

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Care Quality Commission Assessment of Camden Adult Social Care	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Executive Director, Adults & Health	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>  <p>In 2024 Camden's Adult Social Care (ASC) services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and received the first Outstanding rating in the country under the new CQC Assurance framework, with an overall score of 89%. This recognition highlights Camden's strengths in equity, partnership working, safe systems, governance, and innovation.</p> <p>Whilst Adult Social Care has taken great pride in the inspection results, the process also highlighted areas where there was a need to improve. Camden remains focused on continuous improvement, including strengthening resident and carer voices and enhancing support for people experiencing multiple disadvantages.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b></p> <p>Colin Gajewski          Senior Policy &amp; Projects Officer          London Borough of Camden          5 Pancras Square N1C 4AG  <a href="mailto:colin.gajewski@camden.gov.uk">colin.gajewski@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  That the Committee note the report.	



Signed:

Jess McGregor, Executive Director, Adults and Health

Date: 24 June 2025

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. In 2024 Camden's Adult Social Care (ASC) services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in relation to the delivery of Care Act duties. Camden received the first Outstanding rating in the country under the new CQC Assurance framework, with an overall score of 89%.
- 1.2. During the 8-month inspection process the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) was regularly updated on the progress of the inspection through Cabinet Member updates. This report provides an overview of the inspection outcome.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1. The CQC process provided Camden with an opportunity to reflect on the role of social care in people's lives, its importance, and the approach that ASC have been taking to build a social care system that works well for everyone who needs it.
- 2.2. Sometimes we need extra support to live well in the place we call home, with the people and things that we love, and doing the things that matter to us. When it works well, social care can be the glue that helps us assemble our lives and holds our communities together. Whether we need to draw on care services or need help pursuing our dreams, at its best social care can connect us to the support that we need enabling us to live the lives that we want.
- 2.3. Looking at social care nationally we know that there are severe challenges. Insufficient funding means that too many people are going without care, without enough care, or without the right care. Camden is not immune from these challenges, but ASC have been working hard since the implementation of the Care Act in 2014 to build a social care system that works as well as possible for our residents despite this.
- 2.4. In Camden we are constructing an Adult Social Care system that is built on love, that prioritises prevention and early intervention, focuses on what matters to people rather than what is the matter with them and works holistically across the council, our partners and communities to build the right solutions for everyone who needs our support.
- 2.5. ASC are proud of our CQC outcome. It confirms that our approach has been the right one. It shows that the prevailing story about adult social care being

broken is too simplistic and it motivates us to continue to improve so that we can ensure that every Camden resident can rely on being able to draw on outstanding care when they need it.

### **3. Inspection overview**

- 3.1. On 24 June 2024, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) announced its inspection of Adult Social Care in Camden. The process involved the submission of a comprehensive self-assessment and evidence suite, followed by an on-site visit to interview key staff, partners, stakeholders and residents. This was structured around four key themes: Working with People, Providing Support, Ensuring Safety, and Leadership.
- 3.2. The self-assessment produced by Camden provided a comprehensive account of local context, strengths and achievements, and areas of focus. This was informed by in-depth engagement with staff, residents, and partners. The full evidence suite submitted to CQC contained 175 documents covering all areas of Adult Social Care strategy and practice, responding to 38 CQC evidence sub-categories.
- 3.3. In November 2024, CQC conducted an on-site visit, interviewed key people and reviewed casework documentation. Over 100 Council colleagues, partners and stakeholders were involved in this, through a combination of one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Elected member interviews included Councillor Lorraine Revah in her capacity as Chair of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny (HASC), Councillor Judy Dixie in her capacity as an opposition Member of HASC, and Councillor Anna Wright in her capacity as Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **4. Outcome and post-assessment work**

- 4.1. Camden is the first and so far only Local Authority to receive an 'Outstanding' rating under the new CQC Assurance framework. The report, published on 28 February 2025, scored Adult Social Care services at 89% overall, with 88% being the threshold for achieving the Outstanding rating. At the point of writing this report 40 local authorities have had ratings published so far. Of these, 23 (58%) were rated Good, which means an overall score between 63-87%. 16 Local Authorities (40%) were rated Requires Improvement, which means an overall score of 39-62%.
- 4.2. The overall score is determined by how the Local Authority scores against a subset of nine 'quality statements'. On these, Camden received an Outstanding-equivalent score in the following areas:
  - Equity in experience and outcomes
  - Partnerships and communities
  - Safe pathways, systems and transitions
  - Governance, management and sustainability
  - Learning, improvement and innovation

- 4.3. The Outstanding judgment is not an indication that ASC have achieved everything needed in Camden. There are areas to be proud of and areas where there is more to do. Since the inspection ASC have been reviewing an improvement programme to ensure a continuing focus on those areas of work where there is more to do.
- 4.4. Over the next year ASC will be focusing on:
- Creating more opportunities to hear directly from people who draw on care and their carers about what is important to them so that this can shape our improvement work
  - Continuing to deepen the work already started:
    - Improving our offer to carers
    - Improving our support to people who are homeless or experiencing multiple disadvantage
    - Improving our mental health social work arrangements
    - Focusing on equity so that everyone drawing on and working in care can flourish
    - Embedding quality assurance to ensure that reflection and learning underpin the work of everyone in Adult Social Care
    - Building an integrated neighbourhood approach to the delivery of health and care services
    - Designing a new approach to early help for adults
  - Simplifying and streamlining our administrative processes so that our teams can spend more time building relationships with residents
- 4.5. The work ASC are doing now responds to the strengths and areas of focus highlighted by the CQC in their full assessment report. These correlate strongly with those identified in our self-assessment.

## 5. Areas of strength

- 5.1. Camden's commitment to **equity** was commended by CQC, as reflected throughout Adult Social Care and in Camden's wider cross-organisational anti-racism work. CQC recognised that Camden places equity at the forefront of its vision, strategy and workplace culture, and that this was a visible golden thread through all teams and partners that directly informed how people experienced services. A number of strands and pieces of work were highlighted, such as the compassionate approach demonstrated by the use of an Artist in Residence to document and celebrate people's lives. The use of Family Group Conferences was described as innovative and effective in respect of how it has been used to support people experiencing homelessness. The Race Equality Action Plan, Carers Action Plan, and LGBTQ+ learning framework for people in later life were all highlighted as enabling meaningfully inclusive work.
- 5.2. Strong **collaborative and partnership working** was recognised, particularly with housing and children's services. CQC saw effective communication between teams, including partnership multidisciplinary teams, and that this was particularly evident for young people with additional needs served by the integrated (0-25 year old) transition pathway encompassing Camden Young

People's Disability Service (CYPDS) and the Camden Learning Disability Service for adults (CLDS). It was stated that Camden's approach to partnership working allowed the Council to meet the very high demand for people with mental health difficulties, loneliness, homelessness, refugee and asylum seekers, as well as to effectively respond to the broad cultural diversity of the borough. Joint work between adult social care, housing and the voluntary and community sector to face the challenge of housing in Camden was commended, with particular reference to support for refugees.

- 5.3. CQC also commended the efficacy of **distributed leadership** across services, with partners and across the council. Focus groups with staff allowed inspectors to see how Camden's dedicated staff show consistent leadership in their work. CQC commented on having seen many examples of staff and partners living and breathing a relational power-sharing approach with each other, with partners and with people, and how this led to excellent service delivery.

## 6. Examples of areas where there is more to do

- 6.1. On **managing demand**, CQC recognised that at the time of their visit there were no waits for hospital discharge, care placements, social care assessments, safeguarding assessments, or standard deprivation of liberty safeguard (DoLS) cases. However, ASC recognise there is more to do to ensure everyone receives support at the right time. HASC has familiarity with our ongoing work to improve waiting times for assessment and support, having received periodical reports on the matter. Work continues to review processes to ensure ASC have the right capacity to meet demand and alleviate delays, including investing additional funding into neighbourhood teams.
- 6.2. Camden is focused on strengthening its offer for people experiencing **multiple disadvantage**. Those experiencing multiple disadvantage face significant health inequalities, and ASC continue to see a high prevalence of serious mental illness, drug and alcohol issues, and people with co-occurring needs. To tackle this challenge the Council is leading a combined effort with partners to deliver enhanced support for those who experience the greatest disadvantage, including co-producing new and specialist capacity within services, including Adult Social Care. Work is underway to strengthen integrated approaches with Substance Misuse services, Housing, and our supported accommodation pathways.
- 6.3. CQC noted that while there were some gaps in **support for carers** and mixed feedback from carers regarding the assessment process and the support received, carers were also very complimentary of the wide range of commissioned support from Camden Carers. Significant resource is being invested to ensure that carers have access to this support. Camden's new co-produced Carers Action Plan and the introduction of a Carers Partnership Board in Autumn 2024 are key to Camden's efforts to enhance support for the carers who themselves provide such crucial support to people in Camden.

## 7. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

- 7.1. The Executive Director of Corporate Services has been consulted on the contents of the report and has no comments to add to the report

## **8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 8.1. The Borough Solicitor has been consulted on the contents of the report and has no comments to add to the report

## **9. Environmental Implications**

- 10. No environmental implications have been identified in relation to this report.

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix A – ASC CQC Inspection report

**REPORT ENDS**