

ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 OCTOBER 2023

QUALITY STANDARDS MONITORING OUTCOMES 2023-2024

**AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE
WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS 2013-2024**

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 2023-2024. 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 2023 – 2024 demonstrates an increase in the number of homes who have achieved an A Grade, with 16/19, (84%) achieving an A Grade compared to 13/19, (68%) in 2022. 0 homes achieved 8 standards or less.

Recommendation

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

Christine Shields
Assistant Director of Commissioning, Performance and Transformation

Background Papers

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

Yvonne Hall : Extension 5869

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 2024 as the Council has extended the Agreement for a further 1 year. This has been agreed with all of the Providers.
5. **Appendix 1** provides an overview of the Quality Standards Process.

Current Market Position

6. The exercise was completed this year using a self assessment process combined with clarification meetings/visits to the care homes.
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 2023 Providers were informed that the visits for 2023-2024 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 84%. Whilst we previously reported the impact of Covid-19 on care homes remains significant the average occupancy over the last 16 months has been 83.72%.

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.
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 915. 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 excellent quality staff who will stay, and we continue to see the impact of the increases in the cost of living, utilities, and fuel costs. As nursing beds are de-registered, we are also hearing about the impact this is having on the care sector, especially in the recruitment of senior carers who are becoming extremely hard to source.
13. In 2022 there was a reduction in the number of homes achieving an A Grade with 13/19 homes achieving an A Grade, compared to 15/19 the previous year (2021).
14. Each home is required to provide information to the contracts section 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 (or a delegate nominated by them) 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 clarification session, 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 become known 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 2023/24

18. Individual Quality Standard (QS) outcomes have been detailed in **Appendix 2** of this report.

19. Reference (**Table Appendix 3**):

- (a) 16/19 Care Homes gained 10 standards
- (b) 3/19 Care Homes gained 9 standards
- (c) 0/19 Care Home gained 8 or less standards

20. The table below shows the outcomes over the last 7 years.

Grade	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
A	12/19	9/19	11/18	13/19	15/19	13/19	16/19
B	2/19	5/19	2/18	1/19	2/19	4/19	3/19
C	5/19	5/19	5/18	5/19	2/19	2/19	0/19

21. 12 of the previous A graded homes have maintained this grade. 1 home has reduced their overall rating. 5 homes have improved on last year's ratings.

22. 1 home (Care Home 3) that was an A Grade in 2022 has reduced their rating to a B Grade.

23. 1 home (Care Home 9) that was a B Grade in 2022 has maintained that grade and failed the same standard.

24. 3 homes that were a B Grade in 2022, (Care Homes 12, 16 & 18) and 1 home that was C Grade in 2022 (Care Home 1) have improved their rating to an A Grade. 1 home that was a C Grade in 2022 (Care Home 7) has improved their rating 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 encouraging, given the decrease in compliance last year.

- (a) Care Home 9 has failed to show an improvement on last year's gradings and has failed the same standard again.
- (b) Care Home 3 has also failed 1 standard.

- (c) 1 home that has performed well is Care Home 1, (who failed 3 standards last year). This home has had the stability of a consistent manager and management support.
 - (d) Care Home 7 failed 1 standard this year, an improvement on their position in 2021.
 - (e) None of the homes failed Standard 5 (Nutrition), that is independently verifies by the dietician service, which is an improvement on the last 2 years results.
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 2023 – 2024.
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 budget pressure on this year's budget of circa £193k. As in previous years amendments to fee levels will be communicated to our partners in the integrated Care Board.