

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULTS SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH

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PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director  
of Adults and Health  
Thursday, 3 October 2024

## Build happier, healthier and safer communities

### Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

Last month, we were delighted to share the jointly produced BwD Neighbourhood Action Plan to all members of our Primary Care Neighbourhood Groups (PCNs), Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) and 22 GP Practices across the Borough.

The Neighbourhood Action Plan sets out our key priorities, tangible outputs and timescales for implementation, some of which are already underway. This work will continue to deliver our corporate and system wide priorities and will ensure that local plans and strategies align, so that resources across our health, care and VCFSE system are best utilised.

Our Integrated Neighbourhood teams continue to fulfil their statutory duties, completing assessments and interventions for adults with care and support needs across the Borough. Recent areas of improvement include working with police colleagues to understand how best to respond to alerts regarding vulnerable adults and working with wider council colleagues to refresh our website content and better understand opportunities to support people more effectively on first contact with the department. Additionally, Social Work Team Managers are supporting a series of multi-agency workshops designed to improve advanced care planning for people approaching the end of life and supporting people to stay in their preferred place of care at the end of life.

At the beginning of July, local NHS physical health services including District Nursing and Occupational Therapy transferred to East Lancs Hospital Trust (ELHT) from Lancashire Care Foundation Trust (LSCFT). Much work has taken place to ensure that high quality care remains at the heart of service delivery and that existing referral mechanisms and pathways continue. Going forward, and in support of a collaborative approach, a multi-disciplinary task and finish group will ensure that ways of working continue to develop to be as effective and efficient as possible, with the aim of achieving best outcomes for residents.

### Adult Safeguarding

There has been an increase in activity within the Safeguarding Adults Team over the past 3 months, particularly since the new model of delivery was introduced. The Core Team continue to receive Safeguarding concerns daily, which continue to vary in risk and complexity, and which cover all categories of abuse. Through information gathering, using a multi-agency approach and with the 6 key principles at the forefront, the Safeguarding Adults Team determine whether there is a statutory duty to undertake Safeguarding enquiries under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014.

For the new model of delivery to be as effective and successful as planned, initial Safeguarding Adults training has been delivered to 7 staff cohorts within adult social care teams. There is currently a tendering exercise underway to secure in depth 'safeguarding enquiries' training for all registered Social Workers / Team Managers across Adult Social Care. It is anticipated that this training will commence from November 2024.

A review of the safeguarding transformation journey has commenced, which has highlighted a significant increase in safeguarding concerns being received into the Department. The review has also demonstrated the number of safeguarding enquiries being undertaken / concluded by the neighbourhood teams and highlights the demand that this is being met within wider social work teams. A finalised report will be taken to the Safeguarding Adults Board in the next few weeks to consider further.

### Specialist Teams

The Mental Health Team continue to support the wider Integrated Care Board (ICB) and LSCFT Mental Health transformation programme. The introduction of enhanced multi-disciplinary team meetings has been embedded within the Community Mental Health Team operational procedures. This supports collaborative working, ensuring those with the most complex mental health needs are supported through a holistic offer from Health, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector.

The Learning Disability Team continue to attend events at schools to promote an understanding of the transitions pathways and support available for young people after the age of 18. The Advanced Practitioner for SEND is working with partner agencies as well as internal teams to understand and address any barriers for young people who are preparing for adulthood.

### Better Care Fund (BCF) and Discharge Plans

The BwD Better Care Fund Plans for 2024/25 were developed and submitted on time to the National Team and we have received Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) confirmation that these have been formally approved by Better Care England.

As reported previously, the local authority and ICB have been allocated additional Discharge Funds for 2024/25, £1.9m and £1.2m respectively and plans are in place to implement new schemes through the winter period to support expected additional demand pressures in the system. This year's allocation is being utilised to provide ongoing support to the care sector, VCFSE and carers schemes and additional capacity for staffing teams supporting intermediate care and hospital discharge. Several new initiatives have also been agreed to support hospital discharge of people in the Borough who are homeless and presenting in acute care.

A review of the BCF plans across the Lancashire and South Cumbria (L&SC) system is underway in partnership with consultants 31Ten, commissioned by the L&SC system, and this will inform our joint planning into 2025.

### Assurance Preparations and Business Planning

The performance team are currently leading on preparations for the upcoming Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge review in October 2024. The LGA Peer review will be conducted on the same basis as a Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection and is expected to provide critical feedback to support our CQC preparations and readiness to ensure our evidence is reflective of 'what Good looks like'. The team continue to lead on collating our evidence for CQC's Information Return (IR) which will be requested on notification of inspection. In addition to the initial 5 pilot sites, 53 Local Authorities have now received notification of their inspections, including a neighbouring Northwest Authority.

All staff are invited to consider how we best demonstrate the value and quality of our services and celebrate the excellent work that we do. Our new Principle Social Worker has started work to ensure that we have clear processes for sharing learning and best practice across our workforce. This is important both to ensure the continuous improvement of our service and to demonstrate accountability when learning is identified.

Adults and Health are also preparing for our first Improvement Board, due to take place in October 2024. The Board will be independently chaired by a former DASS and Adult Social Care/ CQC expert and will focus on our progress against business plan priorities and delivery of

the Target Operating Model, as well as looking at CQC readiness and an ongoing improvement plan for our services.

### Carers Strategy

In July 2024, the Executive Board endorsed the Blackburn with Darwen Carers Strategy. The strategy has been co-produced with residents and partners and is designed to demonstrate our commitment to support and empower the carers within our Borough. The strategy aims to address the unique needs and challenges faced by carers within our diverse community. The document includes a vision for supporting young carers and adult carers in Blackburn with Darwen which is to *“Create a community where every carer feels listened to, supported, and empowered. We envisage a borough where carers have access to the resources and the help they need, where their contributions are recognised, and their challenges are addressed with empathy and efficiency.”*

There are several key priorities within the strategy, that are intended to inform specific delivery plans which will be co-produced with carers and services users over coming months.

The next steps are the formation of a Carers Board and the development of a strategic delivery plan. This plan will serve as a roadmap, detailing specific actions, responsibilities, and timelines to achieve the strategy’s goals. In addition to Executive Board, the Place-based Partnership Board have endorsed the strategy and committed to taking collective responsibility for the delivery of a strategic plan and review of existing services.

### Changing Futures

The grant funding for the Changing Futures programme is due to end in March 2025. This fully coproduced programme aims to improve the lives of adults experiencing multiple disadvantage (e.g. homelessness; substance misuse; mental health issues; domestic abuse; and contact with the criminal justice system) and supports the public sector and local communities to work together in new ways. Changing Futures Lancashire (hosted by BwD) has therefore been working on a close-down plan for the programme locally. As a time-limited evaluation programme, work is also underway to review the impact and learning from the programme and to consider how this can be embedded in practices and systems locally.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council has led this programme across Lancashire and has taken every opportunity to support the national team with the learning from the programme via multiple evaluation routes.

The third annual Changing Futures Lancashire conference is being held on 25th September 2024. The theme for this year’s conference is a celebration of ‘Lived Experience’ and will explore the learning, impact and legacy of the programme.

### First point of Contact

A project aimed at improving the way that residents access our Services in Adults is progressing at pace. The current online, telephony and in-person ways that customers access Adult’s services are under review to identify opportunities to make improvements to the customer experience. The project aims to provide a more joined-up service to help residents make informed choices and access the right support at the right time and place, in line with our Target Operating Model. With a focus on co-ordination and prevention, it aims to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and enable independence. Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.