

Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

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

In October 2021, Shropshire local authority merged the children, young people and adults directorate into a single People's Directorate. This was to streamline areas, align resources and improve outcomes for all age residents across Shropshire. The Directorate was led by the Executive Director for People, whose role included the Director for Adult Social Services (DASS) function.

There was a stable leadership team who were visible and promoted good communication in the directorate. A senior leader told us was an open invite to meet staff and have face to face direct conversations with them. They said this created an authentic communication route.

There were governance, management, and accountability arrangements at all levels within the local authority which provided visibility and assurance on the delivery of Care Act duties, quality and sustainability, and risks to delivery. A senior leader told us they, attended a range of meetings to provide them with oversight on service delivery. This included weekly directorate management meetings and specific focus sessions on areas such as performance and finance, meetings with the adult social care portfolio holder and meetings with the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

There were clear risk management and escalation arrangements, which included escalation internally and externally as required. Senior leaders told us the corporate risk register was reviewed at team manager, service manager level, and then was escalated to them for overall responsibility.

The local authority's political and executive leaders received good information from the local authority, and they were knowledgeable and well informed about performance and the potential risks facing adult social care. These were reflected in the corporate risk register and considered in decisions across the wider council. There was a good awareness and understanding of the joint strategic needs analysis and we were told how members had used data from it to support a campaign to reopen a community hospital.

Thematic audits were in place to monitor quality and review consistency of practice, for example in relation to care planning and mental capacity assessments. The Quality Improvement and Service Development Board selected case files for review against a prescribed set of quality indicators and resulting improvement actions and training needs were identified and reported to the senior management team for implementation.

Staff in one team told us they were was experiencing low morale due to difficulties providing a consistent and effective service and causing potential risks to people's well-being. Senior leaders were aware of this and following a review, they were making changes to some of the staffing structures to alleviate the difficulties. However, feedback from other teams was positive with staff saying they felt supported by managers.

Strategic planning

The local authority said the Shropshire Plan was the golden thread to delivering wellbeing, prevention, and early intervention as a strategic priorities for Shropshire. The Plan set a vision for people to live their best lives, with a strengths-based practice framework placing the individual at the centre of decisions.

There was a transformation programme for 2024/2025 underway to support the local authority to drive the strategic outcomes in the Shropshire Plan.

People and carers told us the local authority needed to improve its approach to co-production to ensure that local people and partners could fully contribute to developments. We were told that a co-production framework was being developed.

The local authority used a number of performance management measures and data to monitor and manage the use of resources, outcomes for people and to inform strategic planning decisions.

The local authority was working to identify opportunities to further improve the outcomes for people and staff, as well as looking at how to make greater use of technology and digital platforms, having an all-age commissioning approach and continuing to foster integration and partnership working.

A senior leader told us workforce was their biggest challenge but they were confident their vacancy rate was below national averages. There was a significant investment in recruitment and retention and a specific adult social care workforce strategy was being developed. The local authority advocated 'growing your own talent' and they had a graduate scheme to develop social workers. They were also looking at creating a key worker housing scheme for people who wanted to live and work in Shropshire. Additionally they had invested in increased fees rates for the care provider market to support their sustainability and ability to recruit to the sector.

Information security

The local authority had arrangements to maintain the security, availability, integrity and confidentiality of data, records and data management systems.

Staff followed GDPR processes and had to undertake mandatory training on this to use the computer system. Shropshire care providers had to follow the local authority's GDPR processes and were also given training on this.