

The background of the page features several light purple silhouettes of people. On the left, a large silhouette of a person is shown from the back, looking towards the right. In the center-right, three silhouettes of people are walking towards the right, with the person in the middle holding the hand of the person on the right. At the bottom, a row of smaller silhouettes depicts various groups of people, including a person in a wheelchair being assisted by others, and several pairs of people walking together.

Adult Social Care Annual Report 2024/25



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

Portfolio Holder introduction

I am delighted to introduce the Annual Report for Adult Social Care for the year 2024/25.

It has certainly been a challenging year. Demand has risen sharply, including the number of people referred to the service with safeguarding concerns.

Despite these areas of pressure, there are notable areas of very strong performance which give me a good deal of confidence and should reassure my colleagues in the council, and the residents of West Berkshire.

I note the fine work we have undertaken to keep vulnerable people safe, with 96% of safeguarding investigations leading to the identified risk being reduced or removed.

I am pleased with the positive feedback direct from the people we support. The reablement service in particular has received excellent feedback, with a massive 98% of respondents indicating they would recommend the service to others.

The number of complaints received by the service is low - far lower than the number of compliments received, but I am keen that we hear direct from people who receive support from the service. We are developing systems so that people can give us their feedback more easily.

This report also includes high-level financial information. The Adult Social Care budget is very large, and I am pleased that the department has shown real rigour in managing the current financial challenges.

I am also pleased with the work being done to support carers, to aid our colleagues in the Health Service and to make the most of the opportunities being offered by new technologies.

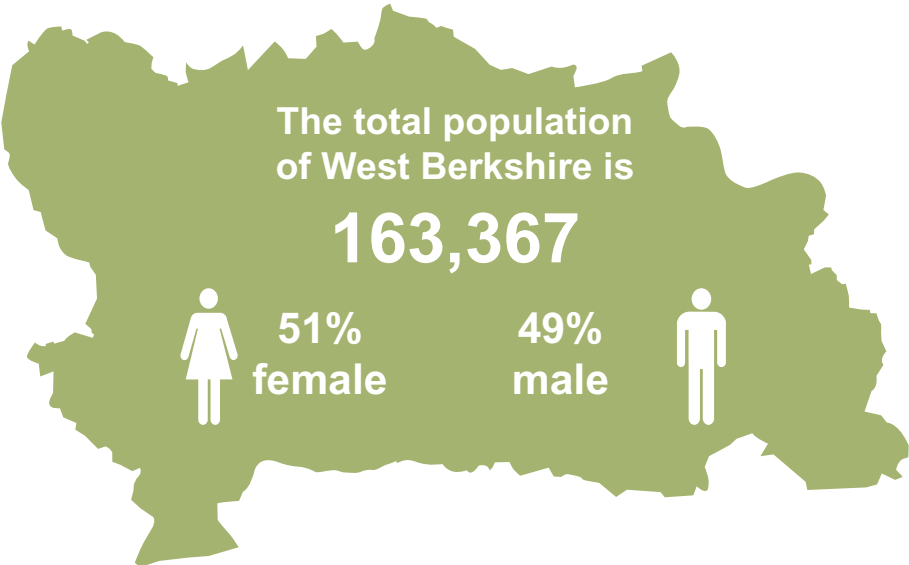
I commend this report and congratulate the department on a successful year.



Patrick Clark
*Executive Portfolio Holder
for Adult Social Care
& Public Health*

1. Key facts and figures

Our population¹



Age range

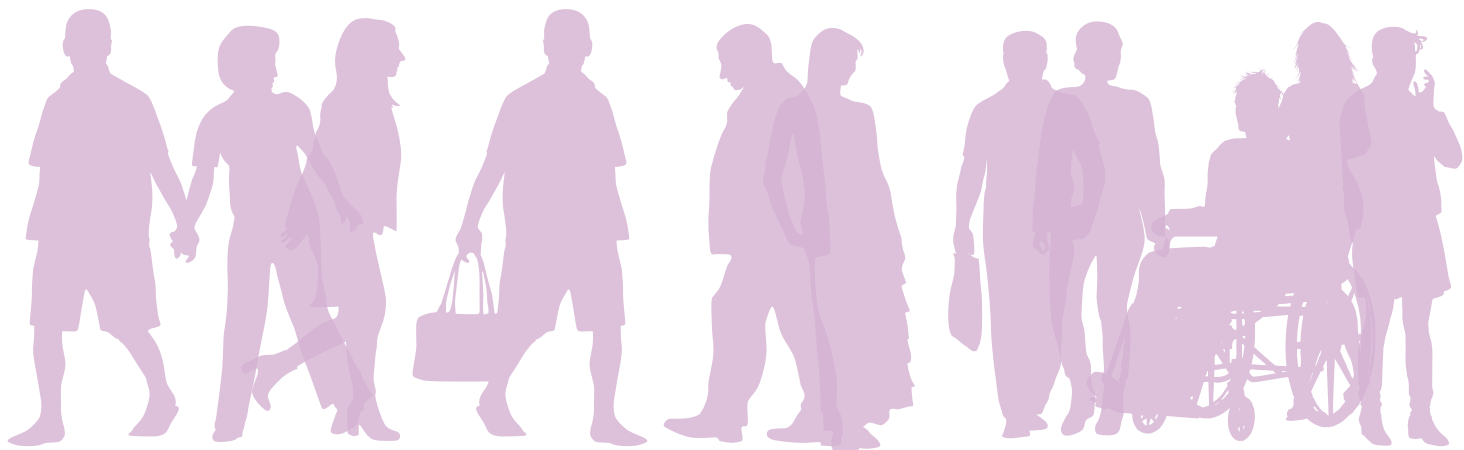
95,185 of the populations are aged 18-64

32,857 of the population are aged 65+

In the latest census 2011 to 2021, there was an increase of **33.8%** in people aged 65 and over in West Berkshire.



¹ Estimates of the population for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics



2. Supporting our residents

How Adult Social Care (ASC) supported our residents during 2024/25

- **8806** requests for support.
- **50.5%** of requests for support were resolved at first point of contact through provision of good information, advice and signposting.
- **737** Care Act assessments for long term support carried out.
- A further **1770** assessments for short term support (includes specialist assessments and assessments for equipment provision through our Trusted Assessors).
- **1676** reviews for individuals were completed.
- Successfully supported **40** individuals in transitions from Children's to Adult's Services, **29** of which were provided long term support.

Support for carers

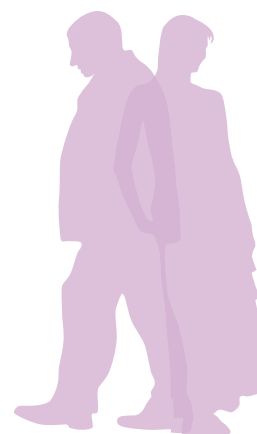
- **1055** individuals were identified during 2024/25 supporting adults with care and support needs and/or receiving a carer's assessment.
- **146** carer's assessments carried out.
- **183** carers received services and a further 583 carers were provided with information advice and signposting.
- **123** carers received respite services.

Short term services

565 people provided with supportive equipment to assist with daily living.

845 items of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) equipment provided.

265 people coming out of hospital were supported with reablement services.



Our statutory reporting requirements changed in 2023. Activity information is now reported quarterly under a new Client Level Dataset framework. Published data is limited and we hope to have comparative data next year. We are working to capture and review data at both a local and national level under this new framework.

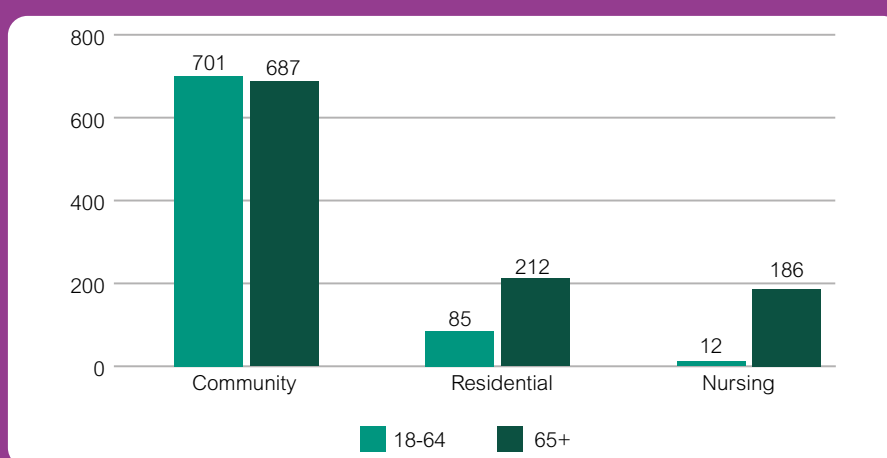
Long term care and support services

2,455 people were supported with long term support during the year. This is a **1.4%** increase since 2023/24.

As at 31 March 2025, we were supporting **1,883** individuals with long term care and support services.

- **1,388** people with support in the community.
 - Of these **166** people were provided with a direct payment.
- **297** people in long term residential care.
- **198** people in long term nursing care.

People in receipt of long term care and support
by setting as at 31 March 2025



New admissions to long term placements:

201 new admissions to Residential or Nursing care **11% lower** than 2023/24.

Settled accommodation

81% of individuals with a Learning Disability aged 18-64 are in settled accommodation (for example with family, in their own home, or in a supported living setting).

Hospital discharge

Our hospital discharge team received **1,332** referrals from hospitals across the district to help support timely discharge. This is a **6%** increase since 2023/24.

Mental Health response

178 Mental Health Act assessments were completed by our Approved Mental Health Practitioners.

Financial assessments

2,775 Adult Social Care financial assessments/reviews.

(Where no comparison data has been provided there has been no significant change in the year, or the situation has remained static).

3. What we heard from you in 2024/25

Adult Social Care survey

Every year we carry out a survey of people who receive ongoing care and support.

- **67%** were extremely or very satisfied with the support received from us.
- **93%** reported that our care and support services helped them to have a better quality of life.
- **75%** of people who used our services felt they had control over their daily life.
- **70%** of people who used our services felt safe, with **92%** reporting that the services they received helped them to feel safe and secure.

We are waiting for the national data to be published to understand our results, and will respond to areas requiring improvement when the Adult Social Care strategy is developed.

We are developing further ways to collect feedback to understand experiences of people that contact us. A pilot started in April 2025 with our Hospital Discharge and Locality teams. We will respond to the learning from this.

West Berkshire Reablement survey

Every year our specialist in-house reablement service asks for feedback from the people that have used their service. **185** people responded to their survey, a **73%** response rate.

- **90%** felt more independent.
- **99%** felt that staff had the skills to meet their needs.
- **99%** said that they were treated with respect and dignity at all times.
- **98%** felt they would be comfortable telling us if they had any worries or concerns.
- **98%** of results indicated that they would be likely or extremely likely to recommend the service.
- **91%** of results showed that they were extremely satisfied with the service.

The survey results were largely in line with 2023/24. A greater number of individuals reported that they felt more independent, increasing from **83%** to **90%**.

Comments included:

*"I am pleased with the service that I received,
I have the upmost admiration for you and the team, thank you very much."*

*"This was a wholly professional service, easy going and easy to talk to the people visiting.
Overall very happy with the service."*

"I have had carers over the years for myself and my husband and this is the best service I have ever had, everyone really was lovely, in fact could I go back into hospital and then come out again so I can keep you for a bit longer. Lovely carers who have been to help me, always happy."

"I have been treated extremely well and I have never felt rushed. The carers and care that I have received has been so much more than what I expected."

Complaints and compliments

We received **45** complaints in 2024/25 (a decrease of **18%** when compared to 2023/24), all of these were investigated in a timely manner, in accordance with our Adult Social Care complaints procedure.

321 compliments were received, a **54%** increase when compared to the **208** recorded last year.

“

*'We wanted to thank you for supporting *** and *** so brilliantly over the last few months. This has been one of the most stressful periods of all our lives. You have both been incredibly effective and generous with your time and nothing has been too much trouble. We all felt that you genuinely cared about achieving a fair and just outcome.'*

“

'Simply awesome'

”

”

“

*'They both said how wonderful it was to have such a kind, warm and caring OT visit *** at this difficult time for them'*

”

“

'With kind regards and thanks for the services and support provided by this small but vital team'

”

“

*'I cannot thank *** enough for helping my brother as she went above and beyond her duty to ensure he was safe and secure. As I live a long way from my brother, I do worry about him but *** kept me updated on every visit. *** is certainly an asset to the services and deserves praise on how she dealt with my brother's case'*

”

4. Safeguarding - responding to concerns about adult abuse and neglect

We responded to **2,187** social welfare concerns.

1,522 safeguarding concerns were reported (an increase of **12%** since last year).

671 reported concerns led to an investigation.

670 safeguarding investigations completed, a **3%** increase.

96% of safeguarding investigations led to the identified risk being reduced or removed.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

678 new deprivation of liberty applications were received – an increase of 12% compared to 2023/24.

617 granted applications during the year (including 422 applications from 2023/24).

250 remaining applications to be processed after 31 March 2025.

Some of our key achievements for safeguarding in 2024/25 include:

Raising awareness of safeguarding - We were actively involved in organising the tri-borough (West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham) Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) safeguarding adults' week. This delivered seven virtual webinars on various safeguarding topics and hosted 263 attendees. Measures of 'confidence in topic area' were taken before and after each event, with all participants recording an increase in confidence achieved.

Older adults (65+) with care and support needs are more likely to die in fires. We actively contributed to the **fire safety campaign** launched by the SAB aimed at providers and residents.

Protecting people from financial abuse - We hosted a virtual learning event from the England Illegal Money Lending team attended by individuals from a range of partner agencies. The event was in response to discussions at the Safeguarding Adult Forum and delivered with colleagues from the Public Protection Partnership.

We continue to chair the multi-disciplinary **hoarding group**. This group aims to identify and support residents where hoarding presents significant risks to the person, neighbours and any blue light services who may be called to attendance.

We sponsored the SAB priority to **embed good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act** (MCA) within the practice of statutory partners. West Berkshire chaired the Learning and Development subgroup of the SAB tasked with co-ordinating the various activities that supported that priority across the partnership area.

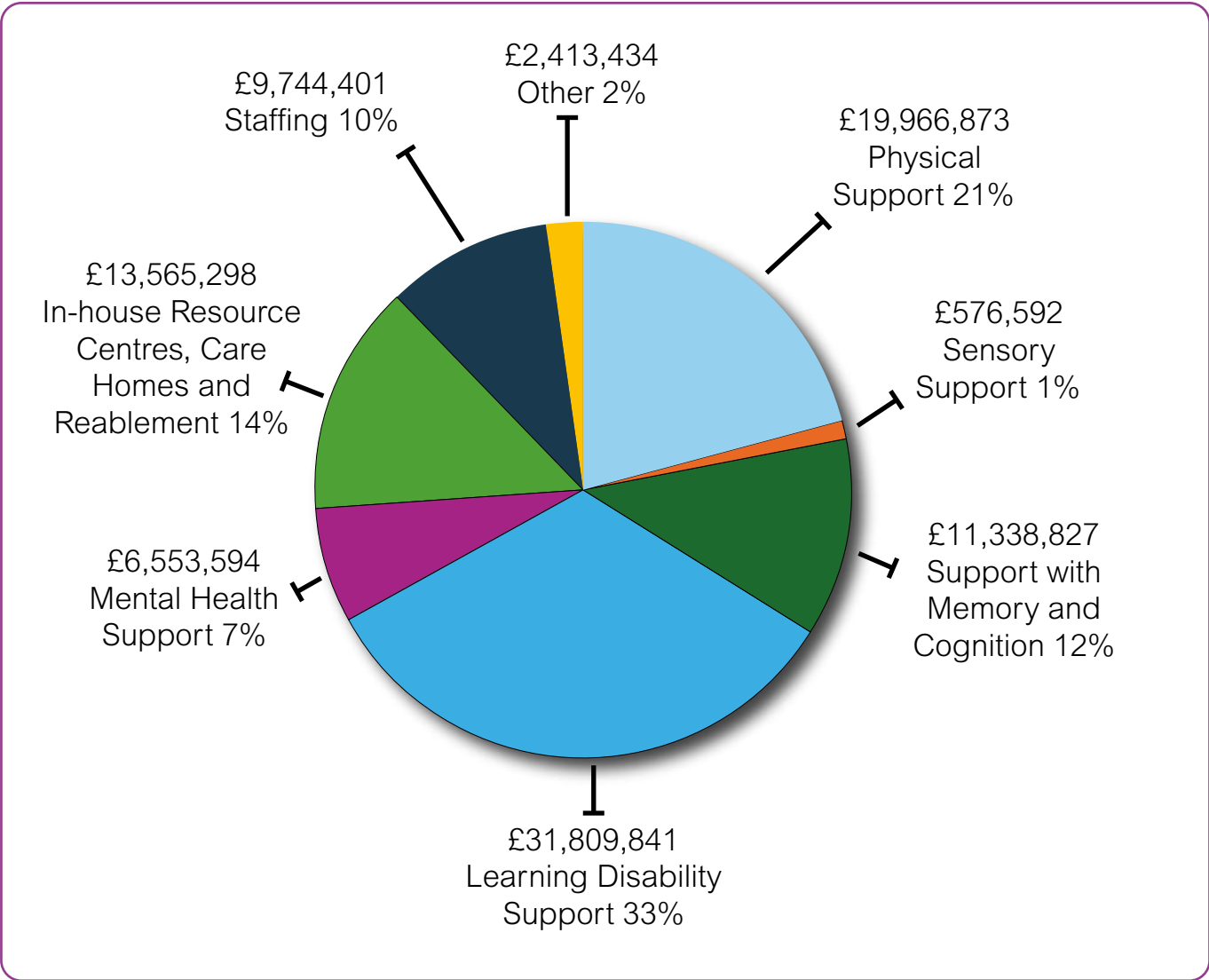
5. Our finances

Overview

£95,968,859 was spent on Adult Social Care services in 2024/25.

This is an increase of **4.4%** compared to 2023/24.

2024/25 Adult Social Care spend



6. Key achievements across our services and teams

In May 2024, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) **rated West Berkshire Council as 'good'** in how well it is meeting its responsibilities to ensure people have access to adult social care and support.



We are continuing our work to respond to the CQC's recommendations for improvement.

Working with Health

The **Better Care Fund** (BCF), a Government initiative, supports the integration of health and social care services to improve outcomes and reduce barriers between systems.

We work towards a jointly agreed plan across Health and Social Care which demonstrates how people are supported to stay well, safe, and independent at home for longer, and how the right care is provided at the right time and in the right place. The plan is refreshed annually.

Better Care Fund Achievements in 2024/25 included:

- Infection Control Service: Direct nursing support into our care homes. This provided critical support over the winter period, with avoiding hospital admissions.
- Be Well this Winter: Provision of targeted Information and guidance to residents, focusing on falls, self-care, vaccinations and staying warm.
- ASC workforce: Working on recruitment and retention of social workers and occupational therapists.
- Falls pathway: Investment was made into our falls coordinators to strengthen the workforce and provision of service.
- Reduce the number of people coming out of hospital on pathway 3: Reviewing our decision making and impact on capacity in the care market.

Working with Public Health

ASC is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board and jointly chairs the Locality Integration Board. As well as addressing Better Care Fund priorities, we work closely with Public Health and contribute to decisions made about the spending of the Public Health Grant. This year our work included the Let's Get Active Fund, focusing on delivering activities to areas of deprivation in our area, work with the Ageing Well Task Group supporting events such as Ageing Creatively and activities in our Libraries and work with Family Hubs on cooking and nutrition.

Hospital Discharge team

- We have now adopted a targeted approach for hospital discharges ensuring those receiving reablement have identified goals.
- We have a home first approach from hospital and are working to keep new admissions to residential/nursing care to a minimum.

Our **Financial Assessment team** work with individuals to ensure that they are financially assessed to understand how much they should contribute towards the cost of their care.

- The team completed 2775 financial assessments/reviews.
- We also work with individuals to ensure that they are receiving the correct welfare benefits and support them to make claims where appropriate. This resulted in **196** people getting additional income.

Our **Deputyship team** support individuals who are unable to manage their own finances and have no-one else appropriate to do this for them.

- We supported **248** people during the year. Support ranges from those in receipt of benefits to individuals who have substantial income and capital.
- Currently managing the estate of a former BAFTA winner.
- The Client Financial Services Assistant recently completed Level 3 Business Administration apprenticeship.

Our **Direct Payments team** support individuals to manage their direct payments.

- We acknowledge that our proportion of people that receive direct payments is lower than the national average.
- We have secured extra resources to improve our position to enable more people to benefit from a more flexible approach to meeting their care and support needs.
- We now have direct payment champions working with our Locality teams and have developed our internal training offer and internet pages.

Transitions team

- A key priority within ASC is to ensure a positive experience for young people with care and support needs as they enter adulthood to create independent and fulfilling lives. We have secured extra resources to allow for earlier intervention.

Learning Disabilities specialist worker

- A new role working with learning disability providers to ensure that packages are appropriate for the individual.

Single Handed Care team

- We continue to work with individuals to see if they can safely reduce any elements of their care packages where two carers are sometimes needed, using appropriate equipment and training to promote independence and reduce costs.

Mental Health team

- Our Specialist Mental Health Team (SMHT) do not have a waiting list for referrals/ allocation of cases and requests for Mental Health Act assessments are reviewed and triaged within two hours.
- The Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) complete between 15 and 20 Mental Health Act Assessments (MHAAs) per month.
- With the decline in probation officers, SMHT staff have taken on the responsibility of handling supervision orders from the courts for mentally disordered offenders.

Carers

- We actively recognised Carers Rights Day on 21 November 2024. A variety of partners attended offering a wide range of information and support.
- In June 2024, in partnership with **Berkshire Age UK** and **Carers Partnership** we celebrated Carers Week with events held across West Berkshire.
- The [Carers' Strategy 2025-28](#) has been officially approved setting our priorities. Our Carers' Strategy Group will oversee the delivery plan.
- Some focused work with carers was undertaken to help reduce the backlog of carers awaiting assessments and we are developing a self-assessment tool for unpaid carers which will be available in 2025.
- Using **Accelerating Reform Fund (ARF)** monies we have undertaken joint work with other councils to work on the identification of unpaid carers. We are developing leaflets designed to reach target communities.



Occupational Therapy

We appointed a Principal Occupational Therapist to improve the quality of the Occupational Therapy (OT) services, promote OT and support recruitment and retention.

The OT workforce has been strengthened with focussed work on addressing CQC feedback to strengthening our preventative approach by introducing best practice workshops and ensure best practice is used in the safe prescription of essential equipment.

Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector

We have developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the VCSE sector, acknowledging that we needed to do more work with the sector and develop stronger relationships. The MOU supports us using more co-production in the work we do and outlines our approach to voluntary sector commissioning.

Working with providers

We held several Provider Forums in 2024/25, working to ensure that the provider voice was heard in our decisions.

7. Innovation and all things digital

Adult Social Care internet review

In response to feedback received from the CQC we are reviewing our ASC internet pages. We plan to work with you, or co-productively, to ensure that the revised pages meet the needs of the people who use our services. This work will conclude in 2025.

The West Berkshire Directory, is an [online directory](#) that provides information, advice, and support on a wide range of services for adults, families, and children in West Berkshire. It serves as a one-stop shop for local resources, including community groups, organizations, activities, and services.

- We have replaced our directory to provide updated information and deliver a better customer experience.
- We worked with partners in the Ageing Well Task Group to ensure that the directory would meet the needs of our residents.
- We have delivered training to show partners how they can work with and support people who aren't digitally enabled – using the directory on their behalf to search and print lists of information to help them.
- Help sessions were also held in our Libraries and information was distributed using the West Berkshire Library at Home Service.
- Work continues into 2025/26 to extend the offer and train more directory champions.

Magic Notes is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) application to record and transcribe conversations. We have successfully piloted Magic Notes and are currently rolling it out across Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

Following recent training, the rollout of Magic Notes has already started to show tangible benefits for frontline staff. One practitioner shared that it has proved especially useful for follow-up visits. With limited time and frequent movement between locations, the ability to dictate notes quickly while sitting in their car has significantly streamlined their workflow. Upon returning to the office, the practitioner found that Magic Notes generated clear, concise case notes requiring minimal edits. They noted that the tool is *'accurate and intuitive, enhancing both efficiency and documentation quality in a real-world setting, and generally making their work more efficient and enjoyable'*.

Companion pets

Robotic pets are increasingly used to provide comfort, companionship, and emotional support, especially for those who may be experiencing loneliness. We have started work to look at how robotic pets can be used in Adult Social Care to help people who are lonely, have learning disabilities or are living with dementia. As part of this project we will be evaluating the impact.

Mosaic

During 2024 we started the work to replace our current Social Care Case Management System, and Social Care Financial Charging System. We will be moving to a system called Mosaic. The new system will be used by both Adults and Children's teams. The new system will go live in 2026.

Analogue to digital switchover

We have worked with our commissioned provider, Berkshire Community Equipment Services/ NRS to ensure that people have been moved to digital provision. We have a handful of people still with analogue services, mostly in very rural areas, and we continue to work to find solutions for these people. We are a member of the Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG), working with other councils to support populations who are more likely to be digitally excluded.

Information and advice

We completed the Local Government Association (LGA) Information and Advice Maturity Assessment, and received positive feedback. We worked with the LGA to develop an internal Information and Advice plan, ensuring that the information we produce continues to meet your needs and meet accessibility standards.

We further developed our own internal help service – Social Care Operating Procedures - to use AI. The tool is called SCOPS AI and can now be used interactively by our social care professionals to help them find information to support them when working with you.

8. Services we provide

Care homes

West Berkshire has **three** internal Care homes providing **115** care home beds. During 2024/25 the service worked hard to build relationships and increase community engagement, develop our workforce and ensure that our care homes are safe and secure places to be. Examples include:

- Community engagement and intergenerational activities including regular sessions with Moo Music, St Gabriel's School, West Berkshire PALS, and Youth Club. We introduced family events such as bingo, quizzes, Christmas events and coffee mornings.
- We now have access to the West Berkshire community bus, providing residents with regular day trips and staff engaged in supporting the outings.
- Further staff development and training, with several staff completing Level 3 and Level 5 qualifications in health and social care, and management.
- We expanded the bank staff pool to enhance continuity and reduce agency use and ensured that permanent nursing staff were appointed including a Senior Nurse and Clinical Lead. Changes to shift patterns have enabled staff to have a better work/life balance.
- Environment and wellbeing improvements carried out, including dementia-friendly lounge decoration with Community Payback and activities teams, creative fundraising and themed days and the development of a sensory garden is underway.

Shared Lives

- The team is now fully staffed. Recruitment incentives for new Shared Lives carers are in progress and a new carer induction and review process has been implemented.
- Community engagement activities were a success, this included our Open Door Days, Thatcham Funday and events for Shared Lives week in June 2024 celebrating the work of Shared Lives carers.

Positive feedback received during Shared Lives carers week

"The scheme is successful in providing a homely, conducive environment and cost-effective service to vulnerable individuals"

"A person-centred approach to living in a family home"

"We have been very fortunate with carers over many years who have always listened to x and made him feel an equal"

"It's been my first case dealing with shared lives and I have to admit I will definitely be recommending this service to more service users in the future. What an asset Shared Lives are to West Berkshire."

- Service improvements have been made, including setting up an extranet for Shared Lives carers to access training and resources and we have secured uplifts for carer payments and housing benefit.

Resource Centres

- We continued our work to engage people and their families including Christmas and summer fetes and wellbeing activities.
- We accepted referrals from people outside the West Berkshire area. This is a reflection of the high level of support and services provided at our Centres.
- Staff turnover was low during the year enabling our staff to establish relationships with people who used our services, leading to people feeling better supported.

9. Closing statement

The completion of the Adult Social Care annual report 2024/25 has identified key areas of focus for the years ahead which will be central to the Adult Social Care strategy which is under development. This will assist in our ever-evolving journey of improvement to ensure we support the residents of West Berkshire.

