

**ADULTS SCRUTINY MEETING
25 OCTOBER 2022**

QUALITY STANDARDS MONITORING OUTCOMES 2022-2023

**AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE
WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS 2013-2023**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of the quality standards assessment for 2022-2023. The level of compliance against the quality standards will determine the fee levels for the current year.

Summary

2. The results of the quality standards for 2022 – 2023 demonstrates a reduction in the number of homes who have achieved an A Grade, with 13/19, (68%) achieving an A Grade compared to 15/19, (79%) in 2021. 4/19 have achieved a B Grade and 2/19 have achieved a C Grade.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the information in this report is reviewed and noted.

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Assistant Director of Commissioning, Performance and Transformation

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific crime and disorder implications in this report
Health and Wellbeing	Adult Social Care is central to Health and Well being
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific carbon impact issues in this report
Diversity	This contract impacts on a whole range of people who receive residential care
Wards Affected	All wards are affected
Groups Affected	People who are in receipt of Adult Social Care
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This report does not require a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This report does not require an Urgent Decision
Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan by the involvement of members in the scrutiny of services that are available for all eligible residents within Darlington.
Efficiency	The contract provides value for money
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Background

4. The current Agreement for the Provision of Residential Care for Adults and Older People with a Mental Health Problem (OPMH) commenced 1 April 2013 and is in place until 31 March 2023 as the Council has extended the Agreement for a further 2 years. This has been agreed with all of the Providers.
5. **Appendix 1** provides an overview of the Quality Standards Process.

Current Market Position

6. As reported last year the Covid-19 pandemic, has had a significant impact on the care home sector. In 2021 we conducted this exercise using a self-assessment process agreed with Providers. It was hoped that for this year's assessment we could carry these out at the care homes, however with the emergence of different variants of the Covid virus, this has resulted in ongoing Covid outbreaks in our care homes making visits extremely difficult to be completed within a set period of time.
7. The Council have continued to be in regular communication with Providers who were kept informed of the situation in relation to contract monitoring. In April 2022 Providers were informed that the visits for 2022-2023 would be undertaken using the same format as last year, with clarification 'Teams' meetings or visits booked in as required.
8. There are currently 19 care homes signed up to the Agreement. The occupancy levels across all 19 homes are currently at 82%. Whilst we previously reported the impact of

Covid-19 on care homes remains significant the average occupancy over the last 16 months has been 81.2% with slight fluctuations for short periods of time, following the increase from the lowest level of occupancy experienced at the end of 2020 which was 74%.

9. Since the pandemic the Commissioning and Contracts Team have continued to provide information and support to the care home sector, which included the distribution of various grant monies that had been made available to Local Authorities from Central Government. In 2021. There were also opportunities to receive financial support for those homes who suffered a significant decrease in occupancy levels as a result of Covid-19.
10. Outbreaks have continued across all Older Persons care homes however the impact on the residents has been significantly less than at the onset of the pandemic in 2020. This is due to the combined efforts of the vaccination programme and infection control.
11. The current availability of beds within Darlington across Residential Care and Nursing Care is 891. As previously reported there continues to be a shortfall of available nursing beds, and more specifically within nursing OPMH, as Providers continue to struggle in the recruitment of nursing staff.
12. There are ongoing challenges within the care sector to recruit good quality staff who will stay, and we are starting to see the impact of the increases in the cost of living, utilities and fuel costs.
13. In 2021 there was an increase in the number of homes achieving an A Grade with 15/19 homes achieving an A Grade, compared to 14/19 the previous year (2019).
14. Each home is required to provide information to the contracts section in order for the self-assessment document to be populated with key areas of information prior to the self-assessment being carried out by the care home Manager and Regional Manager. Once this was completed the individual care homes self-assessment document was sent to the care homes via Egress system, and a 3 week period allocated to complete the process. Once submitted the contracts officers undertook the evaluation, followed by a 'Teams' meeting or clarification visit with both the Manager and Regional Manager to provide feedback and to clarify any queries they may have from the self-assessment information submitted. Each Manager and Regional Manager were required to sign a declaration confirming information submitted was correct and were required to be present at the feedback session, in order to ensure continuity in each home's assessment process.
15. Following the assessment and sign off process carried out by the Council each home is provided with an outcome report and will be asked for an action plan that details how they will meet the standards in the future.
16. Monitoring of care homes will continue, virtually or in person where it is both deemed safe and appropriate to do so. This will also include monitoring through our safeguarding processes, and should any information come to light that contradicts the information submitted by the care homes, contractual compliance concerns will be raised with the Provider.

17. In addition, there continues to be a programme of support by Contracts Officers offered to any new care home manager/regional manager for one to one sessions regarding how the quality standards process works, and to ensure their full understanding of the standards and how they could be met. Managers are also encouraged to contact the team should they have any queries. The homes are however ultimately responsible for ensuring they meet the quality standards, and full compliance maximises their income stream from the Local Authority.

Quality Standards Results 2020/22

18. Individual Quality Standard (QS) outcomes have been detailed in **Appendix 2** of this report.
19. Reference (**Table Appendix 3**):
- (a) 13/19 Care Homes gained 10 standards
 - (b) 4/19 Care Homes gained 9 standards
 - (c) 2/19 Care Home gained 8 or less standards
20. The table below shows the outcomes over the last 7 years.

Grade	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2021-22	2022-23
A	9/21	12/19	9/19	11/18	13/19	15/19	13/19
B	6/21	2/19	5/19	2/18	1/19	2/19	4/19
C	4/21	5/19	5/19	5/18	5/19	2/19	2/19

21. All but 2 of the previous A graded homes have maintained this grade. 4 homes have reduced their overall rating. 2 homes have improved on last year's ratings.
22. 2 homes (Care Homes 16 & 18) that were A Grades in 2021 have reduced their rating to a B Grade.
23. 2 homes (Care Homes 1 & 7) that were B Grades in 2021 have reduced their rating to a C Grade.
24. 2 homes that were a C Grade in 2021, (Care Homes 9 & 12) have improved their ratings to a B Grade.
25. **Appendix 4** shows the outcomes for all 19 homes over the past 6 years. It also shows where there have been management changes.

Conclusion

26. The overall change in compliance from last year is disappointing, especially as some of the areas of non-compliance were raised in last year's assessment.
- (a) 1 home that has not performed well is Care Home 1, (failing 3 standards) and this home has been, and at the time of writing this report remains in our Adult

Safeguarding Executive Strategy Process. The QS assessment is based on the home's performance across many factors over the last 12 months, and this has had a bearing on the outcome. A common factor in this home's performance has been the many home manager and senior management changes the home has gone through in the last 12 months, and this has resulted in the current management team unable to validate the consistency of improvements.

- (b) Care Home 7 has failed 2 standards this year, a deterioration on their position in 2021 and due to similar issues being picked up in this year's assessment that were raised with them after last year's assessment.
- (c) 4 homes failing 1 standard are:
 - (i) Care Home 9 whilst showing an improvement from last year has failed standard 2, (Staff development), due to similar issues being picked up in this year's assessment that were raised with them after last year's assessment.
 - (ii) Care Home 18 has also failed standard 2 due to a lack of staff supervisions and appraisals and is a home that has experienced management changes and staffing issues.
 - (iii) Care Homes 12 & 16 have both failed standard 5, (Nutrition) which is independently verified by the dietician service. 1 of those (Care Home 12) failed this last year

- 27. Contract Officers continue to report that where there have been changes in management, resulting in multiple managers being in a home in any one year, or where there have been significant gaps between managers, standards slip very rapidly.
- 28. Written feedback will be given to providers, together with the outcome of the visits, and action plans will be required from each home to address all the shortfalls identified by the assessment process. Homes that have failed standards this year will have a monitoring visit to verify the progress of their action plans.
- 29. There is also an appeals process in place for providers, (**Ref: Appendix 5**) Once the appeal process timescale is spent, letters are sent to full fee paying Service Users and their correspondents with the result of the quality standards process and advising them of the fee level for the period 2022 – 2023.
- 30. A health and safety risk assessment process is in place to support future visits to care homes.

Budget Information

- 31. The results of the annual quality monitoring process for have resulted in a saving on this year's budget of circa £10,115. As in previous years amendments to fee levels will be communicated to our partners in Tees Valley CCG.