

What Quality Means in Camden

In Camden we believe that quality starts with what matters most to people, and what enables them to live their lives in the way they want, in the places they call home and with the people that they care about. The quality of care and support that residents draw on is critical to people's wellbeing and outcomes to live a good life. We believe that high quality care and support is characterised by ensuring:

- Residents are placed at the centre of care and can achieve the outcomes that matter to them.
- People feel safe, secure, and empowered because their human rights are safeguarded.
- People have a positive experience of care provided through relationships based on mutual respect and consideration, where they are supported to develop their strengths, celebrate their individuality and where care is designed around their needs.

To ensure that our residents, carers and their loved ones can draw on the best quality of care possible, Camden takes a robust approach to quality assurance.

Our Partnership Approach

In Camden we pride ourselves on working with providers as our partners in care, and endeavour to build an environment where trust, openness and transparency is supported across these partnerships. We know that the way we interact and commission our providers can impact on their ability to deliver safe, high-quality care. We want to work in partnership with providers to understand the local market and identify key trends and concerns that may be barriers to providing quality care, from financial sustainability through to staff recruitment and retention. Through our partnership approach, we ensure that commissioned services mirror the values of Camden and are able to excel and innovate. It is an ongoing priority that services meet and exceed quality and safety standards, with equalities and co-production embedded throughout.

We understand that people who draw on care are the experts in their own lives and are best placed to determine the quality of any service they are drawing on. We strive to involve residents and their carers in quality assurance activity, and know we can always do better. We will continue to ensure their voices are central to our quality assurance process.

Quality Assurance: externally commissioned providers

Commissioners play a key role in supporting providers to maintain high quality services for residents, carers and their loved ones. Camden's Adult Social Care Commissioning Teams collate a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data about the performance of providers, and triangulate this information with feedback from residents, social work teams and employees to fully understand the quality of care and support being provided. In some circumstances, an organisation may have several services in borough and commissioners will utilise information across all the services to gain a comprehensive picture of quality across the whole organisation.

Camden's quality assurance approach can differ for each provider based on the size of the organisation, level and type of services provided as well as the types of risks that exist for the provider or their specific market.

In addition to our quality assurance process Camden has a range of policies and procedures that enhance our quality assurance approach and supports escalation of any concerns about quality of care and the safety of our residents.

The Provider Oversight Board

Camden operate a Provider Oversight Board (the Board) to provide oversight and make recommendations regarding the quality of services in Camden and of those commissioned by Camden. It is an information-sharing arrangement between the Council, North Central London Integrated Care Board and Care Quality Commission (CQC). The Board shares significant safeguarding information or concerns about registered locations when appropriate. It supports a positive culture of cooperation and information sharing with joint accountability for risks and benefits. The Board obtains, reviews and triangulates information about both regulated and unregulated social care providers, including organisations that work with residents who fund their care privately, as well as voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations.

The Provider Concerns Procedure

The Provider Concerns Procedure (PCP) addresses concerns on an organisational scale. The PCP process is generally used where there are patterns of incidents and/or safeguarding concerns that indicate a provider is unable to provide care and support in a safe environment that respects the human rights of people who draw on care and support.

The PCP requires a multi-agency response and a multi-disciplinary team of relevant professionals will agree a course of action that could include:

- Agreeing and implementing immediate, specific actions to ensure the safety of adults at risk who draw on services from an organisation about which there are serious concerns.
- Coordination of investigations and processes often by a range of organisations.
- Communicating with and involving residents to ensure they are kept informed of actions being taken and can directly influence improvements.
- Utilising enhanced monitoring to urgently improve the quality of care or if required, enacting the provider failure and service interruption procedures.
- Sharing information with the Police, CQC, Home Office and other partners as required to prevent further abuse or neglect and to aid any investigations.

The PCP process will formally conclude once the PCP panel are satisfied that there has been evidence-based improvement in the provider's services, identified through the quality improvement process.

Provider Failure and Interruption Procedure

Whilst providers may fail, have their service interrupted by unforeseen events or choose to close, the Council's duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents remains. The Provider Failure and Service Interruption procedure is intended to give guidance on how Camden responds to potential provider closure, failure or interruption of service as well as offer reassurance to residents, carers and families in the event of uncertainty about continuity of care and support.

Section 38 of the Care Act 2014 (Care Act) places a duty on local authorities to temporarily intervene to ensure there is continuity of care if a regulated provider is unable to provide a regulated activity to an individual due to a business or provider failure. This duty applies regardless of whether the individual's care is funded by Camden or not. This temporary duty is invoked where the following criteria are met:

- The organisation is a registered care provider.
- The organisation is unable to carry out a particular regulated activity (where the provider can continue the activity despite business failure the duty will not be triggered).
- The inability to carry out the activity is due specifically to the provider's business failure.

The Care Act states that a local authority must 'for so long as it considers necessary' meet the needs for care and support which were being met immediately before the business failure occurred. The local authority is not required to continue the services that were previously provided and has discretion as to how it will meet residents' needs, although this should be agreed with the individuals wherever possible. The Care Act allows local authorities to intervene on a temporary basis. This will be a last resort for the Council, where all other options for maintaining care have been exhausted. It is a temporary arrangement to be in place only until alternative, stable care arrangements have been secured.