

# An update on local authority assessments



**Amanda Stride**, Deputy Director of Local Authority Assessment  
Delivery

*5 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.



# Formal assessments

- We will be implementing learning from the pilots into our formal assessment approach.
- We have updated our guidance on how we assess local authorities. We will publish this following government approval. Until this is published, see our [interim guidance for local authorities](#).
- Local authorities will be notified in writing 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.
- We will be starting to issue the first notifications and information returns following government approval.

# 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

# 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.

# Amanda Stride

## Deputy Director of Local Authority Assessment Delivery



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

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