

# Learning, improvement and innovation

## Score 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

## The local authority commitment

We focus on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across our organisation and the local system. We encourage creative ways of delivering equality of experience, outcome and quality of life for people. We actively contribute to safe, effective practice and research.

## Key findings for this quality statement

Continuous learning, improvement and professional development

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There was an inclusive and positive culture of continuous learning and improvement across the local authority. Staff at all levels told us that they were supported to take part in learning and development opportunities. This included specific specialist training to enable staff to carry out their roles more effectively as well as professional qualifications. For example, the sensory team were trained to level 3 to carry out low vision assessments and a number of the team were trained to carry out level 5 assessments for deaf/blind people. There were a number of staff who had qualified as social workers having been supported by the local authority through the apprenticeship route. The local authority also has a researcher in residence who provides support to staff to combine research and study.

The Principal Social Worker was also the Director of Practice and Quality which enabled them to have oversight of the standard of the workforce as well as ensuring that learning from events was shared across the workforce. The inclusion of the Principal Social Worker in the leadership team ensured that the voice of social work was heard at that senior level. It also ensured that best practice and continuous improvement was embedded within the senior leadership team. Staff told us that learning from events such as Safeguarding Adults Reviews were regularly shared with them in a range of ways. They said that they had good opportunities for support through formal supervision as well as through peer group sessions which were often led by advanced practitioners and focused on discussion and learning through the review of real-life situations.

The staff told us that they were encouraged to work creatively, with partners where appropriate, to find solutions to improve people's outcomes where this may be proving a challenge. For example, we heard about an innovative solution for the support for someone from the Gypsy/Roma community which enabled them to maintain their cultural lifestyle as well as having specific social care needs met.

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The local authority engaged with others to develop innovative and creative solutions where an issue was identified. For example, the frailty risk assessment for people with a learning disability was developed with support from the local university and the Public Health team. This was in response to a strategic priority to reduce the health inequalities experienced by people with a learning disability.

The local authority was proactive in participating in peer review and sector-led improvement activity. The recommendations from the most recent LGA peer assurance review were seen to have been incorporated into relevant strategies and action plans, for example the review of the preventative offer. Another example was that the local authority had liaised with other local authorities whose national data about outcomes for carers was better than theirs with the purpose of learning and implementing that learning.

## Learning from feedback

The local authority were proactive in obtaining the views of people with lived experience as well as that of partners with whom they were working. There was clear evidence that people's views informed the development of strategy, improvement and decision making. For example, following feedback from carers, additional carers practitioners had been employed in frontline teams as well as a carers champion identified within each frontline staff team to ensure that there was a focus on carers. The sensory team had worked with partners to set up a sensory café where people could call in without appointments. This enabled action to be taken to address less complex requests for support in a much swifter, more effective way for the person themselves.

There were processes in place to ensure that learning happened when things went wrong and from examples of good practice. The principal Social Worker and the team working with them took the lead on disseminating information and learning. We could see that learning had been incorporated into the development of policies and strategies with swift action to improve processes where this could be done more quickly.

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The local authority took complaints seriously and looked for the learning opportunities within those. Data from the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman showed that 67% of complaints to them were upheld and that any recommendations for remedies were carried out in a timely way. The local authority data showed that there had been 101 complaints in the time period of April to September 2023 with 49% of these upheld or partially upheld. Analysis was carried out to identify the cause of the complaint and then learning shared either with the individual member of staff or with staff more widely, depending on the issue. In the same time period there had been 200 compliments and these were also shared with the individual and wider teams.

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