

# Assessment of Performance Report 2009/10

## ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE 2009/10 : Central Bedfordshire Council



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The report will produce a summary of the performance of how the council promotes adult social care outcomes for people in the council area.

The overall grade for performance is combined from the grades given for the individual outcomes. There is a brief description below – see Grading for Adult Social Care Outcomes 2009/10 in the Performance Assessment Guide web address below, for more detail.

**Performing Poorly** - not delivering the minimum requirements for people.

**Performing Adequately** - only delivering the minimum requirements for people.

**Performing Well** - consistently delivering above the minimum requirements for people.

**Performing Excellently** - overall delivering well above the minimum requirements for people.

We also make a written assessment about

**Leadership and**

**Commissioning and use of resources**

Information on these additional areas can be found in the outcomes framework

To see the outcomes framework please go to our web site: [Outcomes framework](#)

You will also find an explanation of terms used in the report in the glossary on the web site.

## 2009/10 Council APA Performance

<b>Delivering outcomes assessment</b> Overall council is:	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Improved health and well-being	<b>Well</b>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Improved quality of life	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Making a positive contribution	<b>Well</b>
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Increased choice and control	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Outcome 5:</b> Freedom from discrimination and harassment	<b>Adequate</b>
<b>Outcome 6:</b> Economic well-being	<b>Well</b>
<b>Outcome 7:</b> Maintaining personal dignity and respect	<b>Adequate</b>

## Council overall summary of 2009/10 performance

In April 2009 when the new unitary council of Central Bedfordshire was formed, it was evident that it had inherited an under performing adult social care service. Strategic and operational structures were underdeveloped and lacked cohesion. Data and performance information was unreliable and inaccurate. There were clear indicators that the previous council had failed to maintain it's performing 'adequately' rating.

However, despite inheriting this challenging improvement agenda, the council has made good progress in all key priority areas and in doing so has sought to fully involve and engage with stakeholders, particularly people who use services, and their carers. It has revised the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis and has used this to ensure that improvement initiatives are appropriately focused. There is strong evidence to demonstrate that people are being helped to change their behaviour and that health outcomes are improving.

The transformation of adult social care has been a key priority and the council has developed the strategic and operational infrastructure to support this approach. There has been significant improvement in the uptake of direct payments and individual budgets and the council is on track to achieve 'Putting People First' milestones. It has enhanced its range and quality of public information and, based on feedback, it has introduced focused fact sheets to provide flexible and individualise information. The council has strengthened its engagement activities and has introduced a range of service specific 'Delivery Partnership Boards' and people who use services and their carers are core members of each board. There are many examples to demonstrate that this structure is integral to all service planning, development and monitoring processes. Governance, monitoring and reporting arrangements have been significantly improved with reporting mechanisms at every level of the organisation including directly to the Members Reference Group, the Chief Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened and the council has worked in partnership with the new mental health service provider to agree improvement objectives within these services. This remains an area where further focused work is required to fully embed strategic and operational developments into improved practice. There has been improvement in the quality of residential care and the council is working with providers and through strengthened contractual arrangements to further drive improvement in this area. Outcome based commissioning strategies and contractual processes have been developed and are being rolled out across all service groups. The council is working with providers to help shape the social care market and to embed personalisation and increased choice and control in all aspects of service delivery.

The council has shown good insight into its service development and improvement needs. It adopted a carefully considered 'Recovery Program' approach and has successfully achieved its improvement targets ahead of schedule and has now moved into

phase two recovery. It continues to have focused and appropriately targeted improvement plans in place. Central Bedfordshire Council has made good progress along its improvement journey; it has worked in a focused manner to achieve key improvement priorities and to develop the required foundations on which ongoing change can be built.

### **Leadership**

*"People from all communities are engaged in planning with councilors and senior managers. Councilors and senior managers have a clear vision for social care. They lead people in transforming services to achieve better outcomes for people. They agree priorities with their partners, secure resources, and develop the capabilities of people in the workforce".*

### **Conclusion of 2009/10 performance**

The council has consistently articulated a clear vision about the future of adult social care and about the quality and outcomes it expects people using these services to receive. It has recognised the need to drive significant improvement across the service and this has been a whole council priority area. The level of corporate and political support has been consistently evident and is reflected in business planning, budget setting and improved governance arrangements. The 'Recovery Program' approach has been built on a clear understanding of development needs and a drive to secure improvement in partnership arrangements, including those with people who use services and their carers. Improvement activity has been appropriately focused and progress carefully monitored. It has effectively utilised resources, budget and improvement monies and it has implemented a range of quality audit processes to monitor the quality of services. The Healthy Community Older People thematic partnership board is co-chaired by the council and the PCT and is supported by a Delivery Partnership Framework.

The council recognises the cultural changes required in practice and to support this it has improved staff supervision, training and competency development structures. Communication methods and feedback loops have been strengthened with the aim of ensuring staff are fully aware of expectations, progress and the way in which their personal contributions are making a difference. The Director of Adult Social Care and the senior management team have shown strong and focused leadership and this has helped secure improvement across all key priority areas. Partnership working has been strengthened and relationships are now

based on a shared commitment and vision for the future. Joint working opportunities are continually considered and the council recognises the efficiencies and the potential quality gains to be achieved. There is an active third sector across Central Bedfordshire and the council has commenced a review of its capacity and ability to support its ongoing transformation agenda.

Central Bedfordshire Council has made good progress in securing the required improvement across adult social care and the strong corporate support seen to date will continue to be a critical enabler.

### **Key strengths**

- A clear and consistently articulated vision about the transformation of Adult Social Care and about the outcomes to be secured for people using these services and their carers.
- Strong corporate and political support, with aligned business planning and budget setting arrangements in place.
- Focused leadership, determination and drive demonstrated by the Director of Adult Social Care and the senior management team.
- Significant improvement in partnership arrangements with health and in relationships with all key stakeholders, including providers of commissioned services.
- Achievement of all key priority targets and ongoing improvement planning is appropriately aligned to the services development needs

### **Areas for improvement**

- Continue to work with health partners to maximise efficiencies that are offered through joint working and increased partnership arrangements
- Further embed a performance management culture
- Develop and implement a joint workforce development and competency framework

## Commissioning and use of resources

*"People who use services and their carers are able to commission the support they need. Commissioners engage with people who use services, carers, partners and service providers, and shape the market to improve outcomes and good value".*

## Conclusion of 2009/10 performance

Central Bedfordshire Council has worked in partnership to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which identifies the specific needs of the people of Central Bedfordshire. The findings of the JSNA have been utilised to help shape commissioning strategies and market development activities. It has worked with providers to establish the use of a new regional outcome based contracting framework and these are being used for all new spot contracts and will be rolled out wider as block contracts are renewed. The council is determined to drive improvement in the quality of the residential and domiciliary care market. It has been clear with providers about the standards it expects to be achieved and has signalled that it will not commission from 'poor' services. It has strengthened its contract and compliance monitoring team and associated processes, achieving a greater focus on outcomes and safeguarding. Where issues or concerns are identified these are dealt with swiftly and the council has used information about quality standards to identify and target improvement areas. The council is working with providers to develop partnership improvement plans.

The council has demonstrated a clear commitment to developing services, based on 'Putting People First' transformation priorities and embedding the views and perspective of people who use services, their carers and other key stakeholders. It has reviewed and expanded its engagement and involvement activities and has introduced a delivery partnership framework. This framework, coupled with other engagement activities and focused forums, has had a significant impact on improving relationships. Key stakeholders have welcomed the council's open and transparent approach to service planning processes.

The council has worked in partnership to improve safeguarding arrangements and although there remains an ongoing improvement agenda in this area, strengthened leadership and improved partnership working has helped achieve a range of improvements. The re-commissioning of mental health services was a key priority for the council and tendering processes and proposals were widely consulted upon. People who use services, and their carers, were actively involved throughout the process. There is emerging evidence to demonstrate that the new Mental Health Trust has secured early improvements in these services, however, improved safeguarding practice remains a key priority area.

The council has worked consistently to fully understand its inherited budgetary commitments and has established a clear understanding of commissioning practices, contractual agreements and the associated costs and strategic relevance of directly provided and commissioned services. This will provide a solid basis to help inform budgetary decision making processes, including targeted efficiency savings. It is also being used to focus partnership discussions and market development activities to help secure the shift in provision toward prevention and personalisation.

### **Key strengths**

- Effective and targeted use of revised and Central Bedfordshire Council focused, Joint Strategic Needs Analysis
- Introduction of outcome based commissioning and strengthened contract monitoring processes.
- Significantly improved relationships with key partners, carers and providers of adult social care services.
- Significant progress in embedding a culture of service development based on views and perspectives of people using these services, their carers and other key stakeholders

### **Areas for improvement**

- Continue to work with and engage providers in market shaping activities and continue to expand the range of self directed support options
- Implement plans to shift the balance of residential care provision in relation to people with Learning Disabilities
- Implement plans to expand the range and availability of extra care housing support
- Continue to implement and monitor the achievement of 'Putting People First' milestones.



## Outcome 1: Improving health and emotional well-being

*“People in the council area have good physical and mental health. Healthier and safer lifestyles help them lower their risk of illness, accidents, and long-term conditions. Fewer people need care or treatment in hospitals and care homes. People who have long-term needs and their carers are supported to live as independently as they choose, and have well timed, well-coordinated treatment and support”.*

## Conclusion of 2009/10 performance

Central Bedfordshire Council has demonstrated a commitment to work with partners to promote healthier lifestyles and improve health outcomes for all people across the community. It has gained support from a range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations to drive investment in preventative services and has introduced a ‘Delivery Partnership’ infrastructure to oversee progress. People who use services and their carers are an integral aspect of each partnership and their involvement has been embedded in the development of services priorities and planning processes.

The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) has been used to identify key health improvement priorities and to help focus partnership working. The council and its partners have implemented a range of targeted health campaigns. There is evidence that these initiatives are having a positive impact on helping people to change their behaviour and to improve health outcomes. Targets set to help people lose weight and stop smoking have been exceeded. More people are physically active and healthy eating projects within local schools are having a positive impact on whole families. The wide availability of free health checks from GP surgeries has increased access to health services by people with learning disabilities and other hard to reach communities. This has helped put people with previously undiagnosed health concerns in touch with a range of specialist health care professionals and has improved health action planning processes. A local area target to help improve primary health care prevention has been exceeded in relation to both the availability of specialist stroke care and the reduction of obesity.

The council has strengthened and enhanced the range of public information available and information is now available in a number of languages, formats and media and helps signpost people to a range of partner agencies for support and focused advice. There has been an increase in the number of people who have received support from third sector and voluntary organisations, including Age Concern, Sight Concern and Village Care Schemes. Creative partnership working with the fire

department and police has resulted in health screening, advice and information being available via the fire services educational bus and through the 'bobby van'. Together these initiatives have helped more people access social care services and have also enabled previously unknown carers to be identified and supported through a wide range of carer services.

### **Key strengths**

- Utilisation of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis to focus partnership working and to support the development of a cohesive planning infrastructure.
- Strengthened relationships with health partners and third sector organisations with a shared vision and commitment to drive improvement in health and well-being outcomes.
- Introduction of range of Delivery Partnerships with embedded governance and monitoring arrangements through to the Healthy Communities Older People Board. Membership consistently includes people who use services and their carers along with senior health and third sector partners.
- Effective health improvement campaigns with evidence of positive changes in behaviours and health outcomes, including successful stop smoking, weight management activities and widely available free health checks from local GPs.
- Strengthened re-enablement and non residential intermediate care services. This has decreased the number of admissions to hospital, has helped minimise delayed discharge and enabled more people to retain independence within their own homes.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Continue to work in partnership to promote healthier and safer lifestyles and to implement and monitor the completion of the council's key priorities in this area.
- Continue to evaluate and evidence the impact of health and well-being strategies on reducing health inequalities and lowering the risk of illness, accidents and long term conditions.
- In conjunction with NHS partners continue to streamline care pathways and strengthen intermediate care services.
- Continue to drive improvements in health care standards and outcomes for people using regulated care services.

## Outcome 2: Improved quality of life

*“People who use services and their carers enjoy the best possible quality of life. Support is given at an early stage, and helps people to stay independent. Families are supported so that children do not have to take on inappropriate caring roles. Carers are able to balance caring with a life of their own. People feel safe when they are supported at home, in care homes, and in the neighborhood. They are able to have a social life and to use leisure, learning and other local services.”*

## Conclusion of 2009/10 performance

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to improving the quality of life of people who use services and their carers. It has implemented a stretching change and improvement programme across all aspects of service provision, including carer services. The newly introduced Carers Delivery Partnership has co-produced the Carers Strategic Framework, identifying and setting key development areas and priorities. The council has introduced a carers’ newsletter and held focused carer events to help increase awareness about available support options. Direct payments and carer vouchers are available to carers and have helped increase flexible support options. The carers’ emergency card has been re-launched and has been positively received with carers reporting increased peace of mind.

The council and its partners make a wide range of information and advice available and have recognised the need to achieve a more co-ordinated and cohesive approach. It has introduced focused facts sheets to help ensure people are signposted to services and information which meet their personal needs. Signposting activity to third sector organisations has been improved and more people have accessed these services. The council and its partners are working with the sector to help them shape the services in order to better support the transformation of adult social care.

The council has helped more people to remain independent at home, it has improved access to equipment and aids to support daily living and has increased the use of telecare and Careline community alarms. Waiting times for occupational therapy assessments have been significantly improved and the council has plans to continue to reduce the numbers of people waiting for a major adaptation and to further expand telecare options. It has worked creatively in a range of partnership to help people feel

safe whilst living at home. This includes co-ordinated working with the police and its 'Bobby Van', the fire service and village care schemes. This has helped improve access to vulnerable households and enabled focused support to be offered in relation to home safety and security advice and support. The council has also worked successfully with people who have a learning disability to become more aware of, and minimise, risk factors whilst in the community. The council now plans to roll the programme out across other service areas.

### Key strengths

- Introduction of Carers Delivery Partnership with direct involvement in developing and agreeing the focus and direction of the 'Carers Strategic Framework'.
- Increased range of flexible support options for carers with innovative use of direct payments, carers voucher scheme and the re-launch of the carers' emergency card.
- Strengthened integrated community equipment service with significant improvement in delivery and turnaround time frames and high levels of satisfaction reported by people using the service.
- Creative partnership working to help people feel safe and confident in the community and at home, including use of 'Bobby Van' and security advice and support.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Implement and monitor the completion of the council's improvement priorities in relation to the quality of life of people using adult social care services and the wider community.
- Embed the revised falls prevention strategy into practice, whilst developing a systematic approach to evaluating and evidencing its impact on improving outcomes for people across Central Bedfordshire.
- Evidence the impact of early intervention and prevention services on reducing the need for higher level support and on the cost of care packages.
- Develop a strategic framework to evidence the outcomes for people in receipt of non care managed services and to evaluate the impact these are having on improved quality of life for people using these services and their carers.
- In conjunction with NHS partners continue to drive improvements in the quality of care and support offered and outcomes achieved for people using regulated care services across the Council.

### **Outcome 3: Making a positive contribution**

“People who use services and carers are supported to take part in community life. They contribute their views on services and this helps to shape improvements. Voluntary organisations are thriving and accessible. Organisations for people who use services and carers are well supported”.

### **Conclusion of 2009/10 performance**

Central Bedfordshire Council has embedded a culture of service development based on the views and perspective of people using the services, their carers and other key stakeholders. It has introduced a 'Delivery Partnership' framework across all service areas, each with an associated improvement plan in place and core membership includes service users, their carers, third sector

and statutory organisations. Each delivery partnership has determined the service area's key priorities and outcome based service delivery plans. There is strong evidence that all services' delivery plans are based on and influenced by the 'people's voice'. This was particularly evident in relation to the re-commissioning of mental health services, where service users and carers were actively involved in tendering and contract development processes. The key priorities for Older Peoples services, including the enhanced use of the 'Bobby Van', the revised falls strategy and the development of the dementia care strategy were all directly linked to feedback from the older people's reference group. The Learning Disability Partnership is co-chaired by a person with learning disabilities and has helped identified key priorities, including the introduction of free health checks, expanding employment, reviewing day opportunities and improving housing options. There is an active third sector and the council has established a third sector assembly with a specific work strand aimed at creating a wide range of volunteering opportunities for people with disabilities. The Community Voluntary Services supports local groups and helps match and support people to take up volunteering opportunities. There is an extensive and highly successful 'Village Care' scheme in operation, it is run by volunteers and provides a significant level of support, help and advice across the community. The council has exceeded local targets regarding the development of volunteering opportunities. There is an active 'Bedfordshire LINK' in place and its members are involved in a wide range of activities and consultation processes, including the Healthy Bedfordshire consultation, the Big Care debate and visits to local services. It is evident that feedback provided has helped shape service developments including the refurbishment of hospital wards, work with the ambulance service in relation to people who are blind and the development of a dermatology model of care. Advocacy services have been reviewed and strengthened to ensure that people are supported to make a meaningful contribution both in relation to their personal support needs and in relation to the wider developments across adult social care. Advocacy Alliance, a key source of advocacy across Central Bedfordshire, has been awarded the 'Quality Performance Award' with the assessors commenting that the organisation had 'a strong policy and procedural framework designed specifically to support and safeguard independent advocacy provision. Service users interviewed clearly appreciated and trusted their advocates'. The council holds regular fora with the voluntary sector and with providers of adult social care. This has helped improve relationship and ownership of the markets development needs, whilst helping clarify the models of care and support required to fully transform services.

### Key strengths

- Significant progress in establishing a culture which ensures that services are developed in a manner that fully integrates the 'voice of people' in all review, design, planning and monitoring processes.
- Introduction of a 'Delivery Partnership' framework across all service areas, with core membership of people who use services, their carers and all relevant stakeholders. Learning Disability Partnership co-chaired by an individual with learning disabilities.
- Improved relationships with voluntary sector organisations and with providers of regulated care services.
- Recruitment of carers as 'experts by experience' to work across the Health and Social Care system to help determine future development needs. Positive feedback from carers involved in this initiative.
- Strong support to expanding volunteering opportunities across the community and within the council itself. Progress has exceeded LAA targets in this area.
- Bedfordshire LINK, well supported locally and actively involved in a range of strategic and operational developments. Strong evidence that the LINK has influenced and shaped service developments and improved outcomes for people.
- Advocacy Alliance awarded the 'Quality Performance Award'

### Areas for improvement

- Implement and monitor the completion of the council's improvement priorities in relation to supporting people across the community to contribute to the development of adult social care services.
- Continue to strengthen and embed the 'Delivery Partnership' framework and continue to systematically evidence the impact these partnerships have on driving further improvement across adult social care.
- Continue to support and strengthen the voluntary sector and the uptake of volunteering opportunities, including within the council itself.

#### **Outcome 4: Increased choice and control**

“People who use services and their carers are supported in exercising control of personal support. People can choose from a wide range of local support”.

#### **Conclusion of 2009/10 performance**

From a low starting point the council is making steady progress in transforming services and is on track to achieve the ‘Putting People First’ milestones. It has established a ‘Transforming Peoples Lives Programme Board’ to drive required improvement and to establish clear links to each Delivery Partnership. There are a number of associated work streams and projects underway each with specific aims and action plans in place. Staff have received focused training to help make the cultural shift in practice and to ensure they understand and consistently promote the benefits of personalisation and self directed support. Assessment processes have been strengthened and timeframes for the completion of assessments have been improved. Person centred planning is embedded and all service users are now offered the opportunity to take up a self directed care or support. These activities, coupled with focused governance arrangements, have helped improve the uptake of self directed support, with significant growth seen in the use of direct payments by people with a physical disability or sensory impairment. Although the council is on track to achieve its LAA 30% target by March 2011, focused work is required to increase the use of direct payments and individual budgets by people with a learning disability and those with a mental health need.

Advocacy services have been strengthened and people have been supported to participate more fully in their support planning and within the councils planning and review processes. The Right Track and iCAN service user groups have helped deliver training and advice to people who use services, their carers, council staff and other stakeholders about personalisation and self directed support options.

The council has carried out a consultation exercise to identify how to improve its established complaints and compliments procedures. It has sought to strengthen these processes by providing additional training to all managers and rolling out mandatory training to all staff on the new procedures. Lessons learnt from complaints have been used to further improve practice and service quality, including the introduction of a check list to help prepare for annual reviews, the introduction of new quality



standards for telephone response times and a revised process related to the issuing of the carers voucher scheme

### **Key strengths**

- Establishment of a dedicated multi-agency 'Transforming Peoples Lives Programme Board' with a number of associated work streams in place and embedded membership from people who use services and their carers.
- Strengthened governance arrangements and reporting mechanisms, with good progress in developing the required infrastructure to support personalisation.
- Direct payments available to all people using adult social care and increased use of personal budgets.
- Revised and strengthened advocacy services, widely available to people who use services and their carers.
- Good evidence to confirm that lessons learnt from complaints and compliments are used to drive improvements in service delivery and in outcomes for people.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Implement and monitor the effectiveness of the council's plans and priorities to ensure that people are offered increased choice and control over the services and support they receive.
- Continue to implement 'Putting People First' priorities and ensure that people benefit from a wide range of self directed support.
- Further increase the uptake of direct payments and personal budgets across all service groups and monitor progress against the associated LAA targets.
- Continue to progress the shift in service provision towards prevention and enabling services.
- Implement the revised 'Advice and Information Strategy' and evaluate its impact on helping people access social care and associated support services.
- Increase the number of reviews carried out to ensure care and support packages are appropriately focused and provide good value for money.

## **Outcome 5: Freedom from discrimination and harassment**

“People who use services and their carers have fair access to services. Their entitlements to health and care services are upheld. They are free from discrimination or harassment in their living environments and neighborhoods”.

### **Conclusion of 2009/10 performance**

Central Bedfordshire Council has clear and transparent eligibility criteria in place and has undergone an extensive consultation process to review the threshold. People not eligible for a funded service are offered a range of advice, information and are signposted to relevant other community organisations. They are also offered assessments and annual reviews to ensure that their needs are understood and to help ensure that they continue to access appropriate services.

The council has demonstrated a clear commitment to ensuring that services meet the diverse needs of the local community. It has used the findings of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis to help identify key development areas and to creatively commission culturally sensitive services to meet specific needs, including respite care with Italian speaking customers, residential care for a Jewish customer and has utilised a direct payment to enable an individual to attend day centres services and access the Sikh community. It has recently introduced a gypsy and traveller floating support service. Advocacy services have been reviewed and strengthened, people from all cultures and service groups are supported to have a voice and to participate fully in their personal support planning and in the council’s service planning processes. Advocacy Alliance, a key provider of advocacy services in Central Bedfordshire, has been awarded the ‘Quality Performance’ award and is a highly regarded and respected service locally.

The council has an Equality and Diversity Scheme in place and has completed equality impact assessments in relation to some key strategies and initiatives, including the revised eligibility criteria and charging policy. However, it needs to further strengthen practice in this area and embed equality impact assessments across all its strategies and policies, whilst developing associated monitoring and governance arrangements.

The council is working closely with NHS Bedfordshire to ensure that the level of continuing care support is sufficient to meet the needs of people across Central Bedfordshire. Joint continuing care protocols and dispute procedures have recently been developed and will be utilised to ensure that people are not disadvantaged by delayed funding agreements.

### Key strengths

- Clear and transparent eligibility criteria in place and used to make consistent decisions.
- People who fund their own care are offered a range of advice, information and support including access to assessment and review processes.
- Strengthened advocacy arrangements in place and Advocacy Alliance has been awarded the 'Quality Performance Award'.

### Areas for improvement

- Implement and monitor the effectiveness of the council's plans and priorities to improve freedom from discrimination and harassment for people who use social care and the wider community.
- Continue to process the council's programme of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that all major strategic and operational planning processes are equitable and embed fair outcomes and practices.
- In partnership with NHS Bedfordshire continue to strengthen joint working practices and protocols to ensure that people who meet the criteria for continuing healthcare are enabled to swiftly access these services.
- Continue to progress the implement of the Local Government Equality Scheme and address the development areas identified by the Bedford Race Equality Council.

### Outcome 6: Economic well-being

*"People who use services and their carers have income to meet living and support costs. They are supported in finding or maintaining employment".*

### Conclusion of 2009/10 performance

Central Bedfordshire Council has continued to help people who use services and their carers to maximise income and to support them into employment. It has strengthened partnership working and supports a number of local initiatives aimed at improving access to training, support, advice and information. The customer financial service has improved its approach to ensure it assists more people to maximise benefit uptake. Community financial advisors visit people in their own home to help clarify processes and to offer focused advice and support. The Welfare Rights Service offers a wide range of general and specialist advice regarding support costs, charges, welfare rights and benefit entitlements and it has dedicated one advisor to work specifically with people over the age of 60. The MacMillian Welfare Benefit Service has continued to provide specific advice and support to people with cancer and terminal illness. The 'Rave Bus' visits a number of towns and communities; it provides a range of information and advice including benefit entitlements. Together these initiatives have significantly increased the level of benefit uptake and the council has a number of case studies evidencing the positive impact this has had on people's lives. It has also focused on helping people manage their money better and has created a 'Mortgage Arrears and Prevention' post, which has successfully worked with a number of people to prevent them from becoming homeless.

There are a range of mechanisms to support people who use services, and their carers, into employment. The council's 'Supported Employment Services' offers a number of mechanisms to help people into employment. These include a pre-employment preparation programme at a day centre for people with Learning Disabilities and partnership working with other local trainers to help people achieve NVQ qualifications. Bedfordshire Community Health operates a 'Healthy Steps to Employment' strategy and, through close working with the NHS and third sector organisations, it has helped 142 people who were on benefits with health related issues to get a job and 17 others to return to their jobs. There has been a strengthening of arrangements and partnership working in relation to helping carers maintain or return to employment. Carers' assessments consistently consider employment options and prospects and, in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, carers are offered specific advice, support and training to help build confidence and employment skills. Carers in Bedfordshire provide vocational work and training support for young carers and employ a support worker to work with carers who are working in the NHS. The council is building relationships with local businesses and, through the 'Work Step' initiative, has significantly increased supported employment opportunities for people with a disability. It has also supported the Disability Resource Centre, to develop a social enterprise hub, which is supporting people with disabilities to establish their own businesses. This has helped a disabled woman to start her own business and has enabled two local charities to expand their services.

### Key strengths

- Strong partnership working in helping people to maximise their economic potential and significant growth in the level of increased benefits and entitlements secured by the people of Central Bedfordshire.
- Embedded partnership working with Jobcentre Plus and the enhanced focus on carers' specific training, skills development and support needs in order to help them maintain or return to employment.
- Strengthening of advocacy and brokerage support mechanisms to help people make informed choices about care and support options and to confidently manage direct payments and personal budgets.
- Strong commitment and support to the successful development of a local social enterprise hub and the positive impact this has had on increasing business opportunities for people with a disability.
- Development of good working relationships with local businesses and the success of the 'Work Step' initiative in increasing the number of people with a disability helped into supported employment with local businesses.

### Areas for improvement

- Implement and monitor the effectiveness of the council's plans and priorities to improve the economic well-being for people who use social care and the wider community.
- Completed the revision of the council's charging policy and ensure increased transparency and clarity around the costs of care and the requirements of personal care at home.

### Outcome 7: Maintaining personal dignity and respect

*"People who use services and their carers are safeguarded from all forms of abuse. Personal care maintains their human rights, preserving dignity and respect, helps them to be comfortable in their environment, and supports family and social life".*

## Conclusion of 2009/10 performance

Central Bedfordshire Council has given the improvement of safeguarding arrangements a key priority. It has worked in partnership on the creation of a new Adult Safeguarding Board for the Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough localities and has secured senior membership from all key partner agencies. The council has implemented strengthened governance arrangements, with extensive reporting and monitoring through to the members' reference group, the Chief Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Focused action plans and a range of sub groups have helped focus improvement activity and ensured that all layers within the council understand their contribution to the overall objective. Awareness raising sessions and training have been provided to members and the portfolio holder to adult social care, leading to nominated members taking on the role of safeguarding champions. A review of the multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures have been conducted and the council is determined to ensure that these are based on known best practice. There has been a clear strengthening of partnership working and a cohesive approach to securing improved outcomes for the people of Central Bedfordshire.

A range of awareness strategies have been implemented including the refresh of safeguarding leaflets, information and signposting activity. People who use service and their carers have been closely involved in development activities and are now core members of the safeguarding board and its working sub groups. The council has built capacity within its safeguarding team, which now functions as a single point of contact for safeguarding alerts and referrals. There has been a recent increase in the number of safeguarding alerts and the success of awareness raising activity in health setting is also evident in the increased number of referrals from these services.

The council has made some progress in ensuring that its own staff and staff in the independent sector receive relevant training in safeguarding. However, activity in this area should be further improved to bring this in line with similar councils. Audits of safeguarding practice have highlighted that the council has faced some specific challenges in ensuring that the improved strategic and operation framework is translated into improved practice in relation to safeguarding and case recording. It has, however, responded swiftly where practice development needs have been highlighted.

There is a clear commitment to improve partnership working with the new provider of Mental Health Services and to secure better outcomes for people using these services. Reporting and monitoring processes have been clarified and tightened; there is evidence of focused action to improve safeguarding arrangements and to respond robustly where practice changes are required. The council is developing a culture of managerial supervision and performance management which will help secure further improvement in this important area of practice.

### **Key strengths**

- Clear corporate support and determination to make the required improvements in relation to the councils safeguarding practice, with strong and focused leadership by the Director of Adult Service.
- Significant strengthening of strategic leadership and ownership of the safeguarding improvement agenda across all relevant partner agencies.
- Improved awareness raising strategies across the community and within health and social care service provision and streamlined access routes to safeguarding team.
- Robust governance and monitoring arrangements related to safeguarding activity with significant improvement in relation to the timeframes for safeguarding initial response and investigation conclusion.
- Swift action taken to respond to the results of quality audits and to areas where practice changes are required, seen both within the councils own care management teams and within partner agencies.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Implement and monitor the effectiveness of the council's plans and priorities to improve its existing safeguarding arrangements to ensure that they protect the needs and interest of vulnerable adults and their carers.
  - Continue to strengthen the inter-agency partnership working and strategic leadership of safeguarding processes and practices.
  - Systematically assess the quality of safeguarding practices and implement focused action plans where required in relation to driving further improvement in health and social care services.
  - Increase the numbers of staff across health and social care agencies and organisation who receive relevant training in the protection of vulnerable adults and ensure that they fully understand alert and referral processes.
  - Continue to monitor the outcomes of safeguarding investigations to ensure that each case has been appropriately investigated, positive outcomes achieved and that practice development activities reflect lessons learnt from these investigations.
  - In partnership with the Mental Health Trust continue to drive improved safeguarding practice across all aspects of service delivery.
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