

SUMMARY VERSION

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

CQC Self-Assessment



FOREWORD

This Self-Assessment Questionnaire provides a comprehensive overview of Birmingham City Council's Adult Social Care (ASC) Directorate, structured around the four Care Quality Commission (CQC) themes: working with people, providing support, ensuring safety, and leadership. It reflects our commitment to delivering person-centred, inclusive, and responsive care across a diverse and growing population. Through strengths-based approaches, integrated locality teams, and co-produced strategies, we ensure that citizens and carers are supported with dignity and respect. Our safeguarding systems, risk management protocols, and emergency planning frameworks underpin a safe and resilient care environment. Leadership is demonstrated through strategic alignment, workforce development, innovation, and financial sustainability. This document captures our journey from "Good" to "Outstanding" and sets the foundation for continued transformation, guided by citizen voice, data-driven insight, and collaborative ambition.

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INTRODUCTION SUMMARY

Adult Social Care CQC Self-Assessment (September 2025)

As Executive Director of Adult Social Care, I am pleased to present the 2025 Adult Social Care (ASC) Self-Assessment for Birmingham City Council. This document provides a comprehensive reflection of our Directorate's progress, priorities, and unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. Developed in line with statutory requirements under the Care Quality Commission (CQC) framework, the self-assessment also serves as an essential tool for assurance, transparency, and organisational learning.

Central to this self-assessment are the voices of Birmingham's citizens, carers, and workforce. I am proud that our culture is one of genuine coproduction, where service users play an active role in shaping our priorities and informing solutions. Our approach is founded on accountability and openness, underpinned by a clear ambition to deliver outstanding care that meets the diverse needs of our city's population.

The structure of this document follows the four CQC themes: **working with people, providing support, ensuring safety, and demonstrating leadership**. Within each theme, I detail how we engage with individuals to assess needs, promote healthier lives, ensure equitable outcomes, and foster robust partnerships. I also outline the systems and safeguards we have established

to protect vulnerable people, as well as the mechanisms that drive innovation and sustainable improvement across our services.

Birmingham is a city of contrasts—rich in opportunity, yet facing persistent challenges such as poverty, health inequality, and demographic change. Our population continues to grow, age, and diversify, with more than half of residents identifying as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic. These realities require us to be agile, inclusive, and forward-thinking in our approach to social care.

Our strategy is closely aligned with wider city frameworks, including "Shaping Birmingham's Future Together", the Birmingham Promise, and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. All of these initiatives share a vision to create a thriving and equitable city by 2035, with ASC playing a pivotal role in the delivery of integrated, person-centred care.

Looking ahead, I have set out a refreshed ASC strategy for 2024–2026, built on ten guiding principles: information and guidance, community assets, prevention, personalised support, partnership working, safeguarding, coproduction, social justice, workforce development, and resource optimisation. These principles reflect

our ambition to progress from "Good" to "Outstanding", and to co-produce a 10-year strategy with citizens by 2026.

It is also important to acknowledge Birmingham's position as one of five pilot authorities for the CQC's Local Authority Inspection Framework. Achieving a "Good" rating is testament to our collective efforts to recruit and retain staff, sustain the provider market, and drive improvements in service delivery. This assessment sets clear benchmarks for further progress and reinforces our Directorate's commitment to raising standards and delivering excellent care.

In summary, this introduction positions Birmingham ASC as a reflective, responsive, and ambitious service—deeply rooted in citizen engagement and strategic alignment. It sets the tone for the detailed thematic analysis that follows, and provides a compelling narrative of leadership, resilience, and transformation.

About Birmingham

Birmingham's Scale and Growth

Birmingham stands as the largest metropolitan borough in England and Europe, significantly outpacing other major cities like Leeds and Manchester in population size. Over the past 15 years, the city has undergone substantial development, driven by strategic investment, enhanced transport infrastructure such as HS2, and proactive civic leadership. This transformation has revitalised the city centre and strengthened over 70 local centres, which serve as essential community hubs. Understanding the needs of Birmingham's diverse and growing population is central to maintaining an inclusive and vibrant city, and this is reflected in the city's commitment to evidence-based planning through tools like the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

Demographics, Inequality, and Future Challenges

With a population of approximately 1.166 million in 2023, Birmingham is one of the youngest and most diverse cities in England. Over half of its residents identify as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic, and this figure rises to 66% among school-aged children. However, the city faces deep-rooted challenges, ranking 7th in national deprivation indices, with high levels of child poverty, fuel poverty, and reliance on welfare support. As Birmingham's population ages—projected to increase by 30% in the over-65 group by 2031—demand for social care will intensify, especially in areas affected by health inequalities. The city's designation as a City of Sanctuary underscores its commitment to equity and inclusion, aiming to support and empower migrant and refugee communities while recognising their contributions to Birmingham's social and economic fabric.

A Citywide Vision for Equity and Inclusion

Birmingham's shared vision, shaped through extensive consultation with over 1,500 citizens and partners across sectors, sets out an ambitious future for the city. It acknowledges Birmingham's contrasts—between thriving central areas and communities facing persistent poverty—and aims to create a city that works for everyone. By 2035, Birmingham aspires to be Europe's leading city for young people and a globally recognised Anti-Racist City. This vision is supported by strategic frameworks such as the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy and the Integrated Care Strategy, which seek to improve life expectancy and health outcomes through collaborative, locality-based approaches. Birmingham's inclusion in the Neighbourhood Health Pioneer Programme further validates its integrated efforts in delivering the NHS 10-year plan.

Adult Social Care: Strategic Priorities and Future Ambitions

The refreshed 2024–2026 strategy for Adult Social Care aligns with Birmingham's broader goals of equity, inclusion, and resilience. It is built around ten guiding principles:



THEME 1- HOW THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WORKS WITH PEOPLE

As a Directorate, we believe everyone deserves recognition and personalized support. This theme highlights our strengths-based approach, especially the Three Conversations Model, for assessing individual needs. Our locality-based teams deliver culturally competent assessments that reflect Birmingham's diversity. Through early intervention, technology-enabled care, and strong partnerships, we promote healthy lives for all. We prioritize equity to ensure all citizens receive fair and inclusive support, building trust and independence within our communities.

1. Assessing Needs

Birmingham's Adult Social Care (ASC) Directorate has embedded a strengths-based approach to assessment, rooted in the nationally recognised "Three Conversations Model." This model ensures that assessments are not merely transactional but are designed to understand the individual's context, aspirations, and capabilities. The first conversation focuses on listening and connecting, the second on planning and support, and the third on crisis response. This framework enables practitioners to tailor interventions that promote independence and resilience.

Assessments are conducted by locality-based teams, which are strategically placed across Birmingham's diverse communities. These teams are trained to understand the cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic nuances of the populations they serve. This localisation ensures that assessments are not only timely but also culturally competent and relevant. For example, Occupational Therapy (OT) clinics are co-located in GP practices, churches, and mosques, with language-specific provision in Urdu, Punjabi, and Mirpuri to ensure accessibility and sensitivity.

In 2024, the OT service conducted nearly 30,000 assessments, with complaints under 1%, mostly about process. The Waiting Well policy supports and informs those awaiting assessment, prioritising urgent cases and providing interim help when needed.

Example (citizen feedback):

"The Occupational Therapy team listened to my needs, communicated clearly, respected my language, and helped me become more independent."

92% of users felt heard, and 98% of Blue Badge respondents gave a top rating.

The use of data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Birmingham City Observatory allows ASC to identify areas of greatest need based on health inequalities, deprivation, and demographic trends. This intelligence drives resource allocation and informs service design, ensuring interventions are targeted, impactful, and equitable.

Our Strengths

- 1. Three conversations model:** A strengths-based, person-centred approach guiding assessments through three structured conversations; namely information and advice, short-term support, and long-term planning remains embedded and has been rolled out further across discharge to assess pathways.
- 2. Locality Constituency based Teams:** Staff are embedded in communities, enabling better understanding of local needs and fostering collaborative working with citizens and partners.
- 3. Triage and assessment model:** Efficient triage system ensures timely connection to support and crisis intervention, with assessment teams co-producing long-term care plans.
- 4. Strong community partnerships:** Active collaboration and a mature relationship with the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to shape services and address local gaps.
- 5. Technology enabled care (TEC):** Use of TEC to promote independence and reduce reliance on traditional care packages, with positive outcomes reported by citizens.
- 6. Performance monitoring:** Daily dashboards and regular performance meetings support accountability and continuous improvement.
- 7. Waiting well policy:** Structured approach to managing waiting lists, ensuring individuals are supported, prioritised, and safeguarded while awaiting assessment.
- 8. Responsive to feedback:** Service improvements driven by citizen and staff feedback, including adaptations to language and communication methods.
- 9. Support for carers:** All age approach to supporting Carers, Launch of the Carers Partnership Strategy, Carers Week events, and national recognition for innovative carer support services.
- 10. Working carers support passport:** A confidential, flexible, employee-owned tool that facilitates supportive conversations, enabling tailored workplace adjustments, and ensuring continuity of support, enhancing wellbeing, retention, and inclusivity within the Council.

Our Areas of Focus

1. Improving the effectiveness of the Front Door.

We need to improve the effectiveness of signposting in our corporate contact centre alongside increase understanding of Care Act eligibility to reduce the demand encountered by our social work teams.

2. Responding to demand:

Continuous work to improve timeliness in completing assessments and annual reviews, particularly within our Constituency Teams.

3. Improving transition planning:

Strengthening integrated transitions planning by starting work with more young people from the age of 14 including attending EHCP reviews from year 9. Implementation of a multiagency transitions panel bringing together Children's Social Care, SEND and Adult has improved coordination and early support for your young people with complex needs.

4. Enhancing Financial Processes:

Ongoing work to streamline commissioning and charging systems, including the implementation of new electronic forms and financial self-assessment tools.

5. Improving Communication with citizens:

While the Waiting Well Policy is in place, maintaining consistent, proactive communication with individuals awaiting services remains a priority.

6. Expanding Community-Based Resources:

Ongoing iterative approach to Identifying and addressing gaps in local services—such as befriending and housing support—through collaboration with Neighbourhood Network Schemes. Oriented around local area profiles

7. Strengthening Co-Production:

Continued engagement with citizens, carers, and staff to ensure services reflect lived experiences and evolving needs.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation:

Further development of performance frameworks and use of real-time data tools like Power BI is needed to identify trends and service gaps more effectively. With an increased focus on capturing citizen's qualitative experience

9. Supporting carers:

Ongoing implementation of the Birmingham Carers Partnership Strategy 2024–2029, including the rollout of the online assessment tool and improved social care pathways for carers.

10. Case file audits:

Improve the consistency of practice seen in our case file audits, leading to more Good and Outstanding practice.



2. Supporting People to Live Healthier Lives

ASC's commitment to promoting healthier lives is evident in its investment in prevention and early intervention. Services are designed to support citizens before they reach crisis point, with a focus on maintaining independence and wellbeing. Technology Enabled Care (TEC) plays a significant role in this strategy. In recent evaluations, 84% of TEC users reported feeling more independent, and 64% experienced an improved quality of life. Additionally, 60% said TEC helped reduce feelings of social isolation.

Community Network Support Officers (CNSOs) are another key component of this preventative approach. These officers work within local communities to connect citizens with services, support networks, and opportunities for engagement. In a recent survey, 79% of citizens rated their experience with CNSOs as excellent.

ASC also supports carers through the Birmingham Carers Partnership Strategy 2024–2029. This strategy adopts a whole-life course approach,

ensuring carers receive the right support at the right time. It aligns with the Care Act 2014 and Think Local Act Personal guidance, and includes digital tools, wellbeing programmes, and targeted outreach to seldom-heard communities.

Health promotion is further supported through partnerships with the Integrated Care Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The "Creating a Bolder, Healthier City" strategy (2022–2030) and the "Bolder, Healthier Future for Birmingham and Solihull" strategy (2023–2033) provide a framework for collaborative action across health and social care. Birmingham's inclusion in the Government's Neighbourhood Health Pioneer Programme recognises the city's integrated working at locality level.



Our Strengths

1. Integrated Early Intervention & Prevention.

Holistic support tackles root causes of hardship, enhanced by digital tools like BrumChat and OneView for better coordination.

2. Empowering Digital Innovation.

Self-assessment tools and virtual hubs promote independence; libraries serve as inclusive community support spaces.

3. Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS).

Community-led services reduce isolation and support wellbeing, with 13,000+ citizens supported quarterly and 1,800+ assets mapped. [Click here to watch a short video about our Neighbourhood Network Schemes](#)

4. Community Network Support Services (CNSS).

Short-term, person-centred support delivered through 192 partnerships and over 8,600 engagements in one year.

5. Prevention & Communities (P&C) Programme.

£2.745M invested in 40 providers to support older adults, carers, and disabled citizens through social and lifestyle initiatives.

6. Vulnerable Adults Service.

Trauma-informed, strength-based support for 83,000+ citizens annually, delivering 1.9M hours of care.

7. Public Health & Healthy Ageing.

Ageing Well Strategy aligns with WHO framework, addressing dementia, brain health, and end-of-life care through inclusive campaigns.

8. Substance Misuse Services.

multi-agency, evidence-based model with a 42% increase in access and 149,000+ drug-related crimes prevented since 2018.

9. Inclusive Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG).

multi-channel, co-produced service combining digital and in-person support, with strong community engagement.

Our Areas of Focus

1. Further Enhance digital accessibility and navigation.

We continue to work with Citizens to continuously improve the usability of online platforms like Birmingham Connect to Support and ensure service directories are intuitive and inclusive.

2. Strengthen engagement with underrepresented groups.

We continue to increase our direct input from all our diverse communities in the City to ensure we shape services with ever more inclusive approaches.

3. Improve data collection and impact measurement.

We continue to refine our tools and processes to better capture outcomes and inform service improvements.

4. Advance co-production and citizen voice.

We are working to further embed citizen panels and lived experience into strategy development, commissioning, and evaluation.

5. Coordinate support for serially excluded individuals.

We continue to develop integrated pathways for those experiencing homelessness, addiction, or social isolation, ensuring no one is left behind.

6. Ensure equity in service access and delivery.

We continue to refine and develop our use of Equality Impact Assessments to identify and address disparities across all service areas.

3. Equity in Experiences and Outcomes

Equity is a cornerstone of Birmingham's ASC strategy. The city's population is highly diverse, with over half identifying as Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic. Among school-aged children, this figure rises to 66%. ASC recognises that equitable service delivery requires more than equal access—it demands tailored approaches that address systemic barriers and cultural differences.

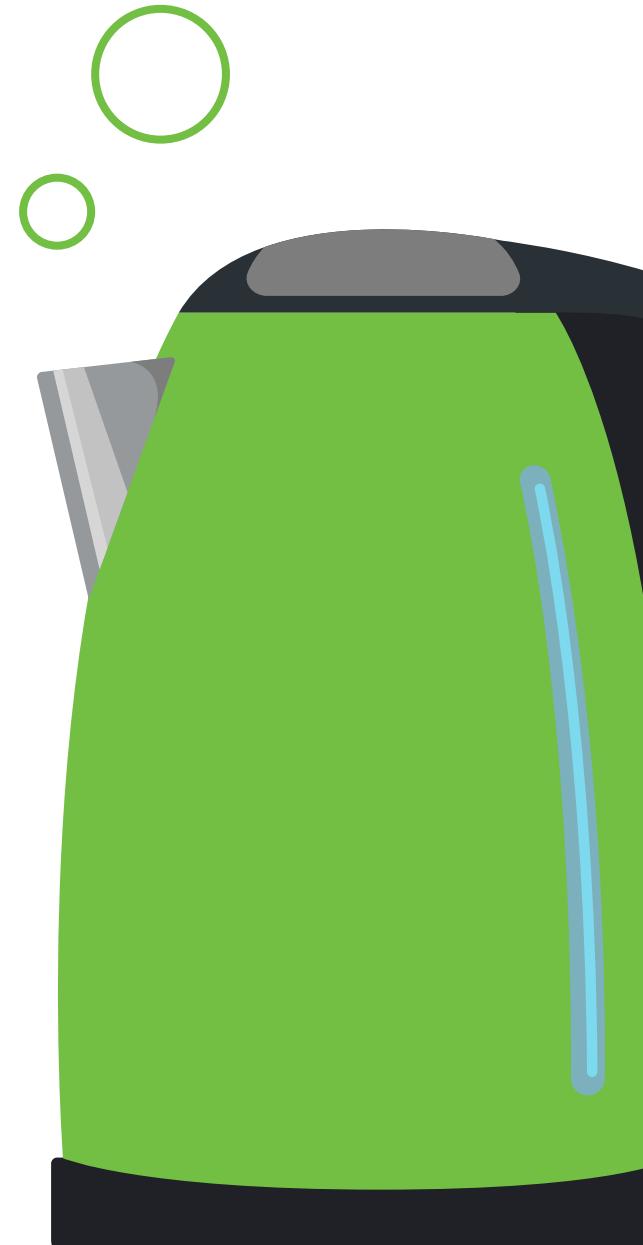
To this end, ASC is shifting from a workforce-focused Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) agenda to one that is more citizen-centred. This includes improving the collection and use of diversity data. Staff have expressed discomfort in asking for sensitive information, particularly around sexual orientation, which has led to gaps in data quality. ASC is addressing this through tailored training programmes, updated guidance, and citizen-facing campaigns to build confidence and clarity around data collection.

The Directorate is also working to strengthen engagement with seldom-heard communities, such as the Roma, Ethiopian, and Eritrean populations. These groups often face barriers to accessing services, and ASC is building

trust through culturally sensitive engagement strategies, including partnerships with local schools and community leaders. Training in cultural humility and dissemination of best practice research are helping to ensure services are more inclusive and responsive.

ASC's commitment to equity is also reflected in its workforce data. Birmingham has achieved a 0% pay gap across ethnicity and gender in ASC, setting a benchmark in public sector equality. This achievement is not only a reflection of fair pay practices but also of a broader culture of inclusion and respect.

Feedback mechanisms are embedded across services to ensure continuous improvement. QR codes are used to gather citizen feedback in real-time, and local surveys are conducted across commissioned care, carers provision, and social work and OT functions. These tools provide valuable insights into citizen experiences and help identify areas for improvement.



Areas of Strength

- 1. Clear Strategic Commitment:** Birmingham City Council has embedded equity and inclusion into its 2024–2027 objectives, ensuring these values drive real change across services and leadership.
- 2. Inclusive Leadership:** Leaders are recognised for their cultural competence and work collaboratively with communities to reduce inequality and promote fairness.
- 3. Data-Driven Decision Making:** The use of live Power BI dashboards and detailed workforce data enables targeted, equitable service design and monitoring of progress.
- 4. Pay Equity Achievements:** The Adult Social Care and Health Directorate has achieved a 0% pay gap across ethnicity and gender, setting a benchmark within the public sector.
- 5. Representative Recruitment:** Recruitment practices are designed to reflect Birmingham's diverse communities, with actions taken to reduce unconscious bias and improve leadership diversity.
- 6. Supportive Workplace Culture:** Initiatives like safe space workshops, mental health support, and neurodiverse-friendly training foster a respectful and inclusive environment.

- 7. Zero Tolerance Policy:** This policy empowers staff to challenge inappropriate behaviour and reinforces a culture of psychological safety and respect.
- 8. Co-Production with Citizens:** Citizens are actively involved in shaping services through co-produced Equality Impact Assessments and engagement events like hackathons.
- 9. Inclusive Communications:** Collaboration with staff networks ensures that internal and external communications reflect the lived experiences and diversity of the workforce.
- 10. Community Engagement:** The Directorate works closely with seldom-heard communities using culturally sensitive approaches and partnerships to improve service access and trust.
- 11. Evidence-Based Strategy:** The new EDI strategy, aligned with the Care Quality Commission's quality statements and Diverse by Design pillars, provides a solid foundation for future progress.

Our Areas of Focus

- 1. Enhancing Diversity Data Collection:** Staff need more support and confidence in collecting sensitive citizen data, particularly around sexual orientation. Tailored training and clearer guidance are being introduced to address this.
- 2. Reaching Seldom-Heard Communities:** Engagement with groups such as the Roma, Ethiopian, and Eritrean communities is being expanded through culturally sensitive strategies and partnerships. This work is helping to build trust and improve service accessibility.
- 3. Improving Transition Care:** A review of transition cases involving young people with disabilities has identified systemic barriers, particularly for those with English as an additional language. In response, a structured, multi-agency improvement plan has been developed to support smoother, more person-centered transitions into adulthood.
- 4. Bridging Digital and Environmental Gaps:** Feedback from citizens has highlighted the need for more inclusive digital and physical environments. A cross-directorate working group is now addressing these gaps through inclusive design initiatives.

THEME 2 - PROVIDING SUPPORT

This theme highlights our broad support across Birmingham, with over 16,000 adults accessing services last year. We prioritise independence through home-based care, integrated locality teams, and partnerships with health, housing, and the voluntary sector for continuity. Technology Enabled Care enhances safety and connection, carers receive tailored support via our co-produced strategy, and we ensure smooth transitions between services. Our commissioning approach is sustainable and innovative, driven by ongoing feedback to deliver timely, person-centred, community-based support.

Summary of our Strengths

- 1. Data-Driven Commissioning:** The Council uses rich locality-based data, including JSNA and community profiles, to tailor services to Birmingham's diverse population.
- 2. Strategic Oversight:** A comprehensive suite of commissioning strategies and the Integrated Quality Assurance Framework (IQAF) ensures robust contract management and market oversight.
- 3. High-Quality Services:** 94% of home support referrals receive offers within 10 minutes, and 77% of citizens are supported by Gold or Silver-rated providers.
- 4. Effective Hospital Discharge:** The Council is a top performer in hospital discharge, offering services like Pathway 2 beds, Discharge to Assess Services and Quick Discharge to ensure safe transitions.
- 5. Evidence-Based Decisions:** Commissioning is guided by citizen feedback and data, with 95% of citizens recommending their care provider.
- 6. Strong Co-Production:** Citizens actively shape services through panels and steering groups, supported by initiatives like the Community Development Practice Hub, the LD & A Quality Champions Team and the Autism and ADHD Partnership Board.
- 7. Inclusive Day Opportunities:** The co-produced Day Opportunities model ensures culturally appropriate services and clear quality standards.
- 8. Responsive Retendering:** The 2024 Home Support retendering included a two-year transition period to protect citizen choice and continuity, offering support to enable continuity of Care with the same provider if requested by the Citizen.
- 9. Engaged Provider Relationships:** The Council maintains regular forums, bulletins, and dedicated webpages to support and engage care providers.
- 10. Diverse and Skilled Workforce:** Birmingham's care workforce is experienced, diverse, and increasingly stable, with strong engagement in training and qualifications.
- 11. Market Resilience:** Over £100 million has been invested since 2017 to support sustainable, high-quality care.
- 12. Digital Innovation:** Programmes like Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and electronic monitoring enhance service delivery and citizen independence.
- 13. Positive TEC Outcomes:** TEC has improved independence, quality of life, reduced care needs, supported carers and delivered a return on investment.



Areas we are focusing on

- 14. Continuous Improvement:** The Council uses dashboards and risk-based monitoring of commissioned services to drive service improvements and maintain high standards.
- 15. Financial Commitment:** A £31.7 million investment to fund inflation and uplifts for 2025/26 underscores the Council's dedication to regulated care, Day Opportunities, and Direct Payments.
- 16. Support to unpaid Carers:** Well developed and effective arrangements to support unpaid carers through our commissioned provider Forward Carers and continuing our focus on co-production, market shaping, and reducing reliance on formal care **through preventative approaches and investment in healthier living.**

- 1. Reducing reliance on formal care:** continuing our focus on co-production, market shaping, and reducing reliance on formal care through preventative approaches and investment in healthier living.
- 2. External Workforce Strategy:** We are currently refreshing our plans to support the wider external workforce and build on the positive achievements so far.
- 3. Direct Payments:** We are looking to develop the Personal Assistant register and the overall offer for this workforce via a refreshed Direct Payments Board.
- 4. Respite Care:** Building on engagement with the sector to develop commissioning options to expand planned respite provision to meet local need.
- 5. Mental Health and Learning Disability Commissioning:** Building on our successful citizen and provider engagement to date, we are strengthening and embedding our commissioning offer for younger adults, supported by a small team of newly appointed staff – including a focus on citizens with the complexities of dual diagnosis. A two-year improvement plan under the IQAF will begin in September 2025, focusing on risk identification and provider support to improve quality across the Care Market.



1. Overview of Service Reach and Demand

Birmingham's ASC Directorate supports a large and diverse population. Between 18 September 2024 and 17 September 2025, **16,882 adults** accessed long- and short-term services. Of these, **15,470** received long-term support, with **9,576** aged 65+ and **5,894** aged 18–64. This reflects the city's demographic profile and the increasing complexity of needs across age groups.

The scale of support is significant. **10,665 people** received care and support at home, demonstrating the Directorate's commitment to enabling independence and reducing reliance on institutional care. This aligns with national policy priorities and Birmingham's own strategic goals to promote community-based support.

2. Integrated and Localised Support Models

ASC has adopted a **locality-based model** of service delivery, which ensures that support is tailored to the specific needs of communities. This model is underpinned by strong partnerships with health services, housing providers, voluntary organisations, and community groups.

Each locality team includes social workers, occupational therapists, community nurses, and support officers. These teams work collaboratively to assess needs, develop care plans, and coordinate services. The integration of services at the neighbourhood level allows for more responsive and holistic support.

The **Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS)** are a key component of this approach. These schemes are commissioned to deliver preventative and wellbeing-focused services that reduce isolation, promote independence, and connect people to their communities. NNS providers are embedded in local areas and have strong relationships with residents, enabling them to identify needs early and intervene effectively.

3. Technology Enabled Care (TEC)

TEC is a cornerstone of Birmingham's strategy to provide support that is both innovative and person-centred. The TEC service offers a range of digital solutions, including remote monitoring, emergency response systems, and assistive technologies.

Recent evaluations show that:

- **84% of TEC users** reported feeling more independent.
- **64%** experienced an improved quality of life.
- **60%** said TEC helped reduce feelings of social isolation.

These outcomes demonstrate the value of TEC in enhancing wellbeing and reducing demand on traditional services. The service is continually evolving, with new technologies being piloted and scaled based on user feedback and evidence of impact.

4. Support for Carers

Carers play a vital role in Birmingham's care ecosystem. The **Birmingham Carers Partnership Strategy 2024–2029** sets out a comprehensive framework for supporting carers across the life course. The strategy is co-produced with carers and aligns with the Care Act 2014 and Think Local Act Personal guidance.

Key elements of the strategy include:

- **Digital tools** to help carers manage their responsibilities and access support.
- **Wellbeing programmes** that address physical and mental health.
- **Targeted outreach** to seldom-heard communities, ensuring that support is inclusive and equitable.

In 2024, **95.83% of carer assessments** were completed within 28 days, and **98.12% of carers** rated their experience as good or very good. These figures reflect the Directorate's commitment to timely and high-quality support.

Example (carer feedback):

"I received a carer's assessment within two weeks, gained digital tools and wellbeing support, and felt valued in my relative's care."

- Birmingham Carers Partnership Strategy survey: underscores prompt, person-centred support and partnership.

95.83% of assessments completed within 28 days.

98.12% of carers rated their experience as good or very good."

5. Hospital Discharge and Transition Support

ASC works closely with health partners to ensure safe and timely discharge from hospital. The **Hospital Quick Discharge Service** is designed to support people in returning home or to a community setting with appropriate care in place.

Recent feedback shows:

- **95.55% of users** were satisfied with the service.
- **93.79%** felt supported in returning to daily activities.

The service includes rapid assessment, care planning, and coordination with community providers. It is particularly effective in reducing delayed discharges and preventing readmissions.

ASC also supports transitions for people with complex needs, including those moving from children's services to adult services, and those with mental health or learning disabilities. Transition planning is person-centred and involves multi-agency collaboration to ensure continuity of care.

6. Commissioning and Market Sustainability

Birmingham's ASC commissioning strategy is focused on quality, sustainability, and innovation. The Directorate works with a wide range of providers to deliver services that meet diverse needs and reflect best practice.

Commissioning is informed by:

- **Market Position Statements** that outline current provision and future needs.
- **Provider forums** that facilitate dialogue and co-production.
- **Quality assurance frameworks** that monitor performance and drive improvement.

The Directorate is committed to supporting a sustainable care market. This includes fair funding, workforce development, and support for innovation. Providers are encouraged to adopt strengths-based approaches and to involve citizens in service design and delivery.

7. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

ASC uses a range of tools to gather feedback and improve services. These include:

- **QR code surveys** in care settings.
- **Local surveys** across commissioned care, carers provision, and social work and OT functions.
- **Complaints and compliments analysis** to identify trends and areas for improvement.





Our Strengths

- 1. Strong Collaborative Governance:** Well-established structures such as the Place Committee and Strategic Commissioning Group enable coordinated planning and decision-making across health and social care.
- 2. Effective Use of the Better Care Fund (BCF):** BCF supports integrated services like BCELS, Intermediate Care, and Dementia Connect, contributing to improved outcomes and reduced hospital discharge delays.
- 3. Integrated Locality and Neighbourhood Working:** Investment in Locality Hubs and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams fosters holistic, community-based care aligned with ICS priorities.
- 4. Robust VCFSE Partnerships:** Programmes like PURE and the Fairer Futures Fund demonstrate deep collaboration with the voluntary sector, supporting inclusion, employment, and health equity.
- 5. Strategic partnerships with VCFSE:** ASC lead the strategic partnership with BVSC that supports their sector wide delivery of the council's corporate priorities and ASC vision.
- 6. Citizen-Centred Service Design:** Feedback mechanisms across services (e.g., BCELS, PURE, TEC) ensure that citizen experiences directly inform service improvements.

- 7. Staff and Stakeholder Engagement:** Regular workshops, forums, and evaluations ensure that frontline staff and partners shape service delivery and strategic direction.
- 8. Innovation Through Technology:** The TEC Demonstrator programme showcases Birmingham's commitment to co-produced, technology-enabled care solutions, with national learning potential.
- 9. Data-Driven Decision Making:** Public Health intelligence, including locality profiles and health inclusion "Deep Dives," underpins strategic planning and commissioning.
- 10. Strong Carers Partnership arrangements:** A well-established system wide and inclusive group driving delivery of the Carers Partnership Strategy 2024-2029

Areas we are focusing on

- 1. Developing collaborative governance:** Ensuring that any governance changes linked to the NHS 10 Year Plan to further support our collective aspirations for the citizens of Birmingham through strong Place-based leadership.
- 2. Embedding Integrated Locality and Neighbourhood Working:** Rolling out Integrated neighbourhood teams (INTs) to deliver seamless multi-agency support tailored to local needs.
- 3. Intermediate care:** Continuing our focus on improving the effectiveness of intermediate care pathways through the BCF, including work to strengthen the operational management of Pathway 1 and exploring future commissioning options.
- 4. Innovation through Technology:** development of a business case for the wider roll out of TEC, building on the success of the Demonstrator project.

8. Inclusion and Accessibility

Birmingham's ASC services are designed to be inclusive and accessible. This includes:

- **Language-specific provision** in key services.
- **Culturally competent practice** across assessment and support.
- **Targeted engagement** with communities facing barriers to access.

The Directorate is working to improve the collection and use of diversity data, particularly around sexual orientation and gender identity. This will enable more tailored support and better understanding of needs.

Training in cultural humility and dissemination of best practice research are helping to build a more inclusive workforce. Staff are supported to reflect on their practice and to engage with citizens in a respectful and responsive way.



THEME 3 – HOW THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ENSURES SAFETY WITHIN THE SYSTEM

Safety is central to our services, supported by robust safeguarding and risk management systems like the Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board and Emergency Duty Team. We use policies and daily dashboards to monitor and respond to risks efficiently. Service transitions are carefully managed with clear protocols and designated staff for continuity. Providers meet high standards through quality assurance, while staff wellbeing and resilience are supported. Emergency planning keeps us prepared, and we actively involve citizens in shaping safe services. This approach underlines our commitment to protection, respect, and empowerment.



Our strengths

1. Strategic Leadership and Partnership:

The Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) benefits from strong strategic leadership and active engagement from statutory and community partners, ensuring a city-wide commitment to adult safeguarding.

2. Intelligence-Led Safeguarding:

Services and partnerships use a proactive, data-informed approach to identify emerging risks, drawing on citizen voice, partner feedback, and performance metrics to shape both strategic direction and operational delivery.

3. Robust Multi-Agency Collaboration:

Close working with key partners including the Children's Trust, Community Safety Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, and ICS Place Board, foster integrated safeguarding responses.

4. Trauma-Informed Practice:

BSAB has joined the West Midlands Trauma Informed Practice Coalition, enhancing its ability to support citizens through compassionate, psychologically aware approaches.

5. Structured Hospital Discharge Pathways:

The introduction of the Single Transfer of Care (STOC) system has improved the safety and coordination of hospital discharges, with clear pathways tailored to individual levels of need.

6. Improved Workforce Stability:

Recruitment of permanent staff has strengthened continuity and multi-disciplinary working, within services which previously had high levels of agency workers. This has enabled consistent service delivery, across seven-day operations where required. Our Reset 2025 program will reduce our agency use by 75% by the end of the year.

7. Innovative Housing Solutions:

Services like Discharge to Assess Service and Accommodation and Support Service provide safe, temporary accommodation for citizens with complex needs, supporting timely assessments and care planning.

8. Responsive Transition Support:

The Transitions Service now engages with young people from the age of 14, attending Education, Care and Health Plan (ECPH) reviews to support early planning. This proactive involvement helps to reduce waiting times and improve outcomes through coordinated, person-centred approaches. While this work is still in its early stages, it marks a positive shift towards ensuring smoother transitions into adulthood at 18, particularly for those with complex needs.

9. High Standards of Supervision and Staff Support:

Regular supervision and peer-led learning groups have improved staff morale, confidence, and the quality of care provided.

10. Citizen-Centred Practice:

Feedback from citizens and carers consistently highlights the empathy, attentiveness, and professionalism of staff, reinforcing the importance of personalised and respectful care.

11. Effective Use of Feedback:

Insights from citizens, families, staff, and partners are actively used to refine procedures, improve service delivery, and inform strategic planning.

12. Clear Commitment to Continuous Improvement:

The service is actively refining referral processes, expanding care provision, and developing formal procedures to ensure consistent, high-quality support across all pathways

Areas we are focusing on

1. Strengthening Transitions Support and EHCP Engagement:

and EHCP Engagement: There is a clear commitment to ensuring that all young people who may have Care Act-eligible needs are assessed and supported prior to their 18th birthday. A programme of change is underway to address allocation delays by March 2026, with earlier engagement beginning from age 14. This work has now commenced, with our first Multi-Agency Panel (MAP) supporting early planning and coordination. The MAP also forms part of a new process to improve Adult Social Care involvement in Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) reviews, ensuring more consistent engagement across key transition stages. While still in development, this approach is already strengthening multi-agency coordination and improving planning for young people's transitions.

2. Managing Assessment Backlogs:

The Discharge to Assess (D2A) team is addressing a temporary backlog in post-discharge assessments through priority protocols and new tools such as welcome packs and remote screening options

3. Expanding Specialist Bed Provision:

Recognising the need for more tailored placements, particularly for younger adults with complex needs, the service is actively reviewing and modelling future provision to ensure suitable care environments are available.

4. Improving Housing Accessibility:

Efforts are being made to strengthen supported living options, with a focus on identifying gaps in the market and improving communication with providers to expand wheelchair-accessible and adapted housing.

5. Reducing inappropriate demand being reported into our Safeguarding teams:

Introducing multiagency data into the Safeguarding Adults Board to improvement quality of referrals and conversion rates.



1. Safeguarding as a Core Function

Safeguarding is embedded across all aspects of Birmingham's ASC operations. The Directorate recognises that safety is not just about responding to harm but about creating environments where people feel secure, respected, and empowered. This includes physical safety, emotional wellbeing, and protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination.

The **Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB)** provides strategic oversight and ensures multi-agency coordination. The Board includes representatives from health, police, housing, voluntary sector, and community organisations. It sets priorities, monitors performance, and leads on learning from safeguarding reviews.

ASC staff are trained in safeguarding procedures and are supported by dedicated safeguarding leads within each locality team. These leads provide advice, coordinate responses, and ensure that safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately. The Directorate uses a risk matrix to assess the severity and urgency of concerns, enabling proportionate and timely interventions.

In 2024, Birmingham saw a rise in safeguarding referrals, reflecting both increased awareness and improved reporting mechanisms. The Directorate responded by strengthening triage processes and investing in additional safeguarding capacity. This included new roles focused on complex cases, domestic abuse, and financial exploitation.

2. Crisis Response and Risk Management

ASC has developed robust systems for responding to crises and managing risk. The **Waiting Well Policy** is a key component of this approach. It ensures that individuals awaiting assessment or support are risk-assessed, monitored, and provided with interim support where necessary. This policy balances responsiveness with safety and ensures that urgent needs are prioritised.

The **Three Conversations Model** includes a crisis response pathway that enables rapid intervention. Locality teams are trained to identify signs of crisis and to mobilise support quickly. This may include emergency care packages, safeguarding referrals, or coordination with health and housing services.

ASC also works closely with the **Emergency Duty Team (EDT)**, which provides out-of-hours support. The EDT handles urgent safeguarding concerns, mental health crises, and other emergencies. It is staffed by experienced social workers and operates in coordination with police, ambulance, and hospital services.

Risk management is supported by daily dashboards that track key indicators, including safeguarding referrals, waiting times, hospital discharges, and service capacity. These dashboards enable managers to identify emerging risks and to take proactive action. They are also used to brief senior leaders and elected members, ensuring transparency and accountability.

included new roles focused on complex cases, domestic abuse, and financial exploitation.

3. Transitions and Continuity of Care

Transitions between services and life stages are recognised as high-risk periods. ASC has developed integrated pathways to support safe and effective transitions. This includes:

- **Hospital discharge:** Coordinated planning with health partners to ensure that people return home or to community settings with appropriate support.
- **Children to adult services:** Joint working with Children's Services to support young people with disabilities, mental health needs, or complex care requirements.
- **Mental health and learning disabilities:** Collaboration with specialist teams to ensure continuity of care and risk management.

Each transition is supported by a named worker who coordinates assessments, care planning, and communication. The Directorate uses transition protocols that outline roles, responsibilities, and timelines. These protocols are reviewed regularly and updated based on feedback and learning.

Feedback from citizens and families has highlighted the importance of clear communication, timely planning, and emotional support during transitions. ASC has responded by developing new guidance, training modules, and peer support networks.

4. Provider Oversight and Quality Assurance

ASC commissions a wide range of services from external providers, including residential care, home support, day services, and specialist provision. Ensuring safety within these services is a key priority.

The Directorate uses a **Quality Assurance Framework** that includes:

- **Regular monitoring visits** by commissioning officers.
- **Feedback from citizens and families** via surveys, complaints, and compliments.
- **Safeguarding alerts and incident reports.**
- **Performance dashboards** that track key indicators.

Providers are required to have robust safeguarding policies, staff training programmes, and incident reporting systems. ASC works with providers to address concerns, implement improvements, and share best practice.

In cases of serious concern, ASC may issue improvement notices, suspend placements, or terminate contracts. These decisions are made in consultation with legal and safeguarding teams and are communicated transparently to citizens and families.

The Directorate also supports providers through training, forums, and guidance documents. This includes resources on safeguarding, risk management, cultural competence, and citizen engagement.



5. Workforce Safety and Support

Ensuring the safety of ASC staff is essential to maintaining a resilient and effective system. The Directorate has implemented a range of measures to support staff wellbeing, safety, and professional development.

This includes:

- **Supervision and appraisal:** Regular one-to-one sessions that provide support, feedback, and development planning.
- **Training and CPD:** Access to safeguarding, mental health, trauma-informed practice, and crisis response training.
- **Peer support networks:** Opportunities for staff to share experiences, seek advice, and build resilience.
- **Working Carers Passport:** A tool that supports staff who have caring responsibilities, enabling flexible working and access to support.

Staff are encouraged to report concerns, raise issues, and contribute to service improvement. The Directorate uses anonymous surveys, staff forums, and feedback mechanisms to gather insights and respond to needs.

In 2024, ASC conducted a staff wellbeing survey that highlighted high levels of stress and workload pressure. In response, the Directorate implemented new wellbeing initiatives, including counselling services, mindfulness sessions, and workload reviews.

Example (Staff Feedback):

"The new Case Allocation Tool benefits the assessment team by improving accountability and fair caseload management. It's reassuring to see safety and wellbeing prioritised."

- Staff feedback from Practice Learning Week evaluation, reflecting strong risk management and a supportive culture.

Staff engagement sessions about the tool have been positive, with more planned for rollout. Staff wellbeing and lone worker safety initiatives are in place.

Our strengths

1. Safeguarding Training: BCC has reviewed its safeguarding training programme, ensuring staff across the directorate receive mandatory and bespoke training tailored to their roles. Compliance within ASC mandatory training is high at 95.5%, and the updated offer to relevant staff includes modules on Modern Slavery, FGM, Coercion and Control, and Domestic Abuse.

2. Operating Model: Safeguarding is overseen by the Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board, which provides strategic leadership and assurance. Learning from safeguarding reviews is shared across ASC and partner agencies through quarterly briefings and reflective practice sessions.

3. Commitment to Continuous Learning: Following the 2023 CQC assessment, BCC commissioned a bespoke safeguarding review through Partners in Care & Health (PCH). Recommendations from this review—focused on defensible decision-making, audit processes, and professional curiosity—have been embedded into the Continuous Improvement Plan.

4. Management Oversight: There is strong oversight throughout the safeguarding process, with management authorisation required at both concern and enquiry stages. Senior Practitioners provide clear guidance, especially to unqualified staff, ensuring consistency and quality from start to finish.

5. Performance Monitoring: BCC has a multi-tiered performance framework, with monitoring at operational (team clinics), strategic (Performance Board), and directorate (Executive Board) levels. This ensures safeguarding activity is regularly reviewed and aligned with service goals.

6. Data-Driven Practice: Safeguarding dashboards provide real-time insights into demand, timeliness, and outcomes. These dashboards are reviewed by BSAB, senior leadership, and operational teams, supporting evidence-based decision-making and service planning.

7. Improved Timeliness: Significant improvements have been made in response times. The average time to complete a concern has dropped from 58.6 to 19 days, and enquiries from 105 to 65.8 days, reflecting increased efficiency and responsiveness.

8. Making Safeguarding Personal: BCC demonstrates a strong commitment to person-centred practice. In 2024–25, 89.5% of individuals were asked about their desired outcomes, and 92.1% of those had their outcomes fully or partially met.

9. Positive External Feedback: The PCH review confirmed that staff consistently engage individuals and their representatives, showing professional curiosity and tailoring support to personal outcomes—even in complex or distressing circumstances.

10. Multi-Agency Collaboration: BSAB works closely with statutory and community partners, including the Children's Trust and Health and Wellbeing Board. This collaboration enhances early intervention and strategic alignment across services.

11. Trauma-Informed Practice: BSAB has joined the West Midlands Trauma Informed Practice Coalition and promotes learning through conferences and forums focused on self-neglect, information sharing, and trauma-informed approaches.

Areas we are focusing on

12. Corporate Safeguarding Network (CSN):

The CSN brings together safeguarding leads from each Directorate, ensuring consistent practice and alignment with the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

13. Workforce Stability: A successful recruitment

campaign has led to 71% of supervisor/manager roles in the Triage Team being filled by permanent staff, contributing to service continuity and leadership stability.

14. Outcome-Focused Culture: Staff are

supported to tailor safeguarding responses to individual needs, with a strong emphasis on listening, engagement, and achieving personal outcomes through defensible and person-centred decision-making.

1. Workforce Planning: BCC is reviewing its staffing model to ensure the right number of skilled and experienced workers are in place, with plans for a robust recruitment campaign to increase permanent staffing and reduce reliance on agency workers.

2. Defensible Decision Making: Enhancing oversight and clarity in decision-making when enquiries are not progressed is a priority. Improvements include revising the enquiry form to capture professional rationale and ensuring managerial review at closure.

3. Conversion Rate of Concerns to Enquiries: BCC is undertaking an audit to better understand why its conversion rate is lower than the national average. This will inform updates to the concern form and support more accurate decision-making.

4. Safeguarding Training Expansion: Formal training for all staff involved in safeguarding enquiries is being strengthened to ensure consistent practice. A compliance dashboard will be developed to monitor training uptake and capacity.

5. Safeguarding Plan Usage: BCC is working to increase the use of safeguarding plans where risks are identified. This includes reviewing the safeguarding plan form, updating practice guidance, and integrating plan outcomes into the data dashboard.

6. Alternative Pathways Awareness: Work is underway to improve staff understanding of alternative pathways for concerns that do not meet safeguarding criteria. This includes mapping existing pathways, identifying gaps, and ensuring clear documentation.



6. System Resilience and Emergency Planning

ASC is part of Birmingham's wider emergency planning and resilience framework. This includes coordination with the Local Resilience Forum, NHS partners, and emergency services.

The Directorate has contingency plans for a range of scenarios, including:

- **Pandemic response:** Lessons learned from COVID-19 have informed new protocols for infection control, remote working, and service continuity.
- **Extreme weather:** Plans for heatwaves, flooding, and snow events include risk assessments, communication strategies, and support for vulnerable citizens.
- **Service disruption:** Protocols for IT outages, staffing shortages, and provider failure ensure rapid response and continuity of care.

ASC participates in regular emergency planning exercises and reviews its plans annually. It also contributes to citywide risk assessments and resilience strategies.

7. Citizen Engagement and Co-Production

Safety is not just about systems and protocols—it is about listening to citizens and involving them in shaping services. ASC has embedded co-production across its safeguarding and risk management work.

This includes:

- **Safeguarding forums:** Opportunities for citizens to share experiences, raise concerns, and contribute to policy development.
- **Peer support groups:** Networks for carers, people with disabilities, and those with lived experience of safeguarding.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** QR codes, surveys, and focus groups that gather insights and inform improvement.

Citizens have highlighted the importance of clear communication, respectful engagement, and timely support. ASC has responded by updating guidance, training staff, and redesigning service pathways.

The Directorate also works with advocacy organisations to ensure that the voices of vulnerable and marginalised groups are heard. This includes people with learning disabilities, mental health needs, and those from minority ethnic communities.



THEME 4 – LEADERSHIP

Leadership means setting a clear direction, ensuring accountability, and taking action. Through our updated ASC Strategy 2024–2026, we align with Birmingham Promise and Health and Wellbeing priorities. Governance keeps us transparent, while dashboards track progress and challenges. We invest in staff development and inclusive practices, achieving a 0% pay gap for ethnicity and gender. Innovation is powered by co-production, technology, and learning. Citizens help shape their care, and we prioritise financial sustainability with preventative, community-focused investments. Our goal is to lead with integrity and collaboration, moving from Good to Outstanding.

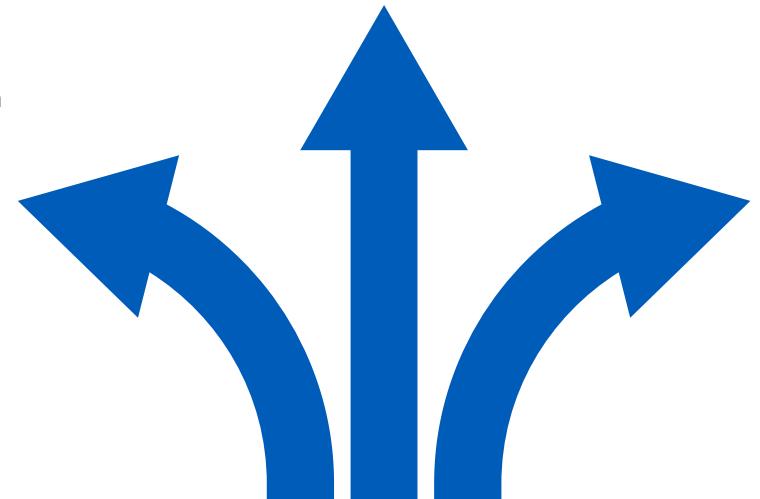
1. Strategic Vision and Direction

Leadership within Birmingham's ASC Directorate is defined by a clear strategic vision that aligns with both local priorities and national policy frameworks. The refreshed **ASC Strategy 2024–2026** sets out a bold agenda for transformation, with a focus on prevention, personalisation, and partnership. It builds on the successes of previous strategies and incorporates learning from the COVID-19 pandemic, inspection feedback, and citizen engagement.

The strategy is aligned with citywide initiatives such as:

- **The Birmingham Promise:** A commitment to inclusive growth, opportunity, and wellbeing.
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** A framework for integrated working across health, social care, and public health.
- **Creating a Bolder, Healthier City (2022–2030) and Bolder, Healthier Future for Birmingham and Solihull (2023–2033):** Regional strategies that promote population health, equity, and system resilience.

ASC leadership is actively involved in shaping these agendas through participation in **the Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Board, and Neighbourhood Health Pioneer Programme**. This ensures that adult social care is not siloed but is embedded within broader efforts to improve outcomes for Birmingham's citizens.



2. Governance and Accountability

Governance structures within ASC are robust, transparent, and inclusive. The Directorate is accountable to elected members, citizens, and partners through a range of mechanisms, including:

- **Scrutiny Committee:** Regular reporting and challenge on performance, strategy, and service delivery.
- **Safeguarding Adults Board:** Oversight of safeguarding practice and multi-agency coordination.
- **Commissioning and Quality Assurance Panels:** Monitoring of provider performance, market sustainability, and citizen experience.

ASC uses a **performance dashboard** that tracks key indicators across assessment, support, safeguarding, workforce, and finance. This dashboard is updated daily and used to inform decision-making at all levels. It enables early identification of risks, trends, and opportunities for improvement.

The Directorate also publishes an annual **Local Account**, which provides a public summary of achievements, challenges, and priorities. This document is co-produced with citizens and partners and is used to promote transparency and dialogue.

Our Strengths

1. Innovative Intergenerational Programmes:

The OT-led initiative at Perry Tree Care Centre, delivered in partnership with HIVE College, exemplifies creative, inclusive approaches that deliver measurable outcomes for both older adults and young people with SEND.

2. Evidence-Based Service Improvements:

Data-driven interventions, such as the reduction in OT waiting lists, demonstrate the service's commitment to continuous improvement and effective prioritisation processes.

3. Strong Stakeholder Collaboration:

Feedback from NHS, care providers, and voluntary sector partners is actively used to shape training, expand services, and refine practice models, highlighting a culture of partnership and shared learning.

4. Robust Feedback Mechanisms:

The use of QR codes for citizen feedback and structured engagement with staff ensures that service development is responsive, person-centred, and informed by real experiences.

5. Investment in Workforce Development:

Initiatives such as peer mentoring, structured onboarding, and the Learning from Complaints Operational Forum demonstrate a clear commitment to nurturing staff, supporting professional growth, and embedding reflective practice.

Our Areas of focus

1. Streamlining Audit Processes:

Although audit returns have increased, there is an identified need to make the process more efficient and impactful, including reducing duplication and administrative burden.

2. Enhancing Practice Forums:

Following leadership transitions, revitalising Practice Forums and ensuring their effectiveness as platforms for learning and reflective dialogue remains a priority.

3. Career Progression and Recognition:

Staff feedback highlights a desire for clearer career pathways, greater recognition, and more opportunities for advancement, particularly in leadership roles.

4. Integrated Working and System Barriers:

Continued work is needed to address IT and process challenges to support more seamless, integrated practice across multidisciplinary teams.

5. Embedding Learning from Feedback:

Ensuring that learning from complaints, compliments, and other feedback is consistently applied across teams to drive improved outcomes and accountability.

3. Workforce Development and Culture

ASC leadership recognises that its workforce is its greatest asset. The Directorate employs 1,649 staff (1,753 FTE) across a range of roles, including social work, occupational therapy, commissioning, support services, and management.

Workforce development is supported through:

- **Supervision and appraisal:** Structured processes that promote reflection, learning, and accountability.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Access to training, qualifications, and career pathways.
- **Leadership programmes:** Opportunities for aspiring and current leaders to develop skills in strategy, change management, and system leadership.
- **Working Carers Passport:** A tool that supports staff with caring responsibilities, enabling flexible working and access to support.

The Directorate promotes a culture of inclusion, respect, and empowerment. This is reflected in its achievement of a **0% pay gap across ethnicity and gender**, setting a benchmark in public sector equality. Staff surveys and forums are used to gather feedback and inform improvement.

In 2024, ASC conducted a **staff wellbeing survey** that identified high levels of stress and workload pressure. In response, leadership implemented new initiatives, including:

- **Counselling and mental health support.**
- **Mindfulness and resilience training.**
- **Workload reviews and staffing adjustments.**

These actions demonstrate a commitment to listening, responding, and creating a supportive working environment.

Example (Staff Feedback):

Staff have noted that leadership is present and responsive. Sessions such as Chance to Chat and Practice Learning Week provide opportunities for input, and feedback is considered in policy and practice decisions. Staff engagement sessions and Practice Learning Week have been used to gather perspectives from staff members. 653 officers attended the CQC briefing session, where participants asked questions and contributed comments. Leadership provides regular updates and considers staff feedback when forming policies.

4. Innovation and Improvement

Leadership within ASC is committed to innovation and continuous improvement. This includes:

- **Three Conversations Model:** A strengths-based approach to assessment and support that promotes independence and personalisation.
- **Technology Enabled Care (TEC):** Use of digital solutions to enhance wellbeing, safety, and service efficiency.
- **Co-production and citizen engagement:** Involving citizens in service design, delivery, and evaluation.

ASC uses a range of tools to gather feedback and drive improvement, including:

- **QR code surveys** in care settings.
- **Local surveys** across commissioned services.
- **Complaints and compliments analysis.**
- **Peer review and benchmarking** with other local authorities.

Learning from feedback is used to update policies, redesign services, and inform training. The Directorate also participates in national improvement programmes and research initiatives.

In 2025, ASC began work on a **10-year strategy** for adult social care, co-produced with citizens, staff, and partners. This strategy will set out a long-term vision for transformation, sustainability, and excellence. It aims to move Birmingham from "Good" to "Outstanding" in service delivery and outcomes.

5. Citizen Leadership and Co-Production

Leadership within ASC is not confined to senior managers—it includes citizens, carers, and communities. The Directorate has embedded co-production across its work, recognising that lived experience is a source of expertise and innovation.

Examples include:

- **Carers Partnership Strategy:** Co-produced with carers and community organisations.
- **Safeguarding forums:** Opportunities for citizens to shape policy and practice.
- **Peer support networks:** Platforms for sharing experience, building resilience, and influencing services.

Citizens are involved in recruitment, training, and evaluation. They sit on panels, contribute to strategy development, and participate in service reviews. This approach promotes ownership, trust, and relevance.

ASC also works with advocacy organisations to ensure that the voices of vulnerable and marginalised groups are heard. This includes people with learning disabilities, mental health needs, and those from minority ethnic communities.



6. Financial Leadership and Sustainability

Financial leadership within ASC is focused on sustainability, value for money, and strategic investment. In 2024–2025, the Directorate managed a gross expenditure of £861.9 million, reflecting the scale and complexity of adult social care in Birmingham.

Budget planning is aligned with strategic priorities and informed by data on demand, outcomes, and market conditions. The Directorate works closely with finance colleagues, elected members, and providers to ensure transparency and accountability.

ASC uses a commissioning strategy that promotes quality, innovation, and market sustainability. This includes:

- **Fair funding** for providers.
- **Support for workforce development.**
- **Encouragement of co-production and strengths-based practice.**

Financial decisions are guided by impact assessments, citizen feedback, and strategic goals. The Directorate is committed to investing in prevention, community-based support, and digital innovation.





CLOSING STATEMENT

– SUMMARY OF CQC THEMES

Birmingham's Adult Social Care (ASC) Self-Assessment presents a compelling narrative of a service that is reflective, responsive, and ambitious in its pursuit of excellence. Across the four CQC themes—working with people, providing support, ensuring safety, and demonstrating leadership—the Directorate has shown a consistent commitment to person-centred care, equity, and continuous improvement.

In **Theme 1**, "Working with People," the Directorate demonstrates how it engages citizens through strengths-based approaches such as the Three Conversations Model. Assessments are tailored to individual needs and delivered by culturally competent, locality-based teams. The use of data from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment ensures that services are targeted and responsive to Birmingham's diverse population. Carers are supported through co-produced strategies, and health promotion is embedded through partnerships with the Integrated Care Board and Health and Wellbeing Board. Equity is a guiding principle, with inclusive practices and targeted outreach to seldom-heard communities.

Theme 2, "Providing Support," highlights the scale and reach of ASC services. Over 16,000 adults accessed support in the past year, with a strong emphasis on enabling independence

through home-based care. Integrated locality teams and Neighbourhood Network Schemes ensure that support is holistic and community-driven. Technology Enabled Care (TEC) enhances wellbeing and reduces isolation, while carers benefit from timely assessments and tailored support. Hospital discharge and transition pathways are well-established, ensuring continuity of care. Commissioning is focused on sustainability, quality, and innovation, with robust feedback mechanisms driving service improvement.

In **Theme 3**, "Ensuring Safety within the System," safeguarding is shown to be a core function, supported by the Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board and dedicated locality leads. The Waiting Well Policy and Emergency Duty Team provide responsive crisis support, while daily dashboards enable proactive risk management. Transitions between services are carefully managed, with named workers and clear protocols. Provider oversight is rigorous, with quality assurance frameworks and improvement plans in place. Staff safety is prioritised through supervision, training, and wellbeing initiatives. Emergency planning is robust, with contingency strategies for pandemics, extreme weather, and service disruption. Citizen engagement is central to safety, with co-production embedded in

safeguarding forums and feedback mechanisms.

Finally, **Theme 4**, "Leadership," showcases strategic vision, governance, and workforce development. The refreshed ASC Strategy 2024–2026 aligns with citywide priorities and sets out ten guiding principles for transformation. Governance structures ensure accountability, with performance dashboards and annual Local Accounts providing transparency. Workforce development is supported through CPD, leadership programmes, and inclusive practices. Innovation is driven by TEC, co-production, and national improvement programmes. Financial leadership ensures sustainability, with strategic investment in prevention and community-based support. Citizens are recognised as leaders, with lived experience shaping strategy, recruitment, and service design.

Together, these themes reflect a Directorate that is not only meeting its statutory obligations but is actively shaping the future of adult social care in Birmingham. The self-assessment provides assurance, direction, and a foundation for continued progress towards outstanding care.



