

# Stronger Together into the Future

## Adult Social Care in Derby Ambitions for 2026 and beyond



Derby City Council



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# Foreword

A message from **Councillor Alison Martin**  
*Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care*

“These are challenging times in the field of Adult Social Care, as everyone involved with it will be aware. Nevertheless, as with all fields of human endeavour, we are always stronger together. Working with people, engaging with people and listening to people are the aims for the future adult care environment in Derby. At the City Council, we know our services need to improve. Yet the City Council itself will only ever be one part of the jigsaw.



All the pieces need to fit together well for us to see a convincing picture of care and support and independent living in our city. As the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care, I am always impressed at the commitment, hard work and resilience of so many in our care system. I hope that, moving forward, we can be stronger by coming together to face the challenges and form our own picture in Derby, for Derby.”

A message from **Andy Smith**  
*Strategic Director of People Services*



“Derby is a city built on strong communities, and at the heart of our vision for Adult Social Care is a commitment to ensuring that everyone can live a safe, independent, and fulfilling life.

We know that the way people access care and support is changing, and we must evolve to meet these needs. This strategy sets out our shared ambition for a more inclusive, person-centred approach that places individuals at the centre of decision-making.

We recognise the challenges we face, rising demand, workforce pressures, and financial constraints. However, we also see opportunities to do things differently, to innovate, and to build on the strengths within our communities. By working together with residents, carers, voluntary organisations, care providers and partners across health and social care, we can ensure that our services remain sustainable and responsive to the needs of those who rely on them.

Our priorities focus on enabling people to maintain their independence, improving the quality and accessibility of care, strengthening partnerships, and embracing new ways of working. We are committed to listening, learning, and continually improving to make sure that every person in Derby receives the support they need, when they need it.

This strategy is not just about services, it is about people. It is about ensuring that everyone in Derby has the opportunity to lead a dignified and meaningful life, regardless of their circumstances. We invite all our stakeholders, residents, staff, and partners, to join us on this journey as we shape the future of adult social care in Derby together.”





# Introduction

Adult Social Care plays a vital role in supporting people to live well, with dignity, independence, and choice.

We are a unique and vibrant city of over 260,000 residents, characterised by rich cultural diversity and a mix of languages and communities. Known for our pioneering spirit, from leading the Industrial Revolution to embracing cutting-edge technologies today, Derby continues to innovate.

In Adult Social Care, this includes using artificial intelligence, (AI)-powered tools, to enable our colleagues to be more efficient and responsive. We are committed to delivering high-quality, person-centred care that empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and promotes wellbeing.

Our strategy is underpinned by our Practice Framework, which guides our strength-based, person-centred, and technology-enabled care (TEC) first approach. It has been shaped through collaboration with those who draw on care and support, as well as carers, care providers, partners, and our colleagues. It builds on the principles of the Your Life Your Choice strategy from 2020, and reflects the insights gathered through our initial Stronger Together into the Future events, held in December 2024. These events reinforced the importance of working together to improve services, tackle the areas for improvement identified in the 2024 Care Quality Commission (CQC) report, and embrace innovation where it adds value.

We recognise that Derby already has many strengths to build on, including the dedication and expertise of our colleagues, strong relationships between staff and the people we support, committed partnerships, and examples of innovative practice. These strengths are captured in detail in our Adult Social Care self-assessment. Within the strategy we describe our ambition whilst our self-assessment and business plan describe our current position and priorities for improvement respectfully.

At the heart of the strategy is a commitment to being **Stronger Together**. It outlines our shared priorities for the future, ensuring people maintain their independence, supporting them to remain safe and live in the place they call home for as long as possible.

We are realistic about the challenges, including workforce pressures, budget constraints, and rising demand. We have an ageing population and a rising number of people with multiple and complex needs. Both locally and nationally, more people are experiencing mental health issues. At times, people are unable to access timely support, leading to escalating risks, self-neglect, and unmet care and support needs, but in Derby, we remain ambitious.

To meet these future challenges, we must build upon our preventative approach, prioritise early intervention, and invest in the skills and expertise of our workforce. At the core of our work in Adult Social Care is the belief that strong, trusting relationships are central to a good life.

Our mission is to support people in building and maintaining meaningful relationships, engaging actively in their communities, and leading lives that are both fulfilling and 'Gloriously Ordinary'. This strategy aims to inspire and energise our workforce, partners, and people who draw on care and support by setting out a bold, values-led vision for the future.

Together, we can strengthen an adult social care system that is even more inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all Derby's communities. At the end of this strategy, you'll find details on how you can get involved in shaping and delivering our shared vision.

By working together, we can ensure that people in Derby receive the **right support** at the **right time**, in the **right way**, and thereby fulfilling our Care Act 2014 obligations to prevent, reduce, and delay the need for care.





# Stronger Together: Learning from engagement

Following the CQC Inspection in April 2024, we launched Stronger Together events in December 2024, engaging staff, carers, partners, and people who draw on care and support.

These events provided a platform for open dialogue, helping us understand the lived experienced of those who use our services and shape our future approach. Key insights from these sessions included:



## Strengths

**Strong relationships between Social Care Workers and people who draw on care and support, a strong culture of learning, and positive partnership working.**



## Challenges

**Delays in assessments, gaps in specialist services, and digital access barriers.**



## Opportunities

**Improving timeliness and accessibility, personalisation, and greater communication with stakeholders.**

This initiative marks the beginning of a more inclusive and collaborative way of working, one that fosters engagement, continuous listening, and meaningful co-production with those who rely on our support. We will strengthen this by developing a clear co-production network and culture of continuous learning, ensuring diverse voices are enabled to influence every stage of planning, delivery, evaluation, and review. This includes actively addressing inequalities and shaping services to meet the needs of Derby's growing and diverse communities.



We will act on what we hear, for example:

- **Improving communication** between council teams so all staff know about available services, including culturally specific ones.
- **Working with Local Area Coordinators** to strengthen links with communities and voluntary groups.
- **Using technology creatively** to gather real-time feedback, capture quality assurance insights, and measure progress.

We will regularly evaluate the impact of our work, listening to people's experiences and adapting our approach where needed, so that the strategy remains relevant and delivers meaningful outcomes. By embedding the ethos of being **Stronger Together** into our long-term approach, we ensure that the voices of individuals, families, carers, providers, and partners are central to decision-making.

We encourage everyone, whether you are somebody who draws on care and support, a carer, colleague, provider, or partner, to take part in our co-production network. Details of how to get involved, share your views, and help shape services are available in the 'Get Involved' section at the end of this strategy.

This commitment reflects our Council value of Great People, One Team, where we work together each day to make a positive difference for Derby. It also aligns with the updated Council Plan 2025-2028, particularly the themes of Inclusive City, putting people at the heart of everything we do and Connected Council, collaborating to deliver efficient, integrated, and accessible services.

Through regular feedback, targeted action to reduce inequalities, and a commitment to adapting based on what we learn, we will build a more resilient and responsive Adult Social Care system that evolves to meet the needs of Derby's growing and diverse population.



# Our ambition

We want the people of Derby to live healthy, independent, and fulfilling lives within supportive communities. Our ambition is to develop a care system that empowers people to shape their own futures while ensuring they have access to the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

Built on the principles of inclusion, independence, and well-being, our Adult Social Care strategy sets out our vision to deliver high-quality, sustainable care and support that meets the needs of our diverse population. This means recognising and celebrating the many cultures, languages, and communities that make up Derby, and ensuring that all voices can influence how services are designed and delivered. We will work collaboratively with individuals, carers, communities, and partners to ensure our approach is person-centred and forward-thinking.

Our approach is grounded in the Derby Practice Framework, which emphasises relational, strengths-based practice, enabling practitioners to work alongside individuals in ways that build trust and resilience.

We recognise that delivering on our ambition will not be without its challenges. Demand for services is rising, workforce capacity is under pressure, and financial resources are limited. Prevention, although central to our approach, is complex, and no local authority has yet fully solved it.

However, we remain ambitious, continuously assessing, learning, and adapting to shape our services in response to changing needs and growing demand, ensuring we find the best solutions with the people of Derby, for the people of Derby.

By focusing on prevention, innovation, and integration, we will strengthen support, improve outcomes, and build a care and support system that is reliable, adaptable, and able to meet people's changing needs now and in the future. Co-production will be key to achieving this as we recognise the people who draw on care and support will be best placed to improve their own and other people's experiences. We will work with people, carers, and community partners to ensure our priorities reflect real experiences and local needs.

This strategy aligns with the Care Act 2014, the NHS Long Term Plan, and Derby City Council's Council Plan 2025-2028, ensuring that adult social care plays a central role in making Derby an Inclusive City, one where people are at the heart of everything we do.





# How do we deliver

The following approaches set out how we will turn our ambition into action:



**Co-producing solutions together**, by putting the people who draw upon care and support at the centre of what we do, collaborating with them to deliver what truly matters. This means enhancing strong, ongoing co-production networks and using real-time feedback to adapt our services for the better.



**Designing inclusive and responsive local services**, rooted in respect, community connections, and the belief that everyone should be treated with dignity, and supported to live fulfilled lives in welcoming, diverse communities.



**Recognising the role of all of our teams**, who work holistically to help people make informed choices, promote independence, prevent hospital admissions, and connect people to the right support at the right time. By providing timely interventions and tailored guidance, they play a crucial part in preventing, reducing, and delaying the need for long-term care.

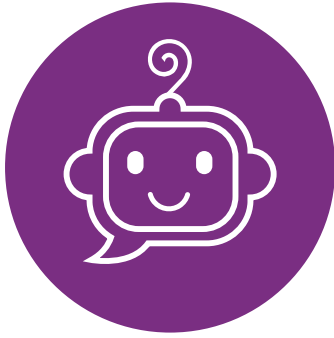


**Investing in our workforce**, building a culture where people feel valued, supported, and able to grow. By investing in the right tools and technology, we enable our teams to work efficiently while promoting staff wellbeing, retention, and professional development.



**Adopting a TEC-first approach**, where appropriate, using equipment and innovation to promote independence, extend access, and enhance efficiency. We recognise that TEC is not one-size fits all and we will always match technology to individual needs and circumstances, ensuring that digital solutions are used with care and promote dignity.





**Harnessing innovative technology** to improve access and service delivery across Derby. Our AI-driven digital helper, Darcie supports thousands of people every day by providing instant, multilingual responses and assisting with enquiries beyond usual working hours. Darcie complements traditional contact methods, ensuring people who draw on care and support can get timely help whenever they need it. Alongside Darcie, Perrie, our digital colleague for staff, is enabling our services to become even more efficient. These tools reflect our commitment to using technology thoughtfully, ethically, and effectively, and we will continue to enhance and expand their capabilities to improve access, responsiveness, and support into the future.



**Maintaining a strong and responsive safeguarding system** that prioritises timely, proportionate, and effective interventions. We work closely with partners to ensure clear understanding of safeguarding thresholds and provide ongoing training and support to improve referral quality and collaboration. By embedding a culture of continuous learning and making safeguarding personal, we engage diverse communities and use feedback to drive improvements that protect and empower those at risk.

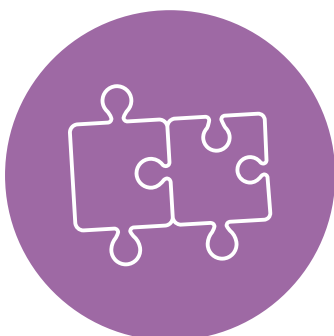




**Collaborating with commissioning partners** to develop a vibrant, responsive, and sustainable care market. This includes the Derby Care Association (DeCA) and other stakeholders to shape services that reflect the diverse needs of our communities.



**Focusing on prevention**, early intervention, and community-based support to delay, or reduce the need for long-term care. We recognise the importance of acting early so more people can live the lives they want. We will build on the work of Derby's Local Area Coordinators (LAC) who help people build on their strengths, find local solutions, and stay connected and in control of their lives.



**Working in partnership across health and care**, delivering joined-up, person-centred support. Our Section 75 agreement with Derbyshire Community Health Services (DCHS) enables integrated planning and delivery that puts people first, addresses inequalities, and improves outcomes.



# Our priorities

These priorities represent our overarching themes, guiding everything we do to improve lives, support independence, and create a fair, person-centred care system for now and the future.

## Empowering people and communities to remain independent



### **Supporting self-determination, building stronger communities.**

We believe that people thrive when they have control over their own lives and access to the right support at the right time. By investing in accessible information and technology, community-led planning, and carer support, we will create an environment where individuals can make informed decisions and participate fully in their communities.

## Delivering high-quality, person-centred care



### **Care that's tailored to the individual, of the highest standard.**

Everyone is entitled to care that is tailored to their needs and seeks to achieve their aspirations. We ensure that reviews are timely and frequent enough to adapt support as people's needs change, assuring the right level of care at the right time, in the right way. Our approach promotes innovative TEC alongside proportionate assisting and moving practices, balancing innovation with compassion and dignity. We prioritise expanding specialist services and developing new housing and care options that promote choice and independence.

## Living safely, with dignity and respect

### **Preventing harm and ensuring protection at every stage.**

Everyone should feel safe, respected, and supported throughout their life. We want people to feel assured that appropriate care and support is available to protect them when needed, with safeguarding processes that are timely, effective, and centred on the person. We'll also make sure that moving between services is as smooth and stress-free as possible. But living well also means having the freedom to make choices—even when those choices involve some risk. We believe in taking a positive approach to risk, working with people to help them make informed decisions about how they want to live. That means recognising what's important to them, understanding their strengths, and balancing safety with independence in line with the principles of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' and person-centred practice.



## Strengthening partnerships and integration

### **Working together for greater impact.**

Collaboration is key to delivering effective and sustainable care. By building on strong relationships at all levels, we embed clear processes that make navigation easier and reduce the impact on the people who draw on care and support. Working closely with health partners, the voluntary sector, and others, we deliver integrated solutions that improve well-being and reduce unnecessary hospital admissions. We use the right expertise and resources at the right time to prioritise prevention and independence through a joined-up, holistic approach. We recognise when to draw on others' skills, strengthening partnerships, and pathways to support the needs, views, and outcomes of people and carers we serve.



## Promoting equity and inclusion

### **Ensuring fairness and embracing diversity in all aspects of care.**

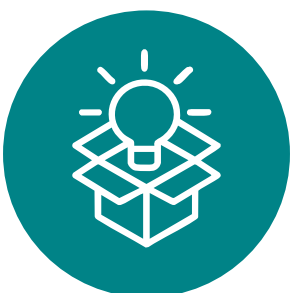
We believe in creating a space where people feel safe to be themselves, where authenticity is accepted and encouraged. Every person in Derby should have fair and equal access to the support they need. We will ensure diverse voices shape decision-making, expand accessibility services, and provide targeted support to those who are most vulnerable.



## Fostering innovation and sustainability

### **Embracing new ideas for a sustainable future.**

The future of adult social care depends on our ability to adapt and innovate. We will embrace technology, enhance performance monitoring, and invest in workforce development to advance our resilient and forward-thinking care system.





# Why these priorities matter

Our overarching goal is to prevent, delay, and reduce needs by:



**Supporting people to stay healthy and independent for longer.**



**Promoting reablement, rehabilitation, and recovery to restore independence and improve quality of life.**



**Delivering the right care, at the right time, in the right way.**



When care and support is required, we will ensure that it's:

- **Timely and effective**, preventing unnecessary escalation
- **Proportionate to people's needs** and delivered in a strengths-based way, promoting independence.
- **Centred around the individual**, where decisions reflect personal preferences rather than cost alone.
- **Underpinned by strong safeguarding practices**, ensuring people are protected from harm and abuse.
- **Achieved through collaboration with individuals**, carers, communities, partners and providers to provide holistic and sustainable support.

By focusing on these priorities, we will ensure our care system not only meets immediate needs but also build resilience and security for the future.





# Delivering on our priorities

To achieve our ambition of supporting people to remain as independent as possible, living safely in their own homes and communities surrounded by the people they love and care about, we are focusing on the things that make the biggest difference.

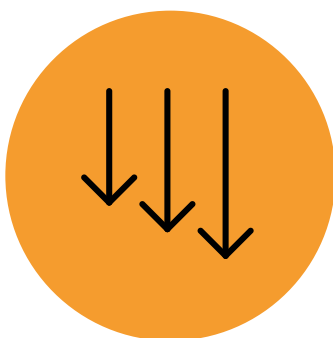
By preventing the escalation of need, embedding a strengths-based approach, adopting 'TEC First' and AI-driven solutions, and empowering our workforce for the future, today, we are creating a care system that is proactive, sustainable, and person-centred. Safeguarding remains at the heart of what we do, ensuring people are protected from harm and supported to feel safe and in control of their lives.



To deliver on our priorities, we aim to:



**Improve assessment timelines by completing initial assessments promptly, ensuring people receive appropriate guidance and support in a timely manner.**



**Reduce backlogs to ensure timely, responsive, and proportionate support.**



**Ensure timely safeguarding responses within set timeframes to protect individuals, prevent harm, and provide the necessary support at the earliest opportunity.**



**Enhance support for carers by improving assessments and the availability of services.**



**Address delays in Occupational Therapy (OT) assessments.**



**Address delays in Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) assessments.**



# Stronger Together: Co-Production Network

The network brings people with experience, carers, families, staff, and partners together, to help shape Adult Social Care in Derby. To get involved, share your experience, influence services, and make a real difference, scan the QR code or email [coproduction@derby.gov.uk](mailto:coproduction@derby.gov.uk).

## Get involved!

We invite everyone to help shape social care in Derby. Join our forums, co-production groups, and consultation events to share your views.

By working **Stronger Together**, we can make Derby a city where everyone can live well, with dignity, independence, and choice.



# Appendices

## Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2024 - 2027

The **Stronger Together into the Future strategy** is closely aligned with our **Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027**, which sets out how we will shape a diverse, sustainable care market that delivers high-quality, outcomes-focused support. We are committed to working in partnership with providers, communities, and people who draw on care and support to co-design services that reflect local needs, promote independence, ensure fairness and equity, and deliver value for money.

## Council Plan 2025-2028

The Stronger Together into the Future strategy aligns with our updated Council Plan 2025-2028, which sets out our priorities and outcomes for the future. The Council cannot achieve our aspirations for the city without the vital support of its communities and partners. This Council Plan outlines the role that everyone can play in fulfilling our huge ambitions – together we're building a Derby to be proud of.

## Your Life, Your Choice

The **Stronger Together into the Future strategy** builds on the principles of the **Your Life Your Choice strategy** from 2020.



We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it.

Please contact us on 01332 640825 or  
[derby.gov.uk/signing-service](http://derby.gov.uk/signing-service)

### **Punjabi**

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ: **01332 640825**  
ਜਾਂ [derby.gov.uk/signing-service](http://derby.gov.uk/signing-service)

### **Polish**

Aby ułatwić Państwu dostęp do tych informacji, możemy je Państwu przekazać w innym formacie, stylu lub języku. Prosimy o kontakt: **01332 640825** lub [derby.gov.uk/signing-service](http://derby.gov.uk/signing-service)

### **Slovak**

Túto informáciu vám môžeme poskytnúť iným spôsobom, štýlom alebo v inom jazyku, ktorý vám pomôže k jej sprístupneniu. Prosím, kontaktujte nás na tel. č.: **01332 640825** alebo na stránke [derby.gov.uk/signing-service](http://derby.gov.uk/signing-service)

### **Urdu**

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں مہیا کر سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم **01332 640825** یا [derby.gov.uk/signing-service](http://derby.gov.uk/signing-service) پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں