

Healthwatch City of London Patient Panel on the City of London Corporation's Adult Social Care strategy

On Thursday, 28 November we held a Patient Panel on the draft strategy for Adult Social Care from the City of London Corporation. We were joined by Scott Myers, Strategy officer and Ellie Ward, Head of Strategy and Performance from the Corporation to discuss and gather feedback from City residents on their thoughts and concerns over the draft of the strategy.

Key areas of discussion included the accessibility of services, digital exclusion, the role of technology in supporting independence, and the need for better coordination in care services. City residents were able to share their experiences, highlight current and potential challenges, and proposed ideas in order to improve the social care that residents are currently experiencing.

The new strategy for Adult Social Care 2024-2028

The vision is to *empower people to thrive through timely and tailored support that always puts those with care and support needs first.*

This strategy addresses the growing need for adult social care in the City of London, aiming to provide the right support for everyone who needs it, at the right time and in the right place.

The current needs for adult social care in the City is growing, especially for older residents. In 2022/23, there was 165 new requests for help, requests have increased by 6% and 73% for those over the age of 65, in 2022/23, there was 19 residents placed in residential care and 78 received care at home, they supported 30 unpaid carers and concerns about adult safety have increased by 88% in five years.

In order to secure their vision, they have identified the following four strategic commitments through which they will:

1. Help people meet their own needs and aspirations in a safe and supportive way.
2. Provide communities with a skilled, supported, and adaptable workforce dedicated to delivering high-quality care.
3. Work collaboratively with their partners to provide people with the right support, in the right place at the right time.
4. Provide a wide range of high-quality, accessible care options to meet people's needs.

These commitments provide the framework for the Corporation's strategy to deliver better outcomes, and more efficient and effective services.

There are unique challenges that the City of London has including, that due to the small size of the population, there is not sufficient demand to develop a care home within the square mile. There are also challenges that are outside the control of the Corporation such as delayed transfers of care from hospital.

Feedback from attendees

Digital barriers and a lack of access to the draft strategy

A significant point raised by participants was the need for greater accessibility to the adult social care strategy. While the strategy is being developed, it was noted that many people may not be able to participate in online consultations or read digital documents.

More engagement is needed in order to ensure residents are able to have their say in the strategy, including printed copies of the strategy, in-person meetings, and the use of accessible formats.

Another attendee emphasised that some individuals may find it difficult to participate in virtual consultations and would benefit from the opportunity to engage in person. Digital exclusion is a barrier that remains a challenge for many, particularly for older adults who may not have access to digital devices.

Although digital barriers were highlighted here, another discussion also emphasised how technology can be used to support independence, especially for individuals with physical or cognitive impairments. Examples were shared, such as smart devices and digital tools that assist people with dementia by providing reminders or location tracking, as well as for those with impaired mobility to use smart devices to pay for items.

The access to care homes

Another issue raised was the experience of residents who are paying for their care but may struggle to find appropriate accommodations. Many residents are unable to access affordable or suitable care homes within the City and are then forced to move away from their community due to a lack of availability.

Safeguarding Concerns regarding estates

An attendee shared a personal experience of receiving a scam call about a repair request, highlighting the vulnerability of residents when dealing with unsolicited calls related to repairs within the estate.

The Corporation will be taking all of the comments and feedback from attendees into consideration for the strategy and into the action plan that will follow.

The consultation for the draft strategy closed on 31, December 2024.

To read the draft strategy that this session was based on, you can visit:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/social-care-for-adults/adult-social-care-strategy-consultation>

For more information on our Patient Panels please visit our events page,

<https://www.healthwatchcityoflondon.org.uk/events>