Adult Social Care Strategy 2026–2030















Supporting people to live well, stay independent and thrive in our communities.

West Berkshire COUNCIL

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Foreword
from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care supports the lives of thousands of people in West Berkshire every year. It supports older residents, adults with disabilities, people with mental health needs, carers, families, and communities. At its heart, it is about enabling people to live the lives they choose, with dignity, independence, and connection. I am proud to introduce this Adult Social Care Strategy for 2026–2030, which sets out how we will continue to deliver on that commitment.

Over the past few years, our services have faced significant pressures. Demand has grown as more people live longer with complex needs, and the expectations placed on local authorities have continued to evolve. Despite these challenges, our teams have worked tirelessly to provide high quality support, and our **GOOD** rating from the Care Quality Commission reflects their dedication and professionalism.

This strategy builds on that solid foundation. It has been shaped through engagement with staff, partners, and people with lived experience, and it reflects both local priorities and national reforms. It sets out a clear vision for the future: one where people receive support earlier, where independence is promoted at every opportunity, and where services are joined up, modern, and responsive.

We are ambitious about what we want to achieve. We will strengthen our approach to prevention, improve the experience of young people moving into adulthood, expand the use of Technology Enabled Care, and work closely with our NHS and voluntary sector partners to support people with the most complex needs. We will also continue to modernise our services, ensuring they are sustainable, high quality and designed around what matters most to the people who use them.

Most importantly, this strategy places **people** at the centre. We are committed to co production, to listening and learning, and to collaborating with residents and carers to shape the future of Adult Social Care in West Berkshire.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this strategy, and all those who deliver care and support every day. Your work makes a profound difference to the lives of local people.

Together, we will continue to build a system that is compassionate, resilient, and focused on helping every person in West Berkshire to live well.



Cllr Patrick Clark

Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.

1. How This Strategy Was Developed

This strategy has been shaped through a collaborative process involving staff, partners, and local people. It was developed in five stages:

- Work by the Adult Social Care Senior Management Team
- Engagement with Executive Members and the Executive Director (People)
- Consultation with staff, partners, and stakeholders
- A public consultation using Consultation Finder reaching out to communities.
- West Berkshire Council's internal governance process
- Development of a detailed Action Plan to deliver the priorities

This approach ensures the strategy reflects local needs, national expectations, and the voices of people who draw on care and support.

2. What is Adult Social Care?

Adult Social Care (ASC) describes the wide range of support available to adults who, due to age, disability, illness or other circumstances, need help to live independently, stay safe and maintain their wellbeing. This includes both formal services provided by the local authority and informal support offered by families, friends and the wider community.

Unlike the NHS, Adult Social Care is not free for everyone at the point of use. Most support is means tested, and whether someone receives publicly funded care depends on an assessment of their needs and financial situation, as set out in the Care Act 2014. Local authorities must also offer information, advice and preventative support to all residents, even if they do not qualify for funded care.

Adult Social Care plays a vital role in helping people remain independent, healthy and connected to their communities. It supports individuals and families, reduces pressure on hospitals and emergency services, and acts as an essential link between health care, community support and personal resilience.

Adult Social Care Includes

- Personal care and daily living support: Assistance with tasks such as washing, dressing, eating, taking medication and moving around safely.
- Community and social support: Access to day services, transport, befriending schemes and activities that help prevent loneliness and isolation.
- Reablement: Short term, focused support after illness, injury or a hospital stay to help people regain skills and independence.
- Residential and nursing care: Long term accommodation and support for people with significant or complex needs who cannot live safely at home.
- Support for carers: Practical and emotional help for unpaid carers, including respite, advice and financial support.
- Housing related support: Home adaptations, equipment, supported living options and extra care housing to help people remain independent.
- Safeguarding adults: Protecting people from abuse, neglect or exploitation and ensuring they are safe and supported.



3. Looking Back: Our 2022–2026 Strategy

Our previous strategy focused on modernising Adult Social Care. It included nine themes centred on:

- Improving digital tools and Technology Enabled Care (TEC).
- Strengthening communication.
- Reviewing our care home provision.
- Expanding our Shared Lives service.

What we achieved

- Magic Notes, an AI tool, is now helping practitioners record information more efficiently.
- A new digital financial assessment system has been introduced.
- Further TEC solutions are in development to help people remain independent at home.
- The West Berkshire Directory has been refreshed, offering clearer information and advice.
- A co-produced review of our webpages improved accessibility and clarity.
- The Community Wellness Outreach Project launched in 2025, offering free health checks to people at higher risk of poor health.
- A new Market Position Statement was published, reflecting rising complexity of need and increasing demand for services.
- Work is underway to transfer the Council's three care homes to external providers.
- Significant preparation has taken place for a new Electronic Client Record System, due to launch in Spring 2026.

4. Looking forward, the National Picture

Adult Social Care is shaped by national legislation, policy, and regulation. Key influences include:

3.1 Legislation

Our duties are set out in laws such as the Care Act 2014, Mental Capacity Act 2005, and Mental Health Act 1983 and Human Rights Act 1998. These define people's rights and our responsibilities.

3.2 Demographic Change

People are living longer, often with more complex needs. This increases demand for care and support and places pressure on local services.

3.3 Public Understanding

Many people only encounter Adult Social Care at a point of crisis. This can lead to confusion about what support is available and how it is funded.

3.4 CQC Assurance

In 2024, the Care Quality Commission assessed West Berkshire and rated us GOOD across four areas:

- Working with people.
- Providing support.
- Ensuring safety.
- Leadership.

All councils will be assessed by 2026, after which a new national model is expected.

3.5 NHS 10 Year Plan (2025)

The plan emphasises:

- Closer integration between health and social care.
- A stronger, skilled workforce.
- Digital transformation.
- Prevention and early intervention.

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will bring professionals together to support people in their communities.

3.6 Liberty Protection Safeguards

A national consultation in 2026 will shape the future of LPS, aiming to simplify processes and reduce duplication.

3.7 Independent Commission into Adult Social Care

A national commission, chaired by Baroness Louise Casey, will report by 2028 on:

- Proposals for a National Care Service.
- Long term funding.
- System reform.
- A future model of care.

3.8 National Priorities for 2026–2027

The government has set three priority outcomes:

1. High quality care delivered by a skilled workforce.
2. Support that promotes independence, choice, and control.
3. Joined up health and social care at neighbourhood level.

5. Our community

West Berkshire is home to **165,112** people *(ONS 2021)*, expected to rise to **169,853** by 2047.

- **51%** female, **49%** male.
- **61%** aged 16–64.
- **20%** aged 65+.
- **88%** born in the UK.
- **1.2%** born in the Middle East or Asia.
- **12%** born outside of the UK.

These demographics shape the type and level of support our community needs.

Data has been sourced from the public health observatory.



6. Adult Social Care: 2024/25 At a Glance.

People who requested support.

Out of 4400 requests for support.

92% received information, advice, or practical support.

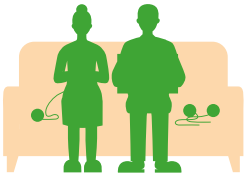
3% received short term or emergency help.

5% of new people to ASC went on to receive long term support in the community.



We supported:

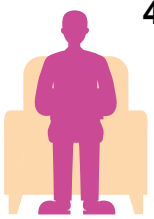
1,888 people receiving long term care



1,397 supported in the community

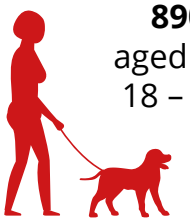


491 in residential or nursing care



As of December 2025

Overall, **2460** people received long term support during 2024 / 25



890 were aged between 18 – 64 years

1,570 were aged 65 or over



We received **1300** referrals to support people to leave hospital. **91%** were aged 65 or over



828 carers were supported





237 people were supported to manage their financial affairs through the Deputyship Team



178 people had an urgent Mental Health Act Assessment

Data has been taken from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework and locally sourced data.

Areas we do well on:

- Carers reporting a good quality of life.
- Overall satisfaction of carers with social services.
- The proportion of people who receive long-term support who live in their home or with family, aged 18 – 64.
- Proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for.
- The proportion of S42 Safeguarding enquiries where a risk was identified, and the reported outcome was that this risk was reduced or removed.
- The proportion of people who use services and who reported that they have as much social contact as they would like (services users).
- The proportion of staff in the formal care workforce leaving their role in the past 12 months is low.
- The percentage of residential adult social care providers rated good or outstanding by CQC.

Areas we need to improve upon:

More people's reablement outcomes:
62.8% (England average 77.1%)

Support people to receive a Direct Payments to allow them to arrange their own care:
12% (England average 24.5%)

7. Our Priorities for 2026–2030

Our priorities reflect areas where we want to improve, alongside national reforms and local needs.

Priority 1: Making Sure People Get High Quality Support

We want everyone to get timely, helpful support that makes a real difference to their daily life.

We will:

- Support people earlier, reducing waiting times.
- Provide clear advice and signposting to help people stay independent.
- Co produce care and support plans with individuals and carers.
- Adopt a "Waiting Well" approach for anyone awaiting assessment.
- Increase the number of people choosing Direct Payments to give them more control.
- Improve our performance on annual reviews.

Priority 2: Helping Young People Move into Adult Life Smoothly

We will support young people and their families early so the move from children's services to adult services is clear, calm and well planned.

We will:

- Work with young people and families earlier.
- Provide clear information about the transition into adult services.
- Ensure support is proportionate and focused on developing independence.

Priority 3: Using Technology to Help People Live Independently

We will use simple, smart technology—like home sensors and digital tools—to help people stay safe and independent for longer.

Digitalisation

We will continue to use digital tools, including AI, to support efficient and accurate case recording.

- We will implement a new case recording system.

Priority 4: Working Better with Our Partners

We will join up our work with the NHS, voluntary groups and others so people don't have to repeat their story and can get more coordinated support.

We will:

- Establish a West Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Work with the NHS to develop multi disciplinary support for people with the most complex needs.
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention through Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.

Priority 5: Providing the Right Support, in the Right Place, at the Right Time

We'll make sure the services people need are available locally, modern, and suitable for different types of needs.

Using the Market Position Statement and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, we will ensure people can access high quality, modern services through a strategic partnership with providers.

Key areas include:

- Affordable care home beds and extra care housing.
- More supported living for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs.
- Short term crisis, respite, and step down accommodation.
- Technology enabled solutions for adults with physical disabilities.
- Modernising support for people with learning disabilities and / or autism.
- Ensure there is a resilient equipment service is in place.
- Effective budget management to ensure that services are value for money.

Priority 6: Designing Services Together with Local People

We'll listen to residents, carers and people with lived experience and work with them to shape future services.

We will collaborate with people with lived experience, carers, partners, and the wider public to:

- Shape strategies
- Learn from feedback.
- Improve services.
- Respond to complaints and audits.

Co production will be central to how we design and deliver support.

8. A Strategy for Everyone

This strategy sets out our commitment to supporting people to live well, stay independent and feel connected to their community. It reflects our ambition to deliver high quality, person centred care in partnership with local people and organisations.



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