

# Supporting Principal Social Workers with CQC Assurance Webinar – 14 Dec 2023



Facilitated by the **Co-Chairs of the National Principal Social Worker Network (Adults):**



**Hannah Scaife**, Principal Social Worker for Adults at South Gloucestershire Council



**Sarah Range**, Principal Social Worker & Head of Practice Governance and Information at Southend City Council

# Purpose of the Session

As part of an ongoing series of events to support PSWs, this session will provide an **update on the CQC Assurance process** and the explain the next stage of onsite assessments, with a **Q&A** with a representative from CQC. **Partners in Care and Health** will also be providing an hosting an interactive session and sharing the new Tool for PSWs. They will also introduce their support offer going forward. This event has been developed in collaboration with the National Principal Social Worker Network (Adults).

# Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Section</b>
10.30am	<b>Introductions and welcome</b> Hannah and Sarah
10.35am	<b>Update on CQC assessment and Q&amp;A</b> Lella Andrews, Local Authority Assurance Manager, CQC
11.25am	<b>Introduction to Tool/checklist for PSWs and Q&amp;A</b> Michaela Pinchard, Director, MJP Consultancy, Coaching and Training LT
11.45am	<b>Further support for PSWs through PCH</b> Hazel Summers, Director of Adult Social Care Improvement, Partners in Care and Health
11.55am	<b>Closing Remarks</b>

## Housekeeping

- Please ensure your microphones are muted.
- Dedicated time is set aside for Q&A. Please 'raise your hand' to ask a question.
- You are also welcome to use the Chat function to ask questions during the presentations.
- Should you lose connection to the session, please re-join using the same MS Teams link you joined with
- If you have any problems, please contact [PCH@local.gov.uk](mailto:PCH@local.gov.uk).
- An evaluation form will be posted in the 'Chat' at the end of this session to capture your feedback.

# An update on local authority assessments



**Lella Andrews - Assessment Manager, local authority  
assessment team**

*14 December 2023*

# How we got here

- We have new responsibility to independently assess how local authorities are delivering their Care Act functions.
- Our assessment approach has been designed in partnership with a range of stakeholders and people who use health and social care services.
- We will use our new single assessment framework to assess local authorities, using a subset of 9 quality statements focused across four themes:
  - Working with people
  - Providing support
  - Ensuring safety
  - Leadership



# Pilots

We planned for and conducted a phased approach to introducing the assessments to give an opportunity to:

- test, refine and further develop our approach through pilot assessments
- gather information to help develop our understanding of performance across local authorities
- establish a starting point to use as the basis for future assessments
- build relationships within each of the areas.



# LAA pilot evaluation

Headline findings from our evaluation indicate that our core approach is right as we found that:

- the quality statements at the centre of our assessments were broadly right and what LAs expected.
- our methods for assessment are broadly effective to provide the evidence we need to make a judgement on how well LAs are discharging their duties against the Care Act.

The evaluation helped to identify key areas where we can refine and define our operational tools and processes to ensure our approach is efficient for both CQC assessment teams and local government stakeholders taking part in an assessment. These include:

1. How to prepare Local Authorities for the assessments and what they can expect.
2. The Local Authority Information Return and accompanying guidance.
3. The role of self-assessment in baselining Local Authorities.
4. The use of different roles in the assessment teams, including the contribution of experts by experience, specialist advisors and executive reviewers.
5. The methods for collecting and understanding people's experiences and their health and care journeys.



# Themes from the pilots

- **Integrated working** has enabled pilot LAs to address challenges in hospital discharge
- **Waiting lists** for assessments existed mainly **due to lack of capacity** in the social work assessment workforce, but LAs were **managing this by prioritising risk**
- **Partnership working** was key for improving outcomes for people
- **Transition pathways from children to adult services did not always work well**
- **More work is needed** for LAs to understand how to reach people whose voices are seldom heard
- **Social care workforce capacity issues persist**, and **LAs are using a range of incentives** to address recruitment and retention issues, as well as supporting the professional development of the workforce to meet local needs
- Overall, **LAs had developed learning cultures** to help them identify where things were not working well and take steps to improve

# Formal assessments

- We have implemented learning from the pilots into our formal assessment approach.
- We have updated our guidance on how we assess local authorities. This was updated on our website last week <https://www.cqc.org.uk/local-systems/local-authorities>
- Local authorities will be notified in writing (via email to the DASS) that they will be assessed. This notification will include a request for completion of an information return and a date for our on-site interviews. There is information about this on our website also <https://www.cqc.org.uk/local-systems/local-authorities/la-information-return>
- This week we will be starting to issue the first notifications and information returns following government approval
- We will not be publishing the names of the local authorities we are planning to assess

# The assessment team

- We will be inducting new team members for the first few assessments
- Planner
- Assessment manager
- Inspectors including lead inspector
- Executive Reviewer
- Specialist Advisor
- Expert by Experience

# Information Return

- We will ask for documents and information about a range of subjects
- Three weeks to complete and all local authorities will have the same consistent time to complete except in exceptional circumstances eg Christmas
- Additional information within the three weeks – interview planning contacts, case tracking information.
- Additional information we ask for in one week – contacts for voluntary organisations, carer support organisation, advocacy organisation.

# Information Return

- Don't make up new documents. If you have links to documents on websites then send us the links rather than the document
- Self assessment - against the quality statements. Not mandatory and we do not issue a format for this. The LGA have produced a format that is available or can use your own
- If you have already sent us a document in the IR that is relevant to self assessment then just tell us that – don't duplicate

# Information Return

- We will ask for the majority of information to be returned via the portal that will be set up specifically for your local authority
- You will get information about how this works
- This is a secure, confidential way of sending us information

# Case tracking

- We will ask for 50 people using a coded system which we will send you
- We will choose six with four in 'reserve'
- It is not a case file audit – we want to be able to see the person's journey through the records, not to check that you have followed your internal records document policy
- We are happy to speak to people via teams/zoom/telephone or face to face

# Timelines

- Week 1 is the week we send you the Information Return and advise you that we are starting the assessment. We give you the date of the week of our site visit at that time
- You will have information about different timelines to return information in the initial email
- We will be on site week 9-11 (one of those weeks)
- The amount of days we will be on site depends on size of local authority and size of our team



# Principles of scheduling

- Elections
- Mix of political leadership
- Geographical
- Size of local authority
- ICS assessment scheduling
- Other regulatory activity that we are aware of

# Talking to staff

- CQC is experienced at regulation which involves talking to staff
- We want to talk to front line staff teams
- We will have a meeting in week 4 of the process to talk to senior leaders to gain an understanding of the teams they are responsible for, their view of what they are proud of and areas for improvement in terms of outcomes for people using services
- We will ask questions and be professionally curious but we know that we will gather more information from staff if they feel comfortable in talking to us

# Talking to staff

- We don't publish individual staff names in the report
- We will have 'drop-in' sessions where staff who are not involved in the more formal interviews can come to talk to us if they wish to
- Feedback from the pilot sites was that we were 'not as scary as expected'
- We will send you a short briefing that you can share with staff which will say a bit about the purpose of the assessment and what we might talk to them about

# Reporting our findings

- Local Authorities will have a factual accuracy process to follow before reports are published
- We will publish the findings from our assessments in individual reports on our website
- Our communications team will liaise with the local authority communications team in advance of publication
- We will also include issues and themes we find during our assessments in our annual State of Care report

# Lella Andrews

## Assessment Manager

[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

[enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

[@CQCProf](https://twitter.com/CQCProf)

[youtube.com/user/cqcdigitalcomms](https://www.youtube.com/user/cqcdigitalcomms)

[facebook.com/CareQualityCommission](https://www.facebook.com/CareQualityCommission)



# CQC Assurance Support for PSWs

Michaela Pinchard



# The brief

Rapid publication and tool/resources for Principal Social Workers to support the CQC assurance process

- ✓ Summary document setting out the pilot experience for PSWs
  - What CQC did & didn't focus on
  - Learning from the process for the PSWs
  - Learning from Children's services and OFSTED
  
- ✓ Top Tips and a checklist for PSWs to aid their preparation [to include PSW annual report templates]



# Approach & challenge

## Document review

- [Role of the Principal Social Worker in CQC Assessment, 8 November 2023](#) [Presentations]
- [The return of the regulator: What adult social care needs to know](#) [interviews with the Directors]
- Review of PSW annual reports
  - Pilot reports, updated assessment framework & information request

## Interviews & engagement with

- PSWs from pilot sites
- National PSW network chairs
- PSWs/networks
- Key partners

## Challenge

- Lots of information, resources, views and opinions – surfacing what will be most helpful and specific to PSWs



# 8<sup>th</sup> Nov: Some of what people were curious and or concerned about

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## **Case tracking**

Selecting the cases, understanding the categories, inclusion/exclusion of people who lacked capacity, consent issues, access to case management systems

## **PSW experience of the interview**

Level of information & oversight expected, whether CQC understood the role & appreciate how the role varies

## **The extent to which CQC were interested in**

DoLs practice / waiting lists / procedures, Mental Health, Comparing data with neighbours or statistical comparators, budgetary position

## **Principal OT involvement**

## **Would like to hear more about**

How we can learn from Children Services regards discussions around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion with casework.

What support should ADASS / LGA plan for going forward, for assurance and the PSW role?



# Progress

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Document review almost complete

Met with Hannah and Sarah

Meeting with pilot PSWs in progress

Lots of learning and thoughts emerging about what 'might' be helpful

## **Next steps**

Consolidating and honing into what 'will' be most helpful for PSWs

# Your views



**Ongoing worries & concerns** - Data, capacity, messaging, case tracking ???



**1) What do you feel you still need to know that will help you to prepare/feel more reassured?**



**2) If you attended the November webinar what were your main take aways in terms of learning and top tips?**



**3) What would you want a checklist to look like and any thoughts about what it should include?**

# Annual Report Template

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\*Equality, diversity and inclusion, and voice/co-production integral throughout the narrative

Annual Report by the Local Authority Principal Social Worker for the year April 2023-March 2024
<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Background/context</b>
<b>Overview/Exec Summary</b>
<b>Progress, Challenges and Future Priorities</b>
Quality & practice
Safeguarding
Workforce planning, recruitment & retention
Training, learning and development
PSW visibility leadership & learning
Other

Hazel Summers  
Director of Social Care Improvement  
Partners in Care and Health