks.

Achievement across the adult learning programme is not consistently high. In a number of subjects, including GCSE mathematics, a high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications. However, in others, such as ESOL and on some essential digital skills courses, achievement is not high enough. Most apprentices complete their courses successfully, and a high proportion now achieve distinction grades.

Most learners and apprentices receive suitable careers guidance to help them plan their next steps. Many learners who complete their accredited courses progress to study further, and apprentices often secure promotions, gain increased responsibilities or move to a higher level of study. However, too few learners on non-accredited courses receive appropriate careers advice and guidance.

In most cases, leaders' quality assurance activities are appropriate for identifying issues and implementing improvements across curriculums. Leaders use performance review meetings and 'GOAL' process reviews, which have resulted in improvements. However, leaders and managers do not implement quality assurance and monitoring processes well enough across a few adult learning courses, such as ESOL, or on apprenticeships.

Governance arrangements are effective. Elected members have sufficient oversight of strategic and curriculum developments. They have access to appropriate performance data, which they use to scrutinise and challenge leaders effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Make sure that tutors on apprenticeships consistently use effective assessment strategies to check apprentices' understanding.
- Improve the quality of teaching practice in ESOL and on the business administrator apprenticeship, so it is consistently high.
- Provide learners on non-accredited tailored learning courses with effective careers advice and guidance.
- Improve quality assurance arrangements so they are effective across all curriculum areas.

Provider details

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Principal, CEO or equivalent	Paul Fleming
Provider type	Community learning and skills-local authority
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2018
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the senior adult learning manager (standards and quality improvement), as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the further education and skills inspection handbook and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Michael Worgs, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Russ Henry	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Gibson	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Loxton	Ofsted Inspector
Ann Minton	Ofsted Inspector

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Quality Improvement Plan

Key judgement area	Recommendation	Success criteria	Action	Responsibility
Quality of Education	Make sure that tutors on apprenticeships consistently use effective assessment strategies to check apprentices' understanding.	Tutors and trainer assessors consistently use effective assessment strategies. Apprentices understand their study topics well and can confidently apply their new knowledge at work.	Provide developmental support and pedagogy updating to relevant staff. Share and model good practice of using effective assessment strategies across all apprenticeship programmes. Create spaces for practice sharing and Team Development Plan reflections. Consider upskilling staff to teaching qualification at level 3 or 5, as appropriate.	Work Based Learning Programme Manager and Co-Ordinators
Quality of Education	Improve the quality of teaching practice in ESOL and on the business administrator apprenticeship, so it is consistently high.	The quality of teaching practice across all ESOL programmes is consistently high. The quality of teaching practice across all apprenticeship standards is consistently high.	Review the effectiveness of current quality assurance processes within ESOL and Apprenticeship. Apply good practice from other curriculum areas to increase effectiveness of quality assurance processes. Monitor performance improvement targets within ESOL and Apprenticeships through the Quality Board and Curriculum Performance Reviews. Strengthen current methodology of creating Team Development Plans to ensure tutors	Senior Manager for Standards and Quality Improvement, Senior Manager for Skills, ESOL Programme Manager and Co-Ordinators, Work Based Learning Programme Manager and Co-Ordinators

			understand their own objectives, development needs, success criteria and support available. Further develop rolling programme of Continuous Professional Development so that teaching staff have access to training sessions aligned to their individual, team and service priorities. Create spaces for sharing good practice, including peer class visits and cross-curriculum networking.	
Personal Development	Provide learners on non-accredited tailored learning courses with effective careers advice and guidance.	All learners understand progression pathways and/or the roadmap to progress to higher level learning / employment. All learners benefit from a meaningful conversation about next steps and further opportunities to fulfil their personal, educational and professional aspirations.	Ensure course induction includes information about course outcomes, progression pathways, next steps and services available to support learners in achieving their goals. Develop Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) / Careers signposting toolkit to equip learners with information relevant to their personal circumstances. Equip staff with the skills required to provide effective IAG and Careers advice (for example, training how the Gatsby Benchmark can be used to add value to curriculum activities). Ensure progression / next steps review is effectively embedded within Individual Learning Plans for all learners.	Senior Business Support Manager, Participation Manager, Programme Managers

			Further develop internal progression pathways from one programme to another so that learners are aware of further learning opportunities and how the learning offer can support their long-term goals.	
Leadership and Management	Improve quality assurance arrangements so they are effective across all curriculum areas.	Quality assurance arrangements are effective and drive quality improvement across all curriculum areas.	Review and further develop the effectiveness of high level quality assurance processes and working practices to ensure they identify areas for improvement and drive quality improvement. Review and further standardise quality assurance processes at curriculum level. Provide training for managers and co-ordinators on how to conduct professional dialogue / coaching conversations / performance capability procedure. Provide opportunities for good practice sharing on implementing quality assurance and performance management measures.	Senior Manager for Standards and Quality Improvement, Senior Manager for Skills, Programme Managers

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