



Report to Health and Social Care Select Committee

Date: 3rd February 2022

Title: Better Lives Transformation Programme

Relevant councillor(s): Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Author and/or contact officer: Gillian Quinton, Corporate Director, Buckinghamshire Council

Ward(s) affected: none specific

Recommendations: That the Health and Social Care Select Committee notes and provides feedback on the contents of the report.

Executive summary

1.1 Buckinghamshire Council's Better Lives Strategy 2022-25 was published on 19th January 2022. The strategy reiterates the direction of travel set out in the original Better Lives strategy 2018-21. This report provides a summary of the progress made through the first strategy and explains the scope of the second phase of the transformation programme to deliver Better Lives in Buckinghamshire.

Content of report

1.2 In 2018 Buckinghamshire County Council published its first overarching strategy for adult social care, *Better Lives*. The strategy set out the intention to transform social care services from a traditional, paternalistic approach to one that promotes independence, where the outcomes and goals of each individual shaped the support they can draw on.

1.3 Buckinghamshire Council has recently published a refreshed document (Appendix 1). Given the scale of the ambition set out in the original strategy, the refresh reinforces the Council's vision and builds on the successes to date. It demonstrates how the approach is making a difference to people's lives and Appendix 2 provides some example case studies. The refreshed strategy also identifies areas of focus for the

next three years, to embed the changes made to date and continue on the programme of transformation.

The Better Lives Strategy

- 1.4 The Better Lives Strategy sets out the Council's ambition to reduce the number of people in long-term residential and nursing care, ensuring that these services are only used when absolutely necessary. Instead, more people will be supported to regain independence through short term interventions and remain living independently for longer, in their own homes particularly through better signposting and advice. The approach not only provides better outcomes for people, but also focusses activity into the lowest cost provision, resulting in a financial benefit for the council. For example, the average weekly cost of a home care package is £285 compared with the average cost of a nursing home placement at £1,000. The diagram below explains the model, which is based on three tiers of support: Living Independently; Regaining Independence; and Living with Support.



- 1.5 The strategy describes the Council's determination to transform services to improve outcomes for people and focuses on:

- Independence without the need for long-term care wherever possible
- People having greater choice and control over their care
- With each person, looking at what they can and want to achieve, building on networks of support that they already have in place
- Safeguarding adults when it is necessary
- Delaying/reducing the need for traditional care services

- Working with providers in the care market to develop solutions which will meet current and future needs
- Working as part of the health and social care system to provide high quality care and support to residents
- Best value for money

Better Lives Transformation Phase 1 (2018-21)

- 1.6 During the lifetime of the initial Better Lives strategy, the service made some fundamental changes to the way in which adult social care worked, which are providing a strong foundation for Phase 2 of the programme.
- 1.7 The first of these was the introduction of strengths-based practise. The approach moves the focus of our interaction with people away from traditional service provision, which assessed people’s needs, informed them of what they needed and which wrapped services around people to keep them safe. The strengths-based approach means that staff work with people, their families and community assets to understand the outcomes they want to achieve, providing advice and support to help them realise their goals and remain independent. Some of the examples in Appendix 1 demonstrate the difference this approach has made to the lives of those who have been in contact with adult social care in Buckinghamshire.
- 1.8 To modernise the service to support this strengths-based approach, two major change projects were also implemented during Phase 1 of Better Lives. A new social work case management recording system was launched in March 2021 and an operations service restructure which placed long-term teams on a locality footprint with a new ‘front door’ to social care. A new multi-agency hub means that enquirers can be helped in a more holistic way. Workers from different services and organisations are co-located to provide appropriate advice and support on issues such as drugs, alcohol and housing as well as social care. A new advice website, Care Advice Bucks, co-designed with Buckinghamshire residents was launched, providing a

wealth of information and support as well as a new online directory to link people with activities in their area.

The latest national statistics return on short and long-term services demonstrates how this approach is helping many more people in Buckinghamshire with

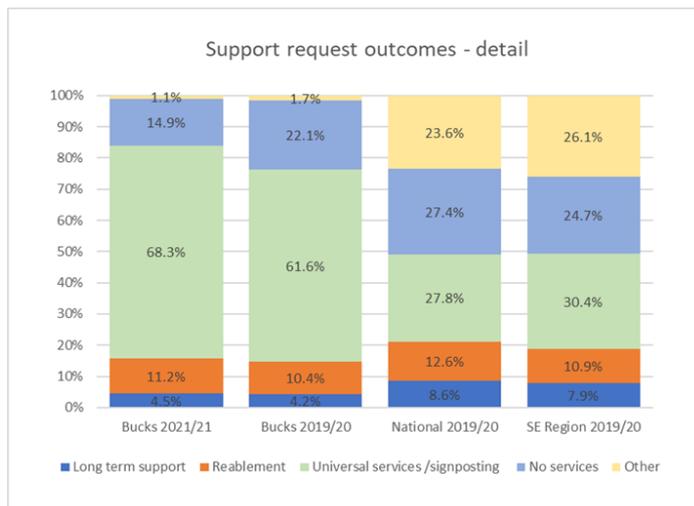


Fig 1: comparison of support request outcomes, National SALT return 2020-21

the advice and support they need at first contact, compared regionally and nationally (Fig 1)

- 1.9 Through our Tier 1 transformation, Buckinghamshire is now one of the best performing authorities for proportion of new requests for support managed through universal services and signposting (Fig 2).

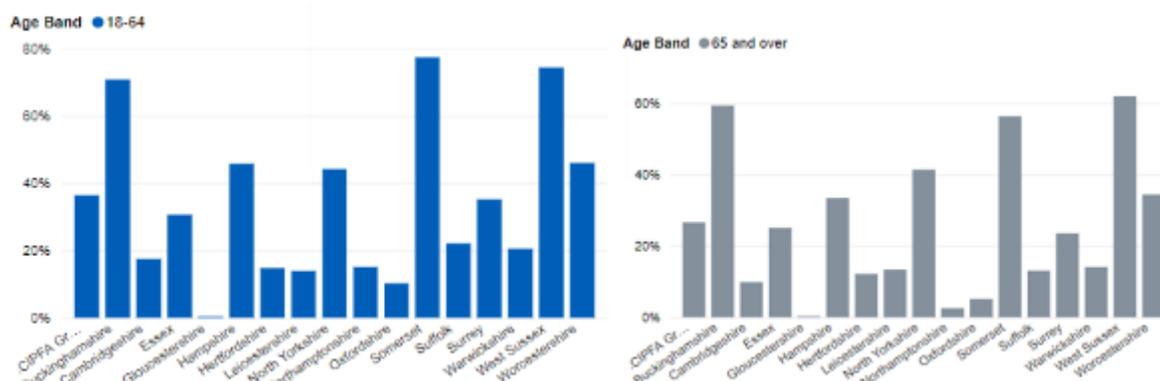


Fig 2: Proportion of requests for support that result in Universal Services and Signposting, by age group

- 1.10 Work to align internal services and with health colleagues in relation to hospital discharge, alignment of processes and reablement during Phase 1 of the Better Lives Transformation programme has resulted in more efficient and responsive services. There have been significant reductions in inappropriate referrals for short term interventions and waiting lists were improving, even during the pandemic (Table 1 below). However, Buckinghamshire still provides lower levels of short-term intervention than comparator authorities and this area remains a focus for improvement.

Table 1: Comparison of short-term intervention metrics, June 2021

	Feb 2019	Feb 2020	Feb 2021
Number of inappropriate referrals	64	91	24
% of referrals inappropriate	32.32%	41.55%	23.08%
Average waiting time from referral to assessment (days)	8.01	8.06	2.84

- 1.11 Prior to Covid our Better Lives approach was delivering on the Tier 3 ambition to reduce the numbers of people in residential and nursing care. Fig 4 below shows

how the trend in residential and nursing home admissions in Buckinghamshire was significantly different to that being seen regionally and nationally.

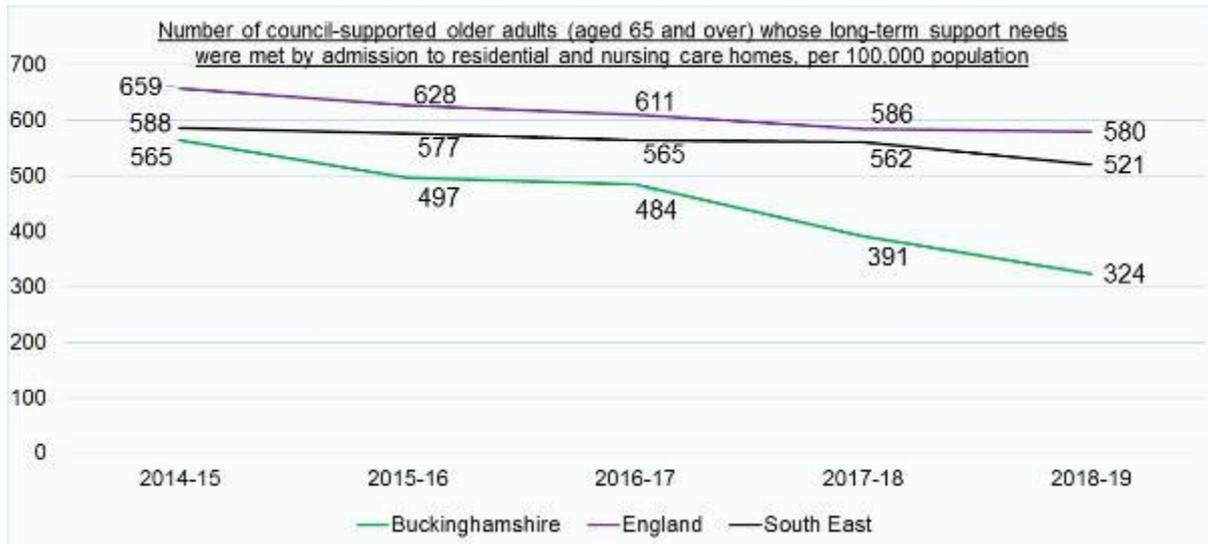


Fig 4: Trends in residential and nursing care admissions 2014-2019

- 1.12 The impact of Better Lives is also being reflected in the views of those who draw on social care services. The latest national user survey (2020-21) showed improvements in satisfaction with the Council’s adult social care services despite the pandemic. Satisfaction with the care and support that people received has improved (68%) and is now higher than both the CIPFA comparators (65%) and the England average (64%). Only 3% of people were dissatisfied with the service they received.
- 1.13 The number of people reporting that they have control over their daily lives has also risen from 75% in 2019-20 to 83% (78% CIPFA, 77% England), and those who say that they feel safe has increased to 77% from 68% (71% CIPFA, 70% England).
- 1.14 Finally, the Better Lives transformation programme underpinning the strategy has been primarily responsible for delivering savings of over £10m, which have mitigated pressures on services from increases in demand and complexity of need.

Better Lives Transformation Phase 2 (2022-25)

- 1.15 A small number of projects are continuing into the next phase of our change programme, underpinning the refreshed Better Lives strategy, alongside a number of new areas of focus. The projects and the desired outcomes are:

Mental Health: reviewing the arrangement with Oxford Health Foundation Trust to ensure social work practise is aligned with the Better Lives approach

Community Opportunities: building on the successful transfer of Thrift Farm to an appropriate provider, this project will continue the programme to develop a broad community opportunities offer with voluntary and community sector partners, a county-wide short breaks offer, improved access to training and supported employment for working age adults and to volunteering opportunities

Autism: Understanding the support needs of people with autism and making it easier for people with autism to get the help they need at the earliest opportunity

Technology-enabled Care: The use of technology is mainstreamed so that it is used where it is appropriate to do so to enable people to live as independently as possible

Specialist Housing: Revising the prospectus to attract investment in specialist housing development in Buckinghamshire and making sure there is enough specialist housing provision to meet demand within the county

First Response: Bringing multi-agency partners into the adult social care 'front door' means that people can be supported more swiftly and effectively. One Recovery Bucks and Connexions Support have already joined and more are due, to prevent, reduce or delay the need for statutory assessments

Carers Support: Carers in Buckinghamshire have a broader offer of support available to them and have a better experience of the assessment process. As a result, there will be fewer care breakdowns in families

Self-directed Support: People with social care needs have greater choice and control over how their personal goals are achieved

Dementia Specialist Services: The route through to services is made easier to navigate and there are more services on offer for people with dementia and their families. More people are able to live at home for longer and fewer people with dementia have end of life care in hospital

In addition, initiatives to continue improving quality will continue with a strong focus on resident engagement and on supporting staff through greater learning and development opportunities, including career pathways.

The integrated commissioning service is introducing a new way of procuring packages of care for people which will allow the Council to set out new terms relating to price and quality. Providers who have met these terms will then be able to bid for packages of care through an online portal, making the process of procurement much more efficient, improve quality and deliver value for money.

Each project will have identified metrics by which their success can be measured and the overall programme metrics, some of which are shown above, are monitored at the service's monthly Transformation Board. The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing is a member of the Board.

Challenges

In terms of challenges, the ambition of the programme and the projects is extensive. Over the past two years much of the capacity of services has been focussed on continuity of service provision for those who use social care services, as well as support to our local NHS in their response to the pandemic. The rapid transmission of the Omicron variant has meant that services are working to maximise hospital discharges and support care providers. To add to this pressure, towards the end of 2021 the council experienced a significant demand for adult social care services and safeguarding. Capacity to deliver transformational change is currently and understandably therefore limited.

In addition, the Government has issued its social care reforms and the council needs to ensure it plans appropriately for implementation. In October 2023 a new cap on personal care, new capital limits and changes for self-funders of care will be introduced. Work is taking place to assess the potential impact, and initial indications are that this will be significant. Over the next two years, adult social care and colleagues in affiliated Directorates will be needed to prepare the council for the reforms.

Finally, at the current time, there will be a legislative change to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards in April 2023. This will impact social work practise and will require a substantial implementation project.

Despite the challenges, the transformation programme, alongside other priorities, are kept constantly under review to ensure that where possible, capacity is available to deliver the Better Lives ambition.

