

**Together Towards Outstanding Care:**  
Our commitment to care partners  
**2025 - 2027**

August 2025

## Document Control

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Author	Matthew Logan, Strategic Lead Integrated Commissioning
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# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 Bury's Let's Do It Strategy outlines the Council's vision and ambition that by 2030, the borough of Bury will have made the fastest improvement in reducing levels of deprivation than any other post-industrial northern locality.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out four clear principles that drive everything the Council do and a clear set of priorities to create the conditions for change:

- **Local** neighbourhoods
- **Enterprise** to drive economic Growth and Inclusion
- Delivering **Together**
- A **Strengths-based** approach

- 1.3 Health and Adult Care are the largest department in the Council, supporting nearly 3000 people in the borough to ensure their needs are met. To ensure a "golden thread" between the Let's Do It outcomes and priorities, and the work done to support the most vulnerable people of the borough, Bury Adult Social Care presents a clear and supportive vision:

*'the people of Bury will have independent and fulfilling lives, involved and connected to their communities'*

- 1.4 The priorities set by Bury Adult Social Care are clear commitments on how the department will improve the lives and experiences of those requiring support, improving their quality of life, working together with residents and partners and doing so in a strengths-based way.



- 1.5 The activities of the Council Commissioning Team are aligned to ensure they meet the department's priorities, and in turn, those of the Let's Do It Strategy.
- 1.6 All linked under the banner of **Together Towards Better Outcomes** and a shared Outcomes Framework, the Commissioning Team have work programmes all pulling together to meet the Adult Social Care Vision, Priorities and Obsessions.



- 1.7 The **Together Towards Outstanding Care Strategy** articulates the support currently available for the providers of our care and support services and the tools the Council uses to empower improvement across the sector. The measures work together to ensure the Provider Market can meet the needs of Bury's residents now and in the future.
- 1.8 The strategy works in tandem with the other Commissioning Work Programmes, all designed to deliver better outcomes for the people of Bury and driving the achievement of the Health and Adult Care priority of supporting and developing a Local and Enterprising care market.

## 2. Context

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### Independent Providers

- 2.1 Bury Council enjoys a diverse Adult Social Care provider market, and we are fortunate to work in partnership with colleagues ranging from large national care providers to smaller local charities. It is these partnerships, and the relationships fostered and developed over time that has supported the Council, the Providers, and the people who draw on care and support to meet the challenges that have been seen in care provision over the last several years.
- 2.2 The sector employs approximately 4,600 staff with the workforce providing care and support to people in various settings with a range of support needs including:
- 49 Care home providers (nursing and residential),
  - 24 Care at home providers
  - 18 Supported living providers.

## **CQC Performance**

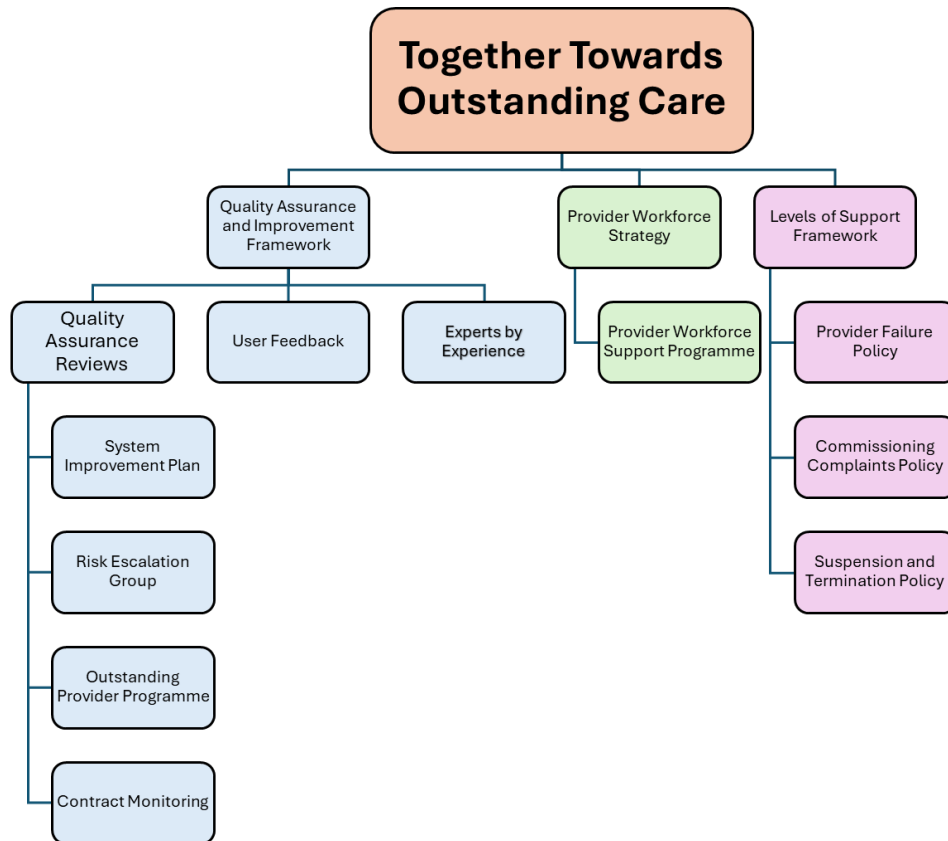
- 2.3 In recent years, Bury has consistently enhanced its standing regarding CQC ratings within the borough, particularly with Care Homes where there are currently no providers rated as Inadequate.
- 2.4 In 2022/23 Bury had 6 Care homes rated Inadequate, all of which were supported through the Provider Failure Process. All homes remain open and have been re-rated with 2 moving from Inadequate to Good. We are proud of the work these providers have done, in partnership with the Council to improve the services available to the people of Bury.
- 2.5 Bury is also delighted to have four care providers rated Outstanding, one of which has recently been voted amongst the Top 20 Care Homes in the Northwest.
- 2.6 Bury is now ranked:
- 8<sup>th</sup> in England for percentage of beds in Good or Outstanding rated Care Homes.
  - First in Greater Manchester for number of Good and Outstanding Learning Disability Supported Living providers.

This is down to the hard work and dedication of our providers, and we are proud to work in partnership with them to help them maintain and develop their quality.

## **3. Tools to work together: Quality Assurance and Improvement**

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- 3.1 Bury Council offer a wide range of support and improvement measures for providers; supporting them where needed and working together to deliver outstanding care and support to the people of Bury.



3.3 The Community Commissioning Team recently launched its updated **Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework**. This was developed to ensure that Bury Council's own commissioning is focused on providing sufficient high-quality services to individuals as well as incentivising continuous improvement by working in partnership with our Providers.

3.4 The Framework now articulates:

- How we quality assure services
- How we work together with Providers, focusing on continuous learning, innovation and improvement across the market and within our own organisation including through engagement and **forums**,
- How we ensure providers and people are encouraged to give **feedback** on the services they receive, which is acted on and used to drive improvements
- The clear and effective governance arrangements that provide visibility and assurance on quality, sustainability and risk to delivery.

3.5 Providers each have a dedicated Commissioning and Quality Assurance Officer who is the first port of call for discussions around development opportunities, service issues and future collaborations. The officers are there to work with providers, taking a collaborative and positive approach to any issue. Whereas in the past contact may have been restricted to annual reviews or even complaint investigations, Officers are there to work alongside the providers and will maintain regular, supportive contact throughout the year.

- 3.6 Providers are subject to an annual **Quality Assurance review** where their allocated Commissioning and Quality Assurance Officer proactively works with them to identify any issues or concerns. The Quality Assurance reviews can result in improvement plans being issued to providers; however, officer and provider will work together, supporting with any improvements that need to be made, whilst also celebrating best practice and successes.
- 3.7 The results of the Quality Assurance review, alongside other work carried out by the officers is tracked and reported via a Quarterly State of the Market report. At the end of each cycle of reviews, recurrent themes are identified and a System Quality Improvement Plan published. While individual actions are tackled by the provider and Commissioning and Quality Assurance Officer, the system Quality Improvement Plan outlines the actions to be taken across the sector such as the commissioning of learning sets, workforce support or training for providers.
- 3.8 As part of the review and redesign of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework, a robust governance process has been established including the development of a **Risk Escalation Group**. With members including Social Work Operations, Healthwatch, Safeguarding, Medicines Management, Infection Prevention and Control and NHS GM (Bury). This ensures that local intelligence is shared with the relevant colleagues, ensuring providers get the right support, at the right time, from the right professions.
- 3.9 The Local Authority also utilises a **Contract Management** Dashboard that proactively identifies themes across the entire Bury Adult Care Market, allowing support to be offered and measures taken before the need for escalation. It also allows officers to take a holistic view to the service being delivered by their providers; looking at a wide range of measures to proactively identify where support may be required. It utilises the following:
- Quality Assurance and Expert by Experience Audit outcomes
  - Concerns and Complaints and outcome tracking
  - Customer feedback
  - Safeguarding tracking
  - Infection Prevention and Control Audit results
  - CQC rating and bandings
  - Changes in ownership and management
  - Staff turnover
  - Healthwatch Enter and View Feedback



- 3.10 This data is readily available to Commissioning and Quality Assurance Officers while it is regularly reviewed by the Provider Performance Management Group to help develop the Annual **System Quality Improvement Plan**.
- 3.11 While we are proud of the number of Outstanding Care Providers in the Borough and are committed to only commissioning those rated Good and Outstanding in any new commissions, we are committed to driving continuous improvement in the sector.
- 3.12 Those providers rated Good who are identified through the Quality Assurance Review process as having the potential for an improved rating can now be offered support via the **Outstanding Provider Programme**. Utilising a self-assessment, targeted support by the Commissioning Officer, peer support from other providers and sharing of best practice, providers are given every opportunity to take the next step in improving the quality of their service. When they are ready, the Commissioning Team will then recommend them for reinspection to CQC.
- 3.13 To further ensure the Quality Assurance process assesses whether the dignity, wishes, and choices of people in receipt of services are being met, the Commissioning Team will also be employing a team of **Experts by Experience**. Employed by the Council they will work alongside Commissioning and Quality Assurance Officers, carrying out their own reviews of services using a framework and process co-produced with users. An integral part of the Commissioning Team they will ensure that the voice of the person in receipt of services is heard and respected.

## 4. Provider Workforce

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- 4.1 The Independent Provider Sector in Bury is diverse with providers ranging from large national care providers to small local charities. Each provider is a separate employing organisation with its own employment terms and conditions, employing approximately a total of 4,600 staff. This workforce provides care and support to people in various settings with a range of support needs.
- 4.2 Bury are one of the few authorities in the Northwest with a dedicated **Adult Social Care Independent Provider Workforce Strategy**. Describing a number of priorities and areas for action for the coming years, this has been informed by Providers who identified their priority areas for support.
- 4.3 To action the strategy, the Council has commissioned the **Adult Social Care Workforce Support Programme**. Delivered by the **Bury Care Academy**, this aims to enhance the capacity, sustainability, and quality of the adult social care workforce in Bury. This programme is designed to support independent sector providers in recruiting, retaining, and developing their workforce.
- 4.4 The key objectives of the programme are:

- **Reduce Provider agency spends** improved retention and access to alternative forms of staffing
- **Student pathways:** improved flow and accessibility of student placements in high quality Adult Social Care settings
- **Career pathways:** establish clear career pathways for new and existing staff
- **Improve Recruitment practices:** supporting the management of current recruitment and development of different approaches
- **Support the increase of workforce capacity and retention**
- **Outstanding care:** driving excellence in the field of service delivery and staff development in the Provider Sector
- **Support Workforce Development:** Provide training and development opportunities to improve the quality of care.

4.5 While the offer will continue to develop in response to feedback, risk and new innovations, Providers will have access to:

- Centralised Recruitment Support
- Co-ordinated market recruitment campaigns
- Social Care Career Academy
- Student Placement, work experience and early careers promotion
- Influencer programme
- Bury Flex: Flexible pool of staff negating the need for expensive agency to fill roles
- Provider Excellence Program
- Bespoke training opportunities
- Leadership Development for new and aspiring managers
- Support in uptake of ASC-WDS
- Support in engagement with Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter

4.6 Having the right level of workforce capacity and capabilities in this element of the system is crucial to ensure people are supported in the right place at the right time.

## 5. Levels of Support

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- 5.1 While the Risk Escalation Group is where issues are escalated and solutions sought, Bury also has a **Levels of Support Framework** for when concerns require a more urgent response.
- 5.2 The Framework clearly states the processes, actions, and responsibilities of Bury Council in the event of a more urgent care provision concern. This incorporates the responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, including our joint response to managing provider failure.
- 5.3 The framework allows the Council, and partners to work alongside providers to proactively. It details how staff can follow a **Multi-Agency Concerns (MAC)** process to address any urgent care plan delivery concerns in this context.
- 5.4 Multi-Agency Concerns (MAC) meetings can be requested at any time during this process and representation will reflect the level of concern. They are categorised as:
- Level 1 Low concern
  - Level 2 Serious concern
  - Level 3 Serious/Significant Concern - Risk of Closure
- 5.5 These meetings act as part of our supportive intervention approach with Providers. A proactive and supportive way to work with providers and partners in addressing concerns when they first arise.
- 5.6 They provide a robust system of co-ordination of intelligence for all partner agencies including health, social care, Care Quality Commission (CQC) and police (if appropriate) and ensure a plan of action is agreed.
- 5.7 Developed alongside relevant stakeholder and utilising a lesson learned approach, the Council also has a robust **Provider Failure Policy** and Procedure. The purpose of the policy and its procedures is to:
- Recognise that whilst providers may fail or sometimes choose to close, service continuity never should. The Council's duty to safeguard and ensure continuity of care comes first.
  - Give confidence and reassurance to people who use services, carers, and family members in the event of uncertainty about the continuity of care and support.
  - Establish a clear set of responsibilities and accountabilities for mobilising staff and other resources in response to potential provider closure or failure.
  - Ensure the safety and wellbeing of people who use services, regardless of funding arrangements, by enabling continuity of care in the event of or the likelihood of provider or business failure or service interruption.

- Develop a proactive approach which, as far as is practicable, ensures the Council works with the market to ensure continuity of care and support services, and.
- Ensure that the use of duties under the Care Act 2014 are used only in exceptional circumstances and remain only temporary.
- Information and vital updates are shared with partners organisations including other placing/contracted authorities.

5.8 The proactive approach taking by the Commissioning Team, working closely with providers and utilising the Levels of Support approach helps identify potential provider failure as early as possible and ensure users, families, staff and provider are supported effectively.

## 6. Outcomes Framework

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6.1 The Bury Commissioning Team works to ensure the golden thread of the Let's Do It strategy, filters through the Adult Social Care Vision and Priorities, is informed by the latest risks and drives the work and approach taken by the team.



- 6.2 The Commissioning Team have an overarching Outcomes Framework, designed to ensure that the work undertaken has a positive impact on the wider Council and Adult Social Care strategies, vision and priorities.



- 6.3 Commissioners across the “Together Towards” programmes work to these outcomes with Together Towards Outstanding Care primarily focused on the ‘**Local And Enterprising Market**’ priority and ‘**High quality of care when needed**’ outcome.
- 6.4 Regular monitoring of specific KPIs against the above outcomes provides us with assurance on the impact our work is having on the most vulnerable people in our borough.

Priority	Outcome	KPI
Local and Enterprising Market	High quality of care when needed	% of providers rated Good and Outstanding by CQC
		reduce number of complaints received
		Staff retention rates, agency usage and staff turnover
		% of providers members of Good Employment Charter
		Increase amount of feedback received from people in receipt of services
		£ care market is worth to the local economy

6.5 Local authorities are required to develop a market that delivers a wide range of sustainable, high-quality care and support services that will be available to our communities. The Commissioning Team knows it cannot do this in isolation and is committed to working together with providers and partners to strive for excellence across the care sector.

6.6 The Together Towards Outstanding Care Strategy presents a clear picture of all the support available to Providers, and measures in place to drive continuous improvement across Adult Social Care in Bury. Our commitments are outlined below, and they will ensure the availability of high-quality care in a local and enterprising market and that **we will** deliver:

- Outstanding support to providers,
- Outstanding strengths-based services,
- Outstanding workforce development and career progression
- Outstanding care provision.

## 7. Annex A

### Together Towards Outstanding Care Commitment Grid

The commitment milestones will be reviewed annually, updated and revised as necessary.

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#### “WE WILL”

‘We Will’	How
Increase the number of Outstanding rated care providers in Bury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invite expressions of interest from providers identified through the quality assurance process to take part in the Outstanding Provider Programme</li><li>• Provide dedicated support to a minimum of 2 providers per year to improve their CQC rating</li><li>• Support will be provided for up to 12 months before Council makes recommendation for re-inspection by CQC</li></ul>
Drive the continued improvement of care services in Bury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a dedicated Commissioning and Quality Assurance Officer for each provider as first point of contact for support.</li><li>• Ensure all providers receive an annual quality assurance review.</li><li>• Each provider will be invited to minimum quarterly, sector-specific provider forum.</li><li>• Established Provider Excellence Learning Sets. Minimum 4 to take place annually on specific areas of risk or improvement. Free to attend and to be run by experts.</li></ul>
Improve the recruitment, retention and staff experience for providers in Bury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council funded Bury Provider Workforce Support Programme</li><li>• Meet commitments outlined in Bury Council Adult Health And Social Care Independent Provider Workforce Strategy</li><li>• Seek and share care staff feedback annually; supporting improvement actions where necessary</li></ul>

