



Derby City Council

Adult Social Care (ASC) Quality Monitoring Team Quality Assurance Protocol

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Derby City Council

1. Purpose and principles of the quality assurance protocol

This official protocol outlines the Derby City Council (DCC) Quality Monitoring Team's (QMT) commitment to the policies, procedures, strategies, and systems that have been developed to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities for ensuring that commissioned provider organisations strive for and deliver high quality care and support. The QMT robustly monitor, review and report on the quality of adult social care providers in Derby City and support providers to continuously improve the quality of the care and support services they provide.

2. The Quality Monitoring Team (QMT)

Embedded as part of Adults Commissioning team, our role is to quality assure providers of care and support services in the following market sectors:

- Care homes (residential and nursing)
- Extra care
- Home care
- Supported Living
- Unregistered services (day opportunities and advocacy)

The quality monitoring officers (QMOs) each have a portfolio of care and support providers across the above market areas. The QMT works closely with other professionals to help support delivery of care and support providers to maintain and improve the quality of the services they provide, as follows:

- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (DDICB)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- NHS
- Health and Safety
- The Fire and Rescue Service
- Public Health
- Adult Social Care teams
- Other Local Authorities
- Housing accommodation providers

The QMT support care and support providers by:

- Completing an annual programme of planned quality audits (announced and unannounced).
- Responding to concerns, incidents, themes, and trends by completing a quality monitoring visit (usually unannounced).
- Ensuring that the latest guidance is shared.
- General visibility and in offering content at Provider Forums.
- Having positive working relationships (through Challenge and Support) with providers.
- Providing direction and recommendations whilst on MASH Duty and through quality audits and quality monitoring visits.
- Responding to organisational safeguarding's, assessing risks, identifying themes and trends, and liaising with the care and support provider.
- Mandating that all quality issues, serious incidents, and safeguarding incidents are reportable.
- Providing general information, advice, guidance and signposting to providers.

The QMT team consists of 7 QMOs (FTE 6.4) and 1 FTE Senior Quality Monitoring Officer (SQMO). Each QMO has a portfolio of allocated providers that they will quality manage providers and investigate safeguarding concerns and serious incidents. The information they collate supports and informs the Senior Quality Monitoring Officer and the wider commissioning team in terms of Lead Commissioners and Senior Commissioning Officers in contract management and market development.

3. Commissioned Market Areas

Care Homes

There are currently 65 care homes in Derby City (27 nursing, 37 residential) - of which 51 are for older people. Types of providers vary in Derby and include a mix of smaller, individually owned, and operated homes as well as larger homes that are part of group structures. There is a legacy provision of small, independently run family care homes in Derby, and a relatively small number of newer, purpose built and larger facilities. Care homes that are registered to deliver nursing are usually quality assured with a joint approach from DDICB and DCC QMT.

Extra Care

Extra care housing offers a housing and care option to enable people to live independently in a community setting. It provides tenants the security and privacy of their own home with access to a range of scheme facilities. Tenants have the added peace of mind of onsite care and support and access to 24/7 emergency support service should this be required. Extra care housing is available to people with a mix of housing and/or care and support needs. Tenants nominated for extra care by the council will have their eligibility assessed in line with the Care Act. There are currently 5 extra care housing schemes in Derby offering mixed tenure accommodation with a combined maximum capacity of 326 flats. The provision of extra care housing is likely to expand in coming years.

Home Care

There are 85 home care providers operating in Derby, however the Council only contracts with 31% of these providers. This is because many of the care providers are small and newly established. Home care housing is way of supporting and caring for people to live independently in their own home. There is an ongoing trend for people who want to remain at home for longer, rather than move into institutionalised care settings. This is line with DCCs strategy on enabling people to live at home for as long as possible and is reflected in the increased number of care packages that are being commissioned.

Supported Living and Accommodation

Supported living is the provision of care and support in a customer's own home. It is often used to support people with a learning disability or mental health issue to live independently. Support ranges from a few hours per week to round-the-clock provision. Tasks include help with daily activities and personal care. There are currently 91 supported living services available in Derby, 62 of these are accommodation based which means the supported living provider may not be the accommodation provider. There is a noticeable increase in use of this kind of community support options, rather than customers having to move into residential and nursing care homes.

Unregistered Services

Day Opportunities

Day Opportunities offer a range of services in a variety of settings where people can participate in meaningful activities, build new relationships and, where required, receive care and support. They are available for individuals aged 18 and over, who have physical disabilities, are older and frail, have dementia, mental health problems or a learning disability. Services will be tailored to individual and cultural needs. Care and support are provided whilst customers socialise, meet friends, have a meal, and take part in a variety of interests / events. Trained staff are available to offer this care and support as required.

Advocacy

Local authorities have a legal duty under the Care Act 2014 to make appropriate arrangements for independent advocacy services to be available to individuals who would experience substantial difficulty in any of the following 4 areas:

- understanding the information provided
- retaining the information
- using or weighing up the information as part of the process of being involved
- communicating their views, wishes or feelings.

Advocates in social care are independent from the local authority. They are trained to help individuals to understand their rights, express their views and wishes, and help make sure their voice is heard. Advocacy services in Derby provide independent statutory and non-statutory advocacy including, Independent Mental Health Advocacy, Independent Mental Capacity Advocate and Independent Complaints Advocacy.

4. Quality Audits and Quality Monitoring

The Quality Audit Programme will be used to develop and improve commissioned adult care and support services and will set out a detailed quality improvement processes which will include but not limited to:

- An annual programme of quality audits – some of which will be joint with other professionals.

- Responsive quality monitoring visits.
- Responding to complaints.
- Quality monitoring of all services in the local market regulated or unregulated.
- Information sharing with other professionals.
- Supporting providers to continually improve quality.
- Ongoing monitoring and reviews.
- Action planning for improvement.
- Support and challenge.
- Signposting providers to mandatory, targeted and specialist training.

The QMT will complete an annual programme of Quality Auditing with care and support providers in Derby City. This will offer a consistent and focused approach when defining and measuring quality of services in Derby. The process will involve a desktop review where the providers will be requested to complete and return Part 1 of the process. Providers appraise their own progress, quality, service model and organisational standards by completing a self-assessment tool to measure their delivery of personalised support and care in care homes, in the community and accommodation-based settings.

The QMT will be proactive in identifying potential quality issues early on to reduce more intensive interventions in future. Quality Audits will be rag rated as follows:

Red	Not Assured (Requires improvement)	Amber	Somewhat Assured (Requires improvement)	Green	Assured
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Green	Good - The service is performing well and meeting our expectations.
Amber	Requires improvement - The service is not performing as well as expected.
Red	Inadequate - The service is performing badly.

Providers who are evaluated as Amber (Requires improvement - The service is not performing as well as expected) or Red (Inadequate - The service is performing badly) in any of the quality checks will be subject to an agreed action plan to improve quality in the identified areas. The action plan will be a live working document that is implemented, reviewed regularly and progress is reported.

Amber and Red ratings will be escalated to the lead commissioner for that market area for a focused contract review and colleagues in Adult Social Care (ASC) for assessment and assurances around customer safety.

The Quality Monitoring Team will conduct planned and unplanned quality monitoring visits to contracted services, where we have been alerted to concerns following safeguarding incidents, complaints or direct feedback from individuals, family carers or partner agencies. These could be joint visits with colleagues from other agencies. These quality visits will primarily focus on ensuring quality services are being delivered and individuals being supported are safe from harm and risks are managed in an enabling way. These visits are significantly different from annual / quarterly quality audits and will be embarked on as a direct response to concerns, incidents, themes, and trends. An agreed action plan will be developed and implemented to ensure the quality of care and support services continually improves. This will be regularly reviewed either virtually or by additional visits.

As part of the QMTs quality monitoring and quality audits QMOs will collect feedback from customers, customers representatives, staff and other professionals involved. This will be used to evaluate the quality of services being delivered, how the service involves and consults with customers in personalised, dignified, and respectful way.

DCC's Commissioning Team and QMT complete a range of contract compliance and quality monitoring activities to drive up the quality of the local care and support services market. Commissioners will complete quarterly contract review meetings with Home Care, Supporting Living and Universal Support providers (services that customers and carers can access to promote independence and reduce demand for more costly statutory interventions) and annually for Care Homes and Extra Care. These meetings will be utilised to discuss market intelligence, quality, performance, value for money, improvements, innovation and address questions and concerns either party may have about the contract and how it is operating. Commissioners will use these meetings as a platform for being assured about the safety and effectiveness of adult social care services and where appropriate advise providers about required improvements, developments, and market changes. The QMT will report any quality concerns with the commissioning team to contribute to the contract management process.

This will include sharing quality information, safeguarding and serious incidents data and areas of improvement and good practice. It is also a platform where positives and complements about providers and services can be shared.

5. Safeguarding and Serious Incidents

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns, helping to protect the most vulnerable people from harm, neglect, and abuse.

“Making safeguarding personal - we must ‘make safeguarding personal’ and safeguarding must be seen as everybody’s business and kept in the public eye.”

Part of the QMT responsibilities is to work in collaboration with the MASH team and undertake investigations and inquiries into organisational safeguarding’s and serious incidents. The QMT implement a MASH duty rota whereby there is an appointed QMO available each working day to process organisational safeguarding’s / serious incidents and pass them to the allocated QMO for investigation.

Each QMO manages and evaluates safeguarding’s / serious incidents and offers providers the ability to own, investigate, respond to, and learn from any identified issues. This ensures customers are protected from risk and abuse and are receiving high-quality care and support in a safe environment by competent staff. The QMOs support providers to implement sustainable improvements in the quality of their provision.

6. Partnership Working

In Derby City there is a strong working relationship between all agencies working with the Care and support sector. Regular multi-agency information sharing meetings are held between the local authority, Care Quality Commission (CQC), Fire and Rescue Services, Police, Healthwatch, Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control, Derbyshire Community Health Services (DCHS) and Continuing Health Care and representation from the Safeguarding teams from both local authority and the DDICB. At these meetings any providers where concerns

have been identified are shared and discussed, allowing effective intelligence and information sharing. Progress against any existing action plans is then reviewed and a unified strategy from health and social care agreed. Trends and themes affecting the sector are also identified and where possible plans put into place to implement changes and updates on work involving the care and support sector shared with the group. DCC has established partnership working with numerous partners, stakeholders, and providers. All of these are a significant part of the quality journey and there are many advantages to be gained from how we join up our data and systems.

The QMT work collaboratively with the CQC and the DDICB sharing intelligence and knowledge about provider organisations. This includes working with neighbouring Councils, particularly where we have concerns about a provider who operates beyond Derby's boundaries.

The CQC determine the quality of registered services and rate their compliance with CQCs regulatory standards. The QMTs insights are reflective of the information and observations at any one time and although viewpoints between DCC and CQC may differ, the QMT activities aim to be complimentary to the CQC and the collaborative approach drives improved quality of services.

DDICB's quality assurance process utilises a variety of quality assurance methods of monitoring; using a mixture of virtual, desktop and face to face monitoring to ensure the most effective use of time. DCC QMT work together with DDICB to deliver joint commitments to quality and safety of services for customers in variety of settings with providers who funded by both organisations. Where quality themes are identified the QMOs, and Clinical Quality Managers (CQMs) follow up with the Care Home to ensure appropriate action is being taken and to challenge and support where required. This joint approach has a common purpose of identifying and agreeing approaches and solutions that will assist organisations to achieve service quality improvements and being repetitive in our approaches.

As a group of organisations, we expect providers and professionals to work together to provide the best possible quality of care and support. We recognise that sharing concerns and intelligence at the right time can make links between pieces of information, which individually might seem small and insignificant, but that joined together can tell us all that a problem is emerging. The joint working approach present us with a positive focus on identifying and sharing best practices, observing the embedding of improvements and by working with CQC to reinspect services that have improved so there is a positive change in rating and / or the lifting of suspension that has been applied to a service through contract management.

Through our joint working initiative, we believe that we can strengthen the systems that allow this information to be shared and improve the transparency about our work for people receiving care, as well as for professionals and health and care providers. Doing so will allow us to fulfil our collective role better, as well as improve our ability to fulfil our individual roles. We also believe that working together more effectively can reduce unnecessary burden. We can encourage organisations to develop joint plans when we share similar concerns, or by taking assurance from each other's actions.

7. Workforce Development: Quality Training for Quality Care and Support

Providers should engage with each other and get involved in local networks as platforms for sharing information. Providers should engage with the forums and meetings that the Council and the DDICB facilitate as a way of keeping up to date with local developments, but also keep in touch with other providers. In addition, providers should take responsibility for keeping information and advice about the service up to date – there are various websites, portals and directories providing information directly to customers – such as via the Council's own website: <http://www.derby.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-life-your-choice/>

Together DCC QMT and partners will work alongside providers to address quality issues, offering support, information, advice, guidance, and training. There is a direct correlation between the quality of staff support, workforce retention and the quality-of-service delivery. To support providers to improve the quality of care we want to continue to support providers and learn from safeguarding and quality concerns. If we can support providers to sustain their workforce, we believe they will be able to invest in more training and development of their staff.

DCC offer a wide range of high quality, excellent value training courses for Health and Social Care professionals, Residential and Nursing Home workers, Personal Assistants, Support Workers and Carers. Details can be found here:

<https://www.derby.gov.uk/media/derbycitycouncil/content/documents/healthandsocialcare/adultsocialcare/Adult-Social-Care-Training-Handbook-2024.pdf>

DCC aim to drive up the quality of services in care and support market through training and development for the sector that can ensure the sector is an attractive employment choice for people. Providers who invest in their workforce and retain their workforce which increases the likelihood that customers are supported by well trained and knowledgeable staff.

8. Protocol Summary

The QMT will continue to complete a range of activities to drive up the quality of local care and support services. These will include:

- Ensuring that the planned annual programme of quality audits is completed in a timely manner.
- Conducting planned and unplanned visits to contracted services, particularly where we have concerns following safeguarding's, serious incidents, complaints or direct feedback from individuals, family, carers, or partner agencies.
- Having a primarily focus on ensuring organisation are offering services that ensure customers are free from risk of harm and are safe and the care and support being delivered is of good quality.
- Having quality assurance priorities that ensure the quality-of-service provision is being monitored and review in a consistent and focused way.
- Working with providers to improve the quality of their care and support with an agreed action plan, regular review meetings and co-working and co-production with other professionals.
- Working with a variety of other professionals both internal and external to share intelligence, information and strategies that will support and improve the quality of care and support services.

The QMT will continue to be involved in the assessment of providers to promote safe and quality care and support services and, where applicable, support providers with developing plans to make improvements and endorse safe environments and services for customers. The QMT will continue to assist care and support provider and with them learn from safeguarding's and quality concerns that will help drive up the quality of care and support available in Derby City.

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