



ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2026

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION ASSESSMENT 2025
IMPROVEMENT PLAN DELIVERY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update of the progress made to deliver the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Improvement Plan, prior to submission of the progress update to the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) due 17 March 2026.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 2 In January 2026, the Committee received a report providing an update on progress made with delivering the CQC Improvement Plan.
- 3 In November 2025, the Committee received a report summarising the CQC assessment findings, highlighting key strengths and areas for development. A summary improvement plan was presented which outlined the actions that will deliver improvements identified in the CQC Assessment report. The Committee requested quarterly progress updates to align with the DHSC reporting cycle.
- 4 In January 2025, the Committee received an update on the position relating to preparations and readiness for the CQC Assessment site visit during week of 24 February 2025.
- 5 In November 2024, the Committee received a report summarising the position and process for the CQC assessment following the initial notification of assessment received on 9 September 2024. The report included the updated self-assessment and improvement plan alongside plans to prepare for the CQC Assessment site visit.

Background

- 6 The CQC published its assessment report of Leicestershire in September 2025, giving an overall rating of Requires Improvement.
- 7 Authorities achieving a Requires Improvement rating are required to develop an Improvement Plan and provide quarterly reporting to the DHSC demonstrating progress with improvement actions.
- 8 The DHSC contract with Partners in Care and Health (PiCH) to work with councils assessed as Requires Improvement. The PiCH Improvement Advisor is working with

Leicestershire to co-ordinate the response, ongoing review and support activities, outlined below:

- a) Stage 1 - response to the CQC Assessment report, submitted 27 September included a response to the CQC findings, emerging improvement priorities and action planning.
 - b) Stage 2 – report includes the improvement plan and oversight arrangements and the support required to deliver the improvement plan. Submitted 17 December 2025.
 - c) Stage 3 – quarterly updates to DHSC and ongoing support arrangements will commence 17 March 2026. The CQC Improvement Plan will be submitted to the DHSC along with a summary report provided by the PiCH Care and Health Improvement Advisor. A summary of the improvement plan is attached as an Appendix to this report.
- 9 Programme management and governance is in place to deliver the CQC Improvement Plan. Internal oversight of progress is through the monthly Departmental Transformation Delivery Board.
 - 10 Scoping and detailed workstream planning is complete, and short-term temporary resource is in place to address assessment backlogs. Recruitment has commenced for teams where the longer-term resource requirement is known, such as Adult Social Care Finance. Other teams require further detailed demand and capacity analysis to determine the long-term resource needed to achieve and sustain delivery of the improvement plan actions.
 - 11 Communication and engagement with staff and people who draw on services has begun and will be key to informing and delivering the improvement plan.

Improvement Plan Delivery Update

- 12 Timeliness of Assessments and Reviews
 - a) Temporary resource is in place to address the current waiting list for assessments. Engagement with staff to develop tools that will enhance the prioritisation and management of incoming referrals and allocation of cases has commenced. Further engagement is scheduled which will identify opportunities to streamline process and practice when responding to incoming referrals. Changes to the reporting dashboards for waits are in development, with revised reporting logic undergoing testing to ensure completeness and accuracy.
 - b) Procurement of an Occupational Therapy Assessment Service is underway. Information governance agreements are required for finalisation of the contract with the selected provider. The provider will focus on completing backlogs of assessments for equipment and adaptations. Occupational Therapy service staff are involved in designing a new duty assessment function that will respond effectively to people referred to the service for an assessment.

- c) A change to the Carers Assessment Team is being considered that will expand the capacity to complete reviews of carers needs and support in addition to assessments.
- d) Adult Social Care Finance case worker recruitment is underway with appointees expected to commence in April 2026. This additional capacity will ensure the improvement in the timeliness of financial assessments continues.
- e) Review Teams are focussed on completing the most overdue reviews in their team allocation. Opportunities to improve recording of reviews have been identified and are being implemented.

13 Access, Information, Advice and Guidance

- a) An Information Maturity Self-Assessment has been completed, and a follow up workshop, facilitated by PiCH, took place on 29 January 2026, the outcome of which is informing the development of the information offer. An opportunity to collaborate with Loughborough University School of Design is expected to assist with improving the usability of the Department's website information. The ICT Service are piloting the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance searching for information on the Council's website, if successful this will be rolled out to include adults social care services and local support options. A leaflet to introduce adult social care and the services available is being co-produced with the Adults and Communities (A&C) Engagement Panel. The Engagement Panel acts as a critical friend to officers of the Council to discuss and challenge proposed engagement plans, service design, and policy and strategy development. Panel members are all volunteers and are recognised as experts by experience as carers, or someone who has previously had a service provided by social care. Opportunities to make better use of community venues to disseminate information about adult social care services are being considered to support access to information and services for people who face barriers to using digital technologies. Opportunities are being explored to refer people to Adult Learning Service to support their access to digital information if they wish, as part of their assessment.

14 Reablement and Hospital Discharge

- a) A detailed analysis of existing reablement capacity is complete, informing the profiling of capacity increase of the Reablement Team. Standard operating procedure is finalised and embedded following initial pilot for direct referrals to the Home Care Assessment and Reablement Team (HART) duty team from Accident and Emergency and non-admission wards.
- b) A review of hospital discharge cases has not identified inconsistencies that lead to an unsafe discharge across different hospitals in Leicestershire and out of county. Reinforcement of escalation routes in the event of risks during discharge will ensure people are kept safe and informed. A new hospital discharge information leaflet is being co-produced with the A&C Engagement Panel.

15 Carers Strategy (2026-2030) and Support Service

- a) Engagement with carers ended in January 2026. A revised draft strategy covering 2026-2030 has been prepared and will be reviewed by this Committee, and

appears on the agenda together with this report. The draft strategy and request to conduct a formal consultation is expected to be considered by the Cabinet on 24 March 2026. If approved, the consultation is expected to take place during April and May 2026. Feedback from carer engagement, carer service data and further engagement with stakeholders will inform the development of a revised specification for the Carers Support Service in Leicestershire.

16 Sufficiency of provider services

- a) The Supported Accommodation Market Statement was uploaded to the County Council's website and sent to developers/providers in January 2026.
- b) The business case for new Extra Care accommodation developments in Hinckley and Coalville is finalised, and discussions continue with developers. Re-commissioning of the Community Life Choices Day services commences early 2026.
- c) Scoping of a commissioning dashboard is underway which will support identification of any gaps in commissioned services.

17 Equity of access and experience

- a) Activity is in the early stages, initially the focus is to work with partners and communities to understand the barriers people in rural communities and homeless people face when accessing adult social care services.
- b) The need to ensure access to services for unpaid carers living in rural communities is included in the draft Carers Strategy 2026-2030 and will be a component of future strategy and commissioning developments.

18 Safeguarding

- a) A survey is underway to understand the ease of use of the safeguarding referral form and to ensure referrers are informed of the outcome of safeguarding enquiries.
- b) A review of the safeguarding pathway reporting is underway, considering improvements that will strengthen the monitoring of agreed target timescales and address issues with data quality.

19 Pathway for Adulthood

- a) This area of work is being delivered as part of the Corporate Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Review.
- b) The PfA project board approved the project move into design phase. Governance arrangements are to be agreed.

20 Workforce

The Adult Social Care Workforce plan is being drafted in preparation for consultation with staff. Initial analysis of demand and caseloads has been undertaken and

findings presented to operational managers. Additional analysis is required to ensure capacity and case work activity is fully understood to ensure resource is allocated where it is required. A new audit assurance group is established to provide assurance that current practice audits are effective and driving improvements in practice.

21 Partnerships in joint funding

This area of work is being delivered in collaboration with the Integrated Care Board (ICB). Initiatives completed by the ICB and Accommodation Review team to review potential funded nursing placement have achieved a small increase in determinations. A revised policy and action plan is being developed with partners.

22 Performance and Oversight

- a) This workstream, led by the Director of Adults and Communities, is providing over-arching direction and assurance across all improvement workstreams to ensure that reporting developments are co-ordinated and meet the needs of the Department and the CQC.
- b) Proposed reporting logic for assessments is under consideration, pending the outcome of testing exercise.
- c) Consideration of enhancements to the Reviews Dashboards is expected February 2026.

Key risks

- 23 Failure to make adequate progress with the improvement actions identified will result in further intervention from DHSC.
- 24 A second consecutive Requires Improvement rating will lead to enhanced support and monitoring including direct engagement by DHSC.

Resource Implications

- 25 Additional resource is required to deliver the improvement actions identified in the CQC Assessment report. Financial resource has been confirmed through the Medium Term Financial Plan approved by full Council approval on 18 February 2026.
- 26 Additional short-term staff resource is required to ensure sufficient capacity to reduce the waiting time for assessments. Longer-term, reviews of demand and capacity undertaken as part of the improvement plan will inform any staffing establishment change required in key teams such as Occupational Therapy to ensure sustained performance.
- 27 Technology will be used wherever possible to improve access to information and streamline processes to which will support improvement activities. Business Intelligence Service resource will be required to deliver enhancements to performance reporting and oversight.

- 28 The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Timetable for Decisions

- 29 Progress with delivering the CQC Improvement Plan will be presented to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

- 30 None.

Equality Implications

- 31 There are no equality implications arising from this report. Any proposed changes to the Council's policies, procedures, functions, and services which may arise from delivery of its Improvement Plan will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Human Rights Implications

- 32 There are no human rights implications arising from this report. Any proposed changes to the Council's policies, procedures, functions, and/or services which may arise from delivery of its Assurance improvement plan will be referred immediately to the Council's Legal Services for advice and support regarding human rights implications.

Appendix

Summary of CQC Improvement Plan

Background papers

- Report to County Council (Budget Meeting): 18 February 2026 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27-2029/30
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7862&Ver=4>
- CQC Leicestershire County Council local authority assessment published 17 September 2025 <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports/leicestershire-0925>
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 3 November 2025 Care Quality Commission Assessment of Leicestershire County Council's Delivery of Care Act 2014 Duties
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s192588/CQC%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20LOCAL%20AUTHORITIES.pdf> - item 36
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 20 January 2025 – Assurance of Adult Social Care
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s187689/Report%20CQC%20Assessment%20of%20Local%20Authorities.pdf> – Item 50
- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 4 November 2024 – Assurance of Adult Social Care
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s186111/CQC%20ASSESSMENT%20OF%20LAs.pdf> – item 35

- Report to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 6 March 2024 – Assurance of Adult Social Care - <https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=7107&Ver=4> – item 65

Officers to Contact

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

Tracy Ward
Deputy Director of Adults and Communities and Assistant Director (Access, Integration and Prevention)
Tel: 0116 305 7379
Email: tracy.ward@leics.gov.uk

Debbie Moore
Improvement Manager
Tel: 0116 305 8091
Email: Debbie.moore@leics.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank