

# Adult Social Care Strategy 2024-2029



Central  
Bedfordshire

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# Foreword



**From Andy Sharp, the  
Director of Adult Social Care  
and Housing**

We are delighted to introduce this strategy which sets out the vision for Adult Social Care in Central Bedfordshire and our strategic aims for delivering that vision. It describes how we plan to provide future adult social care services that make a real difference to the lives of people in Central Bedfordshire.

Our services are vital to support people’s health and wellbeing, whether that be short term interventions for periods of ill health, intensive long-term care for those who have complex needs, access to prevention services to maintain independence, protecting vulnerable people, or providing information and advice.

We want people who have care and support needs to have the best possible quality of life, focusing on choices that are most important to them. We understand that every person is unique and that different things such as people’s health, opportunities for learning, employment, housing options, relationships with others, and access to leisure activities and to outdoor space, all have an impact on the best outcome for each person.

We will continue to strengthen our relationships with the NHS and care providers, the voluntary sector and our communities to achieve a holistic adult social care service which meets the needs of the people we support.

Our strategy defines the direction for adult social care in Central Bedfordshire for the next five years, building on a strong foundation of a dedicated workforce, strong partnerships and leadership. Our aim is to continue to deliver a progressive and innovative adult social care service for the people of Central Bedfordshire whilst also ensuring their voice is at the centre of everything we do.



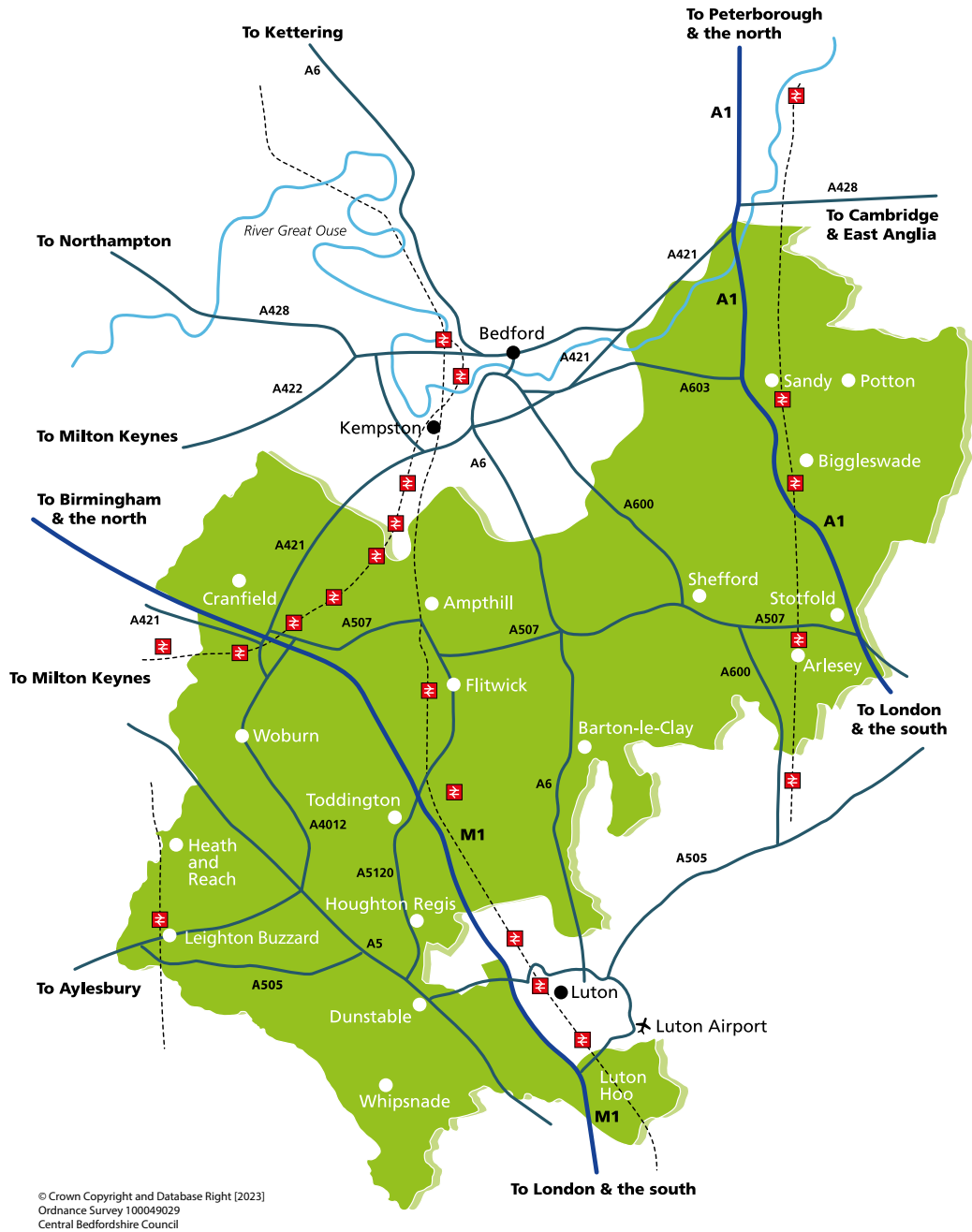
**and Councillor Mark Smith,  
Deputy Leader and Executive  
Member for Adult Social Care  
and Health**



# About Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire is a safe, green, prosperous area, with low unemployment rates and a higher than UK average annual household income. The overall health of our residents is above the UK norm. A relatively affluent area, it nonetheless, like most regions, encompasses areas of deprivation: three small areas in parts of Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Flitwick are in the 10-20% most deprived areas in England.












It is an area of considerable growth, with new housing developments planned, and has an ageing population. We have ambitious plans for creating new, vibrant, sustainable communities, whilst also enhancing Central Bedfordshire's picturesque setting.



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Ordnance Survey 100049029  
Central Bedfordshire Council

# About Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care covers a wide range of activities to help people live independently and stay well and safe. It can include:

-  Supporting people in their own homes (home care or 'domiciliary care').
-  Supported accommodation such as Extra Care Housing or Supported Living Schemes.
-  Support in day centres; as well as wider support to help people stay active and engaged in their communities.
-  Care provided in residential and nursing homes.
-  Services such as reablement that help people to retain or regain their skills and confidence so they can learn to manage again after a period of illness or stay in hospital.
-  Providing aids and adaptations for people's homes.
-  Providing information and advice.
-  Providing support for unpaid carers.
-  Supporting people to engage in work, training, education or volunteering and to socialise with family and friends.
-  Providing preventative services that help people stay well for longer.
-  Providing safeguarding services for people with care and support needs who may be at risk of abuse or harm.



We offer support to the following groups of people who are aged over 18:

- ▶ People with physical disabilities
- ▶ People with sensory disabilities
- ▶ People with learning disabilities
- ▶ People with autistic spectrum conditions
- ▶ People experiencing mental ill health
- ▶ Older people
- ▶ Unpaid carers who support friends and family
- ▶ People receiving children's services who are approaching 18 years old and who may require adult social care

# Our Vision for Adult Social Care in Central Bedfordshire

We have developed a vision for Adult Social Care in Central Bedfordshire which is:

'To help people live their own lives and play a full and active part in the life of the community.'

We will achieve this by:

- Focusing on people's strengths (what people can do) as well as assessing what they can't do.
- Working with people who use services and their carers as they are best placed to help us design them.
- Focusing on enabling people to be as independent as possible.
- Embracing new ways of working.
- Making the most of opportunities for partnership and integrated working with other organisations for the overall benefit of the communities we support.



# The challenges facing Adult Social Care

## Demographic pressures

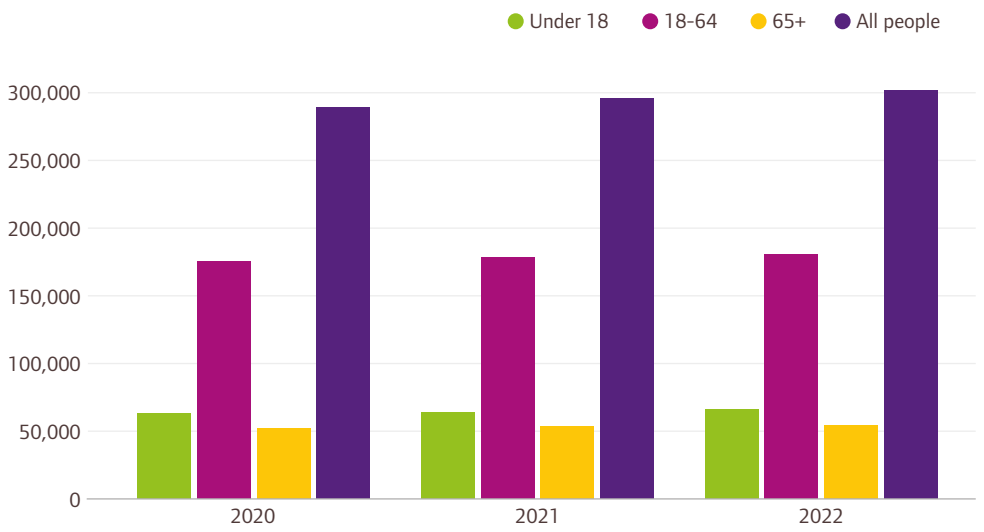
Central Bedfordshire has a population of around 301,000\*, which is expected to increase by 22.6% by 2031. Approximately 18% of the population are aged 65 and above, which is an increase of 29% in this age group over the last ten years. Between 2020 and 2035 this is expected to increase by 40%. The changing age profile of Central Bedfordshire is leading to an increase in demand for adult social care services as more of us live longer with some people also having more complex needs. This can mean that ensuring the right care and support is available at the right time is becoming more challenging.

\*ONS Mid-Year 2022 – Estimates of the Population for England and Wales



"You have been an enormous support to us as a family and your approach, being compassionate, professional and an excellent voice of reason has certainly proved effective and supportive. I feel confident that we have achieved the best possible situation so thank you for your support and your interventions as these were very helpful."

Central Bedfordshire population



Central Bedfordshire Population	2020	%	2021	%	2022	%
Under 18	62,923	22	64,122	22	65,942	22
18-64	173,964	60	178,283	60	180,941	60
65+	52,218	18	53,246	18	54,618	18
All people	289,105		295,651		301,501	



Finance

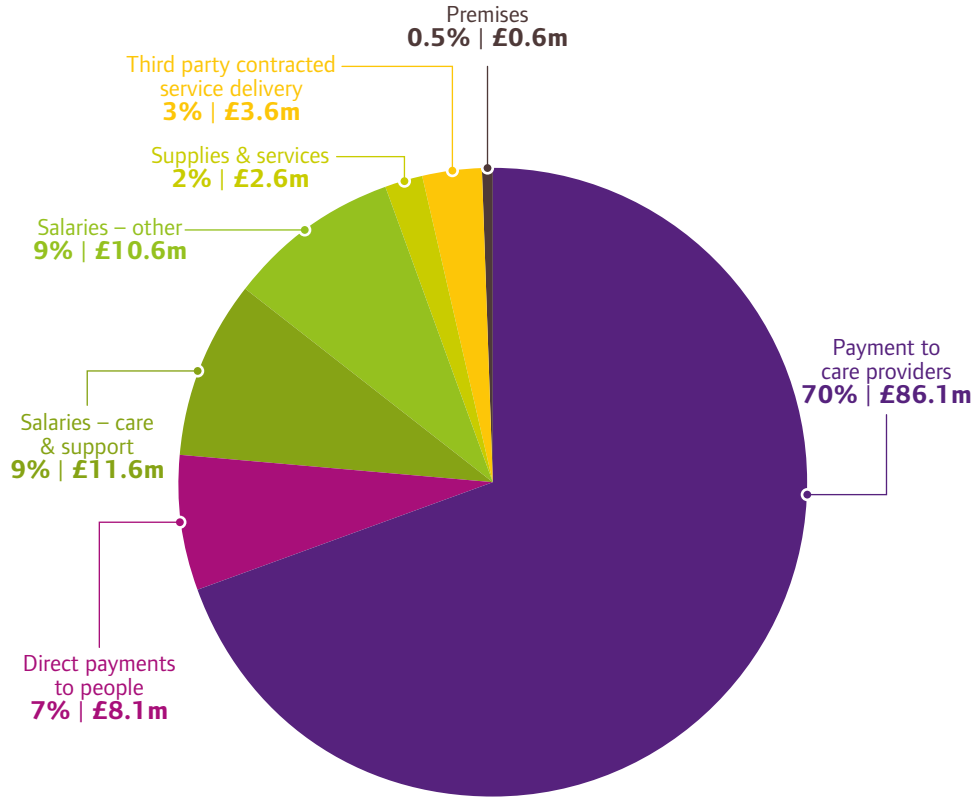
The budget for Adult Social Care in Central Bedfordshire currently accounts for nearly 37% of the Council’s net budget each year although this is lower than other authorities in the East of England region who currently spend on average 41% of their Council’s budget each year.

The Council also spends comparatively less per person than peer authorities and in the financial year 2021/22 spent £110 less per head of population than comparators.

In recent years, the funding provided from the Government for adult social care has reduced which along with delays in Government policy on future funding, has caused uncertainty. These funding pressures are likely to be compounded by the current cost of living crisis and rising inflation which has an impact on the people we support as well as putting pressure on the Council, care providers and partners in the voluntary and community sector.

In addition, the demographic pressures mentioned above and increasing demand mean that in the coming years we need to consider how we make best use of the available budget to meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable. The costs of care now amount to 85.9% of the total Adult Social Care Budget for 2023/24, which includes care and support salaries of 9.4%. This reflects the rise in demand over the last three years (84.2% in 2022/23, 83.6% in 2021/22 and 82.0% in 2020/21).

Adult Social Care Budget for 2023/24



Total gross expenditure	123.2m
Less income	30.8m
Net Expenditure Budget	92.4m

Workforce

The Adult Social Care workforce is broad and includes employees working directly for the Council, employees working for care providers commissioned by the Council, those people employed via a direct payment, such as personal assistants, as well as care staff employed as part of any integrated arrangements with health bodies.

As is the case nationally, the Council has experienced significant issues in terms of the external social care workforce who work for our care providers in Central Bedfordshire. There are high levels of vacancies and staff turnover rates in the care market, which could be attributable to the local availability of less stressful jobs, for example, in retail, hospitality and warehouses. These roles offer the same, or better, rates of pay which impacts on the recruitment and retention of staff.

There are similar issues with the internal workforce who work directly for the Council with fewer people choosing social work as a career and increased numbers leaving the profession causing a shortage of good calibre social workers. Additionally, workers are often choosing to move between local authorities or are more likely to work in the agency market which can offer higher rates of pay.

"Frankly I am in awe of the efforts you have gone to in the case of my father and the tireless efforts in working towards providing allocation of the very best care so swiftly and safely. I can only begin to imagine the immense pressures being felt by social care services at the moment and wanted to convey our thanks to you for doing such fantastic work in supporting us during this time."

Quality of care and sustainability of the care market

The COVID-19 pandemic placed considerable pressure on the care sector with lots of staff and some managers leaving the sector due to being worn out and higher pay rates being available in other sectors. We believe this had a negative impact on the ratings being awarded to providers by the Care Quality Commission and data indicates that the overall quality of care being provided in Central Bedfordshire weakened in the two years post pandemic. More recently we have seen some improvements in these ratings although we continue to have concerns around the quality of care of some care providers within Central Bedfordshire and we are keen to ensure that we support them to improve and where progress is made, this is sustained.

In addition, the financial challenges caused by the cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation are leading to fragility in the care market with some providers going out of business or choosing to leave the sector as their businesses are no longer financially viable.



# Our strategic aims

1

## Promoting independence and wellbeing

Our aim is to enable people to live independent and fulfilled lives with strong networks and personalised support. We recognise that everyone we work with has strengths that can be built on to enable them to live their best life whilst also preventing and delaying the need for further or more intensive intervention.

We recognise that different groups of people have different needs to enable them to live independent lives. We respect the individuality of each person and that their needs and preferences are unique.

### Our ambitions



#### Investing in prevention –

We want to support people by intervening early on, in order to help prevent or reduce the escalation of health issues. We want to enable people to remain independent in their community for as long as possible and delay the need for longer-term support. This type of early intervention can also prevent the escalation of mental and physical health issues and thereby the need to use health services, including primary care, emergency services and hospitals.



#### Delivering person-centred and strengths-based practice –

We want our social workers and other staff to focus on the things people can do themselves as well as the things they need help with to give them greater choice and control over their lives. We understand that every person is unique with different skills and strengths and will want to

achieve different outcomes. We will listen to what matters to the person and ensure that they have an equal voice in their care and support.

We will consider each person's circumstances, such as their age or level of disability, and tailor our approach to reflect those differences.



#### More joined-up working –

We want our residents to receive the care and support they require at the right time and in the right place. This requires a more joined-up and integrated approach, working in partnership with health services, independent care providers and the voluntary sector. We will use a population health and care approach, which is centred on delivering care as locally as possible, bringing together health and care services to the benefit of residents. With much of our population living in our rural towns and villages, it is important to see that real shift from reliance on acute hospitals

and other institutionalised forms of care to a more community-based focus.



#### Providing suitable housing and accommodation –

As well as having responsibility for social care, as a unitary council we also have some responsibilities in respect of housing. We want to take a holistic approach across social care and housing to ensure that people have access to the right sort of accommodation and live in the place that is right for them. This will include ensuring there is sufficient capacity in supported accommodation and that suitable adaptations are available if they are required.

### Delivering our ambitions

- ▶ We will review our approach to strengths-based practice and the model which our Social Care Teams use, to ensure that we focus on what a person can do rather than what they cannot.
- ▶ We will improve the joining up of social care between primary care (GPs), community health, mental health services and hospitals to provide better experiences for those receiving health and care services.

- ▶ We will continue to support and work with the voluntary and community sector who play a key role in providing prevention services in Central Bedfordshire. This will include providing prevention services to people with mental health issues and autism, and not just focusing on older people.
- ▶ We will support the Integrated Care Board with the aim of developing an approach to providing high quality health and social care services close to where people live.

- ▶ We will use a Population Health Management approach to target evidence-based interventions for those young people aged 16 to 25 years who are most in need of mental health support.
- ▶ We will use the example of Our Working Together project in Leighton Buzzard to further develop our approach to create Multidisciplinary Teams who will deliver a joined-up response across primary care footprints.
- ▶ We will recommission and develop services to help people adapt after an illness, disability or stay in hospital and enable them to regain the skills they need to live independently.
- ▶ We will fully engage with the new Integrated Care System and ensure that funding is allocated equitably so that Central Bedfordshire residents benefit from the new arrangements.

- ▶ We will work in partnership with our housing colleagues to ensure that where appropriate, different types of accommodation are available to meet the individual requirements of each person and that suitable equipment and adaptations are put in place to meet their needs.
- ▶ We will use additional funding provided by the government such as the Better Care Fund, to undertake collaborative commissioning, for example, in providing Carers Services and Community and Mental Health Services.
- ▶ We will expand our Shared Lives support, a scheme which matches someone who needs care with an approved carer, to include Older People with Mental Health conditions and dementia, as well as Adults with Learning Disabilities.
- ▶ We will align our teams to enable them to integrate and work with primary, community and mental health services.



"Before moving into Priory View, I felt lonely. I had lost my husband and best friend and did not want to do any socialising. With the support of independent living staff and family, I now get involved in the activities, events and also meet my friends for breakfast and lunch down at the restaurant. I am happy here and Priory View has really made such a difference to my life."



## Building resilient communities and keeping vulnerable people safe

Research has shown that a person's social networks can have a significant impact on their health and our aim is to enable people to stay connected and live safely in their community. We want people to be able to access information, advice and guidance that enables them to take their care into their own hands. We also recognise we need to do more to capture the voice of residents and people who use services as they are best placed to help us redesign those services in future.

For those people who are unable to make decisions themselves, we recognise the importance of ensuring that they have a person who can advocate on their behalf.

### Our ambitions



#### Capturing the voice of people/co-production –

We want people with lived experience and their relatives to take an active part in designing and shaping our services. We recognise that they are best placed to suggest how we can improve the experience and outcomes of those who use these services. We also recognise the need to focus on supporting minorities and under-represented groups to make their voice heard.



#### Supporting unpaid carers –

We value and appreciate the vital role unpaid carers play in supporting the people they care for in Central Bedfordshire. We recognise the need to support people in unpaid caring roles and will work with them to understand their concerns and priorities. We have an existing Carers Strategy published in 2022, to focus on this key group of people and we will continue to work with unpaid carers to review our approach.



#### Keeping people safe – We

believe that everyone is entitled to live their life in safety without being mistreated, hurt or exploited by others and we have a duty to protect people whose situation may make them more vulnerable to abuse and less able to protect themselves from harm or mistreatment. This will include ensuring people are safe as they move between services such as young people who transition from Children's Services to Adult Social Care or people moving between different care settings.



#### Providing information and advice – We want to

encourage people to ask for help at an early stage to help them stay as well and healthy as possible and to connect with others. We recognise the need to ensure that the information we provide is easy to find and accessible to all, this includes making sure it is available in different formats to suit people's needs.



#### Addressing inequalities – Our aim is that all people

have equal opportunities to access services to stay healthy, active and safe. We are committed to tackling inequalities and advancing equality of opportunity for all groups of people. We understand that some people will need support to make their views and choices known or someone to advocate on their behalf.

### Delivering our ambitions

- ▶ We will develop our approach to co-production using the lessons we have learned in creating our Carers Strategy and other co-produced projects.
- ▶ We will focus on listening to the voice of residents and people who use services to ensure their views are included as we improve existing services and co-design new models of care provision.
- ▶ We will continue to work with unpaid carers to deliver the key priorities that they told us were important to them as set out in the Carers Strategy.
- ▶ We will continue to work with the Voluntary and Community Sector to provide information and advice to residents both as a direct service and as part of all commissioned services.

- ▶ We will work with community groups and the voluntary sector through our Equalities Forum, and with contractors and those working on behalf of us, to promote equality and tackle discrimination.
- ▶ We will work with partners across the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care System to develop a systemwide approach to address health inequalities for our population.
- ▶ We will play an active part in the Local Safeguarding Adults Board for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire and commit to delivering on the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal which focuses on the outcomes a person wants to achieve.
- ▶ We will work with our colleagues in Children's Services to ensure that the pathway for people transitioning to Adult Social Care is clear for all involved.
- ▶ We will review the approach for young people transitioning to Adult Social Care who are experiencing mental ill health. This will include the development of a joint working and escalation protocol with Mental Health Services.
- ▶ We will focus additional resource on our Governance and Quality Framework to ensure that learning is shared, and staff are able to use reflective practice to deliver the best possible service for the people they work with.
- ▶ We will work with colleagues across the Council and our partners to provide support and services in leisure centres and other community-based buildings.

"My mother was admitted to a Residential Home suffering with Dementia. Having been there for some time now I can honestly say with a 'hand on my heart' that they have treated her like family. She has settled in so well and is really being looked after by all staff, which means I can relax and not have to worry all the time."



Bedfordshire, Luton  
and Milton Keynes  
Health and Care Partnership



## Making best use of available resources

The challenges facing adult social care, such as increased demand and complexity, financial pressures and an ageing population, mean that we need to consider new ways of working. This will include managing demand and considering how we make the best use of the available budget for adult social care in Central Bedfordshire. We recognise the need to adopt a 'whole council' approach with adult social care, planning and housing working together to deliver better outcomes for our residents.

### Our ambitions



**Digitalisation** – We will strive to offer the use of assistive technology where it helps to improve our service delivery and improves outcomes for people. We will invest in technology that integrates into real-life situations and helps keep people safe, for example sensors that detect falls or lack of movement. We will enable people to use self-service but will also support them if they are unable to do so independently. We recognise that taking a digital approach may not be suitable for all and so we will tailor our approach based on the person's circumstances to ensure that no one is excluded.



**Embracing new ways of working** – We want to encourage innovation and we will work with people who receive services, partner organisations, local businesses and the voluntary sector to develop new ways of working. We will review best practice and innovation in other local authorities and implement that learning to deliver improvements in the way we deliver adult social care in Central Bedfordshire.



**Delivering value for money** – Whilst eligibility is important in determining appropriate and proportionate use of resource, we want our practitioners to take a complete view of a person's circumstances when assessing the best way of achieving outcomes to meet their needs. This combined with a strengths/asset-based approach will support people in remaining independent, improve wellbeing and ensure spending on care packages is appropriate and value for money.



**Repurposing existing property and building new accommodation** – We will look to review the assets available to the Council and aim to replace older and outdated facilities with modern purpose-built accommodation which meets new energy efficiency standards and standards in general.



"I would just like to say a very big thank you to the occupational therapist and carpenter, who both did a brilliant job. They sorted out handrails on my back and front doors, the bathroom and toilet, as well as a stair rail. Both were so helpful, polite, and kind. What a massive difference this has made, sometimes the little things in life can make the biggest difference."

### Delivering our ambitions

- ▶ We will develop and improve the social care case recording system, CareDirector, to ensure it captures whether people have achieved the outcomes that are important to them.
- ▶ We will invest in the use of assistive technology such as equipment with built in sensors that automatically detect a fall and telecare equipment which lets others know when help is needed in a person's home.
- ▶ We will consider opportunities to redevelop older assets that are available to the Council such as the redevelopment of the former leisure centre site at Steppingley Road.
- ▶ We will ensure there are a sufficient number of Independent Living Schemes, such as the ones at Grove View and Hockcliffe Road, to meet the needs of the local population.
- ▶ We will work with colleagues in housing and planning to seek to ensure that potential housing development sites of 300 dwellings or more provide an independent living/extra care facility unless an alternative approach can be demonstrated to be more suitable.
- ▶ We will consider the impact our accommodation projects make on the environment to ensure they are sustainable, energy efficient and make a significant impact on lowering our carbon footprint.
- ▶ We will work with the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Health and Integrated Care Partnership to support economic development, improve health and care services, and deliver value for money for residents.
- ▶ We will work together in a 'Place Based' partnership to provide a collective view of system issues for Central Bedfordshire and make best use of the total resources available to meet the specific needs of residents.
- ▶ We will review our approach to performance reporting and use new software solutions such as Microsoft Power BI to improve and enhance our reports to enable Members, senior leaders and residents to monitor our performance.
- ▶ We will continue to engage with other authorities and partners across the eastern region to share best practice and work together on areas such as co-production, safeguarding and assurance.





## Shaping and supporting the care market and workforce

Our care providers and our social care workforce play a key role in providing support to our residents and we understand our responsibility in ensuring the care market is sustainable and that the social care workforce is supported to grow and develop. We recognise that having an experienced and better qualified local social care workforce will lead to a more resilient health and care system.

### Our ambitions



**Improving the quality of care being delivered** – We want to work in partnership with care providers to ensure they provide the best quality of care for the residents of Central Bedfordshire.



**Developing and supporting our workforce** – We want an inclusive adult social care workforce that feels valued and supported and is an attractive opportunity for those looking for a long-term career in person-centred care. Our aim is to ensure they have clear career pathways, are supported with training to develop professionally and rewarded fairly for their work.



**Ensuring the care market has sufficient capacity and is sustainable** – We will work with the care market to set out our future capacity requirements to support them in ensuring that their businesses and the care they provide are sustainable.

"I couldn't find the right person to support my son as he has learning and physical disabilities. After speaking with the lady from Community Catalysts, she helped me find the right support for him and this has been a real blessing; my son is happy, and our family is grateful for the excellent service."



Care is  
Central

### Delivering our ambitions

- ▶ We will refresh our market position statements, so that developers, care providers and housing providers understand the future capacity requirements in Central Bedfordshire.
- ▶ We will continue to develop our homecare framework to ensure that our overall capacity for homecare is maximised.
- ▶ We will explore how we can extend diversity in the care market through the development of new and innovative care models, such as Community Catalysts which has enabled the establishment of micro providers.
- ▶ We will work with our care providers to focus on identifying themes and trends to enable us to identify issues with the quality of care being provided at an early stage and share learning.
- ▶ We will work with other neighbouring authorities to ensure there is consistency of quality monitoring methods across the region which will improve good practice and avoid duplication.

- ▶ We will build on the good relationships we have with our care providers and work in partnership with them to improve the quality of care and establish areas in which they would like more support and training.
- ▶ We will continue to undertake fair cost of care exercises and review the rates we pay our care providers with the aim of supporting them in making sure that their businesses are sustainable.
- ▶ We will encourage care providers to pay their staff appropriate rates of pay and look at ways of making social care roles more attractive as a career.
- ▶ We will set a target, to increase suitable accommodation for working age adults, by 20% by 2027. To support this, we will commission a Supported Living Framework.
- ▶ We will use the Council's own care company, Care is Central, to provide additional capacity by taking on the care provision at two newly built care homes in the next two years. As the company develops, the aspiration is that the provision of nursing care will also be considered and explored further.

- ▶ We will continue to develop new ways of attracting more people to the social work profession by creating opportunities, such as through our apprenticeship scheme for social workers, and we have an aspiration to develop a similar offer for occupational therapy in the future.
- ▶ We will support providers to create and maintain a culture where staff feel valued and supported, invested in their role and in the local care system.
- ▶ We will provide a workplace wellbeing offer which is informed by local research findings and supports all staff to explore their own wellbeing and develop their resilience.
- ▶ We will build on our existing learning and development offer, to ensure that staff feel supported to deliver a skilled and complex role. We will offer bespoke local level training for our leaders and managers as well as development opportunities.



# What difference will the strategy make for people?

We have worked with residents of Central Bedfordshire to define a series of ‘I’ statements which captures their voice and identifies how the Strategy will make a difference to them.

The following ‘I’ statements are those that residents told us were most important to them:



## Promoting independence and wellbeing

- › I can live the life I want and do the things that are important to me as independently as possible.
- › I am in control of planning my care and support. If I need help with this, people who know and care about me are involved.
- › I have a place I can call home, not just a ‘bed’ or somewhere that provides me with care.



## Building resilient communities and keeping vulnerable people safe

- › I have people who support me, such as family, friends and people in my community.
- › I feel welcome and safe in my local community and can join in community life and activities that are important to me.
- › I can get information and advice that is accurate, up to date and provided in a way that I can understand.



## Making best use of available resources

- › If I move from my home to another place, the people who are important to me are respected, listened to, supported and involved in decisions.
- › I know how much money is available to meet my care and support needs. I can decide how it’s used – whether it’s my own money, a health or social care personal budget, or a budget managed on my behalf.
- › I know what to do and who I can contact when I realise that things might be at risk of going wrong or my health condition may be worsening.



## Shaping and supporting the care market and workforce

- › I am treated with respect and dignity.
- › I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths and personal goals.
- › I have considerate support delivered by competent people.



# Measuring the success of the strategy

The strategy will be implemented via individual delivery plans across the directorate and underpinned by the Adult Social Care Performance Framework. It will include any associated action plans or learning from the CQC Assurance Framework for Adult Social Care and the Local Government Association Peer Challenge of Adult Social Care which was published in March 2023.

We will measure the success of this strategy by producing a yearly report which will summarise the progress we have made against the aims and ambitions set out in the strategy as well as summarising our performance through the year.

We recognise that this five-year strategy is a long-term vision, and whilst we would not expect the four key aims to change in that time, we will review the strategy in the event that the Council’s overarching priorities change or if there are significant changes to national legislation relating to health and social care.





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