



Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership  
*A caring partnership*

***‘Joint inspection of services for older people in Aberdeen’ – a summary for staff***

**The Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland have published their joint inspection report into health and social work services for older people in Aberdeen.**

**The report recognises that Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership is performing well in many areas.**

**The inspectors were particularly impressed by the impact our new Partnership was already having on the local community when they visited from November 2015 to February 2016, rating us ‘Very Good’.**

They say we are delivering good personal outcomes for many older people and their carers – and performing well in preventing avoidable emergency admissions to hospital.

The inspection report evaluates us as ‘Good’ in two of their quality indicators – ‘Impact on Staff’ and ‘Getting Help at the Right Time’.

It judges the Partnership to be 'Adequate' on the indicators 'Key Performance Outcomes', 'Policy Development', 'Management and Support of Staff', 'Partnership Working / Management of Resources', and 'Leadership and Direction'.

The report assessed the organisation as 'Weak' on 'Delivery of Key Processes'.



In the '**Impact on the Community**' section, they say: "The Partnership was strongly committed to engaging with and involving local communities in meeting the health and social care needs of the older population."

They add: "A range of effective engagement opportunities was in place to support communication with local stakeholders and communities and for them to contribute to discussions about the needs of their communities. A number of locality planning events were taking place, which aimed to increase local ownership.

**"The Partnership's strong commitment to promoting healthy active ageing was evident. Individuals and groups we met spoke very positively about these developments."**

"The Partnership's strong commitment to promoting healthy active ageing was evident. Working with organisations across the whole care sector, opportunities to support healthy lifestyles, reduce isolation and support carers were being taken forward.

"These had resulted in access to a wide range of creative opportunities and activities being developed. Individuals and groups we met spoke very positively about these developments.

"Overall, there had been significant mobilisation of community capacity to effectively support older people and their carers."



The report also speaks highly of the Partnership's commitment to delivering the right help, at the right time, in the right place – an area of activity which the inspectors graded 'Good'.

It says in the '**Getting Help at the Right Time**' section: "The Partnership's approach to the design and delivery of care for older people had a clear focus on maintaining their independence, good health and wellbeing.

"There was a strong message from the Partnership that educating and supporting communities as partners in managing health and care needs was important in order to improve wellbeing and reduce the impact of ill health. There was a clear plan for supporting and encouraging healthy ageing throughout the city.

"Once in receipt of services, older people and their carers we met were, in the main, satisfied with the quality of the support and care they received.

**"There was a clear plan for supporting and encouraging healthy ageing throughout the city."**

"Older people and carers greatly appreciated and praised the post-diagnostic support offered following diagnosis of dementia. However, access to this service was sometimes delayed."



We were also assessed as 'Good' in terms of our staff's approach towards integration.

Under '**Impact on Staff**', the inspectors say: "Almost all the staff we met enjoyed their work and most said they felt valued, recognised and supported by managers and other professionals. There was good access to professional development. Staff were generally well motivated.

"A more cohesive approach to planning and delivering services was beginning to be achieved through multi-agency working. Despite some of the challenges caused by staff shortages and increased demands on time, staff remained committed to

ensuring they delivered high standards of person-centred care for older people and their carers.

“The Partnership had a number of effective approaches to communication in order to keep staff updated. There was evidence that staff had been able to influence future services design through consultation events. Most staff had attended briefing events and said they felt well informed about integration.

**“Almost all the staff we met enjoyed their work and most said they felt valued, recognised and supported by managers and other professionals.”**

“Generally, staff expressed enthusiasm about what integration could offer to improve outcomes for older people. Senior managers recognised that continued dialogue with staff was needed to enable frontline staff feel more engaged.”

The inspectors did, however, recognise that “although approaches to improvement were under way, increased workloads, vacancies, absence and cumbersome assessment paperwork were having a negative effect on staff morale in some services”.



**We were assessed as ‘Adequate’ on five key indicators – ‘Key Performance Outcomes’, ‘Policy Development and Plans to Support Improvement in Service’, ‘Management and Support of Staff’, ‘Partnership Working’, and ‘Leadership and Direction’.**

Regarding **‘Management and Support of Staff’**, the inspectors say: “Overall, we found that staff were working effectively together to deliver good outcomes for older people and carers.

“However, there were significant recruitment issues for some staff groups that were affecting the capacity and capability of services to focus on prevention, earlier intervention and re-ablement.”

They add: “The majority of staff felt they had effective line management and had access to profession-specific supervision and appropriate training and development opportunities. The Partnership was working to establish an organisational development plan to support health and social care integration.”

**“There were several approaches taken by the Partnership that resulted in significantly fewer older people being admitted to hospital on an emergency basis compared to the Scottish average.”**



Under ‘**Key Performance Outcomes**’, the report says we deliver “positive personal outcomes for many older people and their carers”.

They continue: “There were several approaches taken by the Partnership that resulted in significantly fewer older people being admitted to hospital on an emergency basis compared to the Scottish average. Significant progress had been made in developing an anticipatory care approach and the preparation of anticipatory care plans for older people who otherwise had a high risk of emergency hospital admission.

“Although there were some recent signs of improved performance, too many older people still experienced a delay in their discharge from hospital. Care at home provision, an important factor contributing to delayed discharges, was a significant challenge for the Partnership.

**“Significant progress had been made in developing an anticipatory care approach and the preparation of anticipatory care plans for older people.”**

“The Partnership was beginning to strengthen its approach to self-directed support for older people. It was also reviewing its approach to re-ablement. The Partnership acknowledged that these were key areas for improvement.”



In terms of **'Policy Development'**, the inspectors note: "A number of key strategies were in the process of being finalised. These strategies had been developed to support the effective delivery of services to older people. Most were on target to be in place for the official start date for the Partnership [on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016].

"The Partnership's joint strategic plan had been subject to wide consultation. This plan set the high-level direction for future planning and delivery of services.

"The Partnership had an agreed locality structure and was in the process of developing the supporting management arrangements. Learning from a development site in the south side of the city was being used to progress locality planning across the city but was at a very early stage. Stakeholder engagement, including involving older people and their carers, was being incorporated into locality planning."



Regarding **'Partnership Working / Management of Resources'** the inspectors found: "Joint working between the finance teams within the council and NHS Grampian was effective. Development of joint financial management arrangements were on target for the start of the Health & Social Care Partnership.

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"Health and social work services had successfully achieved required savings targets in previous years and the Partnership acknowledged the need for this to continue in the challenging financial climate.

"As the new integrated arrangements take shape, the Partnership needs to work more closely with the third and independent sectors to deliver some of these savings through service redesign."

The report adds: “The Partnership had begun to address the challenges of electronic information sharing between health and social work, building on earlier developments within GP practices. This work was at an early stage of development and would be a key area for the Integration Joint Board to progress.”



Under **‘Leadership and Direction’**, the document says: “The Partnership had a clearly articulated vision for older people’s services within its strategic plan although it still had to set out the actions that would ensure this plan was implemented.

“The Partnership was engaging well with key stakeholders including local communities, staff and partner services. There had been effective engagement with staff to involve them in the planning and development of services.

“Senior managers acknowledged that this needed to be a continuous process to keep staff informed and engaged in the change and improvement processes. It was essential that the Partnership built on and improved its collection and analysis of performance information to inform change and improvement.”



The one area where the Partnership was judged to be ‘Weak’ was in **‘Delivery of Key Processes’**.

**“Nearly a quarter of older people were on a waiting list for services and some service provision had been delayed in excess of six months. The Partnership was actively progressing a range of initiatives to support improved access to services including access to out-of-hours support.”**

The report says: “Both health and social work services had centralised referral processes. Although this made initial contact easier, it did not always mean services were provided in an appropriate time frame. There was also a range of service-

specific criteria that led to multiple pathways into services. Older people and their carers found this confusing.

“Nearly a quarter of older people were on a waiting list for services and some service provision had been delayed in excess of six months. The Partnership was actively progressing a range of initiatives to support improved access to services including access to out-of-hours support. It was too early to measure the impact of these developments.

“There was clear evidence that investment had been made in relation to anticipatory care planning and we found this approach was achieving better outcomes for some older people. Many older people told us that they felt they had been involved in discussions about their assessed needs, though some said choices were limited. This was not helped by the slow implementation of self-directed support for older people.

“A significant concern was in respect of adult support and protection referrals. Although initial screening was undertaken in an appropriate time frame, critical tasks such as initial enquiries and full investigations were not, in some cases. Such delays potentially left a few older people at significant risk of harm over a protracted period.”



A further quality indicator covers ‘**Capacity for Improvement**’. Though not given a specific evaluation by the Care Inspectorate, ACHSCP does receive positive praise in the report.

The inspectors say: “The Partnership’s efforts to build community capacity and enhance individual wellbeing had helped many older people lead healthier and included lives. The Partnership was building on the work it had started to reduce the number of people whose discharge from hospital was delayed.

**“We considered that the Partnership had set a clear agenda to drive the health and social care partnership and deliver the required improvements as it goes forward.”**

“The leadership clearly supported staff to be engaged in informing continuous improvement in the Aberdeen area. The Partnership needed to consolidate its



management team to implement the new structure and ways of working to deliver its aspirations.

“We considered that the Partnership had set a clear agenda to drive the health and social care partnership and deliver the required improvements as it goes forward.”



**The inspection process was very useful in triggering a more in-depth review of our practices in relation to Adult Support & Protection and the report reflects the rapid action we took to deal with these issues.**

The findings of the inspectors were brought to the attention of the Partnership during early feedback during the inspection process. Senior managers reacted immediately and an independent external review of Adult Protection processes was commissioned.

Our external review, which looked at a much larger sample than the inspectors had studied, provided a contrasting result to the findings of their initial case file reading and revealed no underlying systemic problems.

**We will of course continue to improve processes and support our staff in Adult Protection – but the Partnership’s external review highlighted much better practice than that which is reflected in the report.**

The initial file reading found 21% of cases to be ‘weak’ or ‘unsatisfactory’ but the external review found only 3%, using the same methodology. The external review also found that 90% of cases were completed timeously, rising to 100% for the 75-84 age group.

We will of course continue to improve processes and support our staff in Adult Protection – but the Partnership’s external review highlighted much better practice than that which is reflected in the report.

The inspectors were satisfied by the speed with which the Partnership acted to address issues arising from the file reading.

We have now established a short-life working group, comprising staff members and management, to deal with any outstanding issues.

We welcome the Care Inspectorate's recommended areas for improvement. We will act upon them and build on our recognised areas of good practice to ensure that the Partnership is seen as an exemplary organisation, with excellent service delivery, outcomes, governance, processes and practice.

Many of the recommendations have been actioned and completed already in the months which have passed since the inspection was completed last February. Progress on the outstanding recommendations is well in hand and an Action Plan is being developed to ensure that all matters are fully dealt with.

**Our staff are highly skilled, knowledgeable, hard-working and dedicated. There can be no better foundation upon which to build our new organisation.**

The Care Inspectorate, as is standard procedure, will monitor our progress.

Significantly for such a young organisation, the inspection report has highlighted a number of areas of very good practice in the Partnership.

The inspectors have recognised that our staff are highly skilled, knowledgeable, hard-working and dedicated. There can be no better foundation upon which to build our future.



**ACHSCP**  
**20 September 2016**