Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 2

2 - Evidence shows some shortfalls

The local authority commitment

We have clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. We act on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and we share this securely with others when appropriate.

Key findings for this quality statement

Governance, accountability and risk management

The local authority had experienced a recent change to the political leadership of the council, which has not impacted the delivery of services or strategic priorities for adult social care. Staff told us that there was a strong leadership team with an open, trustworthy culture.

The new section 75 around hospital discharge was a positive example of a robust governance structure which oversaw all activities provided by the NHS Trust on behalf of the local authority. This included Scrutiny Boards, contractual assessment meetings, key performance indicators (KPI), and daily discussions between departments.

Governance and management systems were in place, ensuring oversight and scrutiny from members. Senior staff spoke of their involvement in other Boards providing the opportunity for of shared learning and partnership work.

There was more work to be done on systems that ensured quality assurance of the delivery of the Care Act duties. Although there was an improvement board and a risk register in place which was reviewed quarterly, there were missed opportunities to ensure robust performance monitoring. An example of this was the escalation of safeguarding enquiries and the back logs of people waiting for reviews across the system. It was evident that use of qualitative and quantitative data in performance management required further development to objectively drive performance and allow for timely interventions. The local authority acknowledged that performance reporting was an area that required strengthening and required regularising. It was confirmed that a new performance management system was in progress.

There were pockets of work, which were designed to collate peoples' experiences, but evidence showed inconsistency in people's experience of adult social care. The local authority conducted quality assurance audits of people's care journey that included checks of staff' practice, such as checking how staff involved the person in care planning or whether the assessments people received were reflective of their strengths. This provided some oversight of people's experiences. However there were inconsistencies in people's experiences in areas such as waiting times for assessment and reviews and feedback about how staff had applied strengths-based approaches, indicating that further work was needed to use data effectively to drive improvements in people's experiences of adult social care.

There was a lack of clarity in the principal social worker's role specially around a functional plan of prioritisation.

Strategic planning

The local authority identified themselves that more work was required by them to ensure that information and data insight on risks and performance informed adult social care strategies and plans in a sustainable way. The local authority had begun work in this area with their data systems. However, in relation to strategies, there were a number of out-of-date strategies and a number of strategies which were under development yet to be signed off. Examples of strategies in the draft stage included the commissioning and housing strategy. The local authority was aware of where improvements were needed, and plans were underway to improve fundamental areas such as co- production and performance. These gaps had the potential risk of directly affecting the delivery of services and targets related to the outcomes for people.

It was acknowledged that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted the development and progress of strategies, however, it was unclear how all the strategies would be delivered across the organisation.

Information security

The local authority had clear policies and procedures in place in relation to the security of information. Shared electronic records were used between the Trust and primary care services to make people's journeys through services easier and prevent repetition for people requiring discharge.