

Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2026-2029



Introduction

As the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Leisure, I am both proud and excited to present our Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy. Good commissioning is essential to achieve the best outcomes for people requiring adult social care support. This strategy represents our commitment to and sets out the approach, principles and priorities we will adopt to ensure that people can access the support and services they need to **live their best lives**.

In Brent we know that our community is diverse and ever-changing. This strategy is designed to reflect the unique needs and strengths of our population. At its core is a commitment to working collaboratively and in partnership with service users, carers, residents, communities and partners to co-design services and support that meet current and future needs.

We believe that it is only by adopting this collaborative approach that we can create a system that is responsive, resilient, person-centred and promotes long-term well-being and independence.

As a Council and local health and care system we continue to face significant financial pressures – due to our requirement to support growing need in the community and to find further efficiencies. We are aware of the challenging landscape for providers too as we face the continued pressures of cost of living and inflationary increases together.

Enabling people to live and stay well (prevention) is at the heart of our vision for adult social care and we aim to provide services and support that help people stay well and independent at home for longer.

This is not a journey we can take alone - collaboration and partnership with our health and system colleagues, as well as our communities and VCSE will be crucial. We are committed to maximising opportunities to work in partnership across our neighbourhoods and to identify shared commissioning goals and outcomes that make the most effective use of our collective resources.

Through this strategy we will work with health partners to maximise the opportunities presented through the NHS Forward Plan and the shift towards collaborative, preventative and outcome-based models that work better for our residents, increase independence, reduce long term care needs and pressure on hospitals.

Our work to build the capacity of the VCSE in Brent is a priority – we recognise the vital role they play. We are also championing innovation and best practice, embracing the advantages we can gain from greater use of technology.

We encourage everyone – service users, residents, carers, care providers and partners to engage with us. Your continued feedback and participation in shaping and delivering this strategy with and alongside us is vital.

About this strategy

Purpose

This document sets out Brent's Council's commissioning approach and priorities for adult social care over the next 3 years. It describes the things we will focus on through our commissioning activity to ensure that services and support are available to meet the needs of local people and enable them to **live their best life**.

It is aligned with and supports our overall vision for adult social care, our **Transformation Programme** and key strategies such as the **Health and Well-Being Strategy, Carers Strategy, Prevention and Digital Strategies** for adult social care.

It also supports the borough priorities in the **Corporate Plan**, with a particular contribution to **Thriving Communities and Healthier Communities**.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive guide and action plan to everything we will do. It includes a summary of our **key messages and opportunities for the care market** about what we want to see for our residents. These will be supported by specific market position statements / commissioning plans where appropriate.

This strategy covers:

- About Brent – facts and figures
- About adult social care – facts and figures
- Our vision for adult social care and what we want to achieve
- Key challenges facing adult social care in Brent
- Our approach to commissioning and our guiding principles
- Our commissioning goals and strategic themes
- The key strategic actions and areas of focus for commissioning
- Summary of our key messages and opportunities for the market
- Governance and monitoring
- How you can get involved

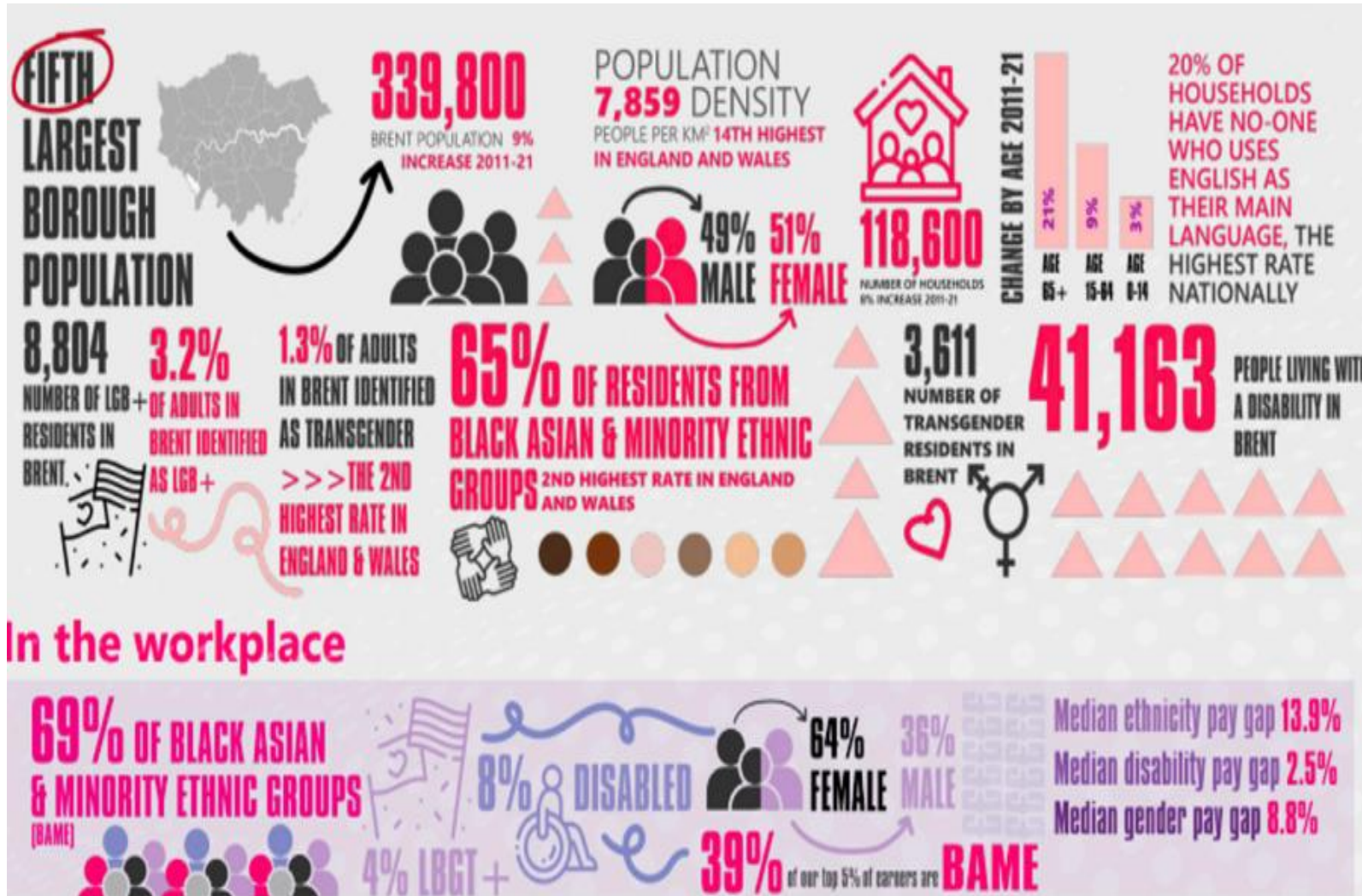
About Brent

Brent is the 5th largest London Borough in terms of population (2021 Census).

Although Brent has a younger age profile compared to England and Wales, the wider trend shows that the population is ageing. Over the last ten years (2014-24), the number of residents aged 65 and over rose by 23%, more than three times faster than the overall pace of population growth. There is significant pressure on housing and housing needs.

Brent has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the country. The majority of the population are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups and there is a diversity of faith.

Health and wellbeing inequalities are a major issue in Brent with different communities having very different health experiences and outcomes even in the same communities. There is a high level of deprivation.



About Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care provides statutory functions set out in legislation including the Care Act (2014), Mental Health Act (1983) amended (2007), and Mental Capacity Act (2005).

Under the Care Act (2014) Adult Social Care provides care and support to adults and carers, with a focus on preventing care needs and promoting wellbeing, helping people to live independently and safely in their communities.

We work together with residents and carers as ‘partners’ through a strengths-based approach. This includes offering assessments of needs, promoting wellbeing, preventing and delaying needs getting worse, safeguarding vulnerable adults and determining people’s eligibility for adult social care (against the national eligibility criteria).

Care and support includes a range of services such as aids and adaptations to homes, equipment to help people at home, assistive technology (telecare) and short-term support for up to 6 weeks (reablement). Where people have long-term needs, we offer support such as home care, supported living options or residential and nursing care.

Adult Social Care Facts and Figures 2024-2025



We carried out **12,249 assessments**



We supported **2821 hospital discharges**



The number of **residents in supported living or extra care was 719**



We carried out **6621 reviews.**



We carried out **445 safeguarding investigations**



As of April 2025, there were **155 CQC-regulated ASC locations and 130 providers** in our Borough



We carried out **514 major adaptations**



We provided funded support for 6305 service users. We commissioned support for **165 carers.**



3371 residents received homecare



We carried out **866 Mental Health assessments**

Adult Social Care – who we support

At the end of 2024-2025 Adult Social Care was providing commissioned services to 4,519 service users across a range of services. The largest user groups were receiving home care, direct payments, supported living, extra care, residential and nursing care.

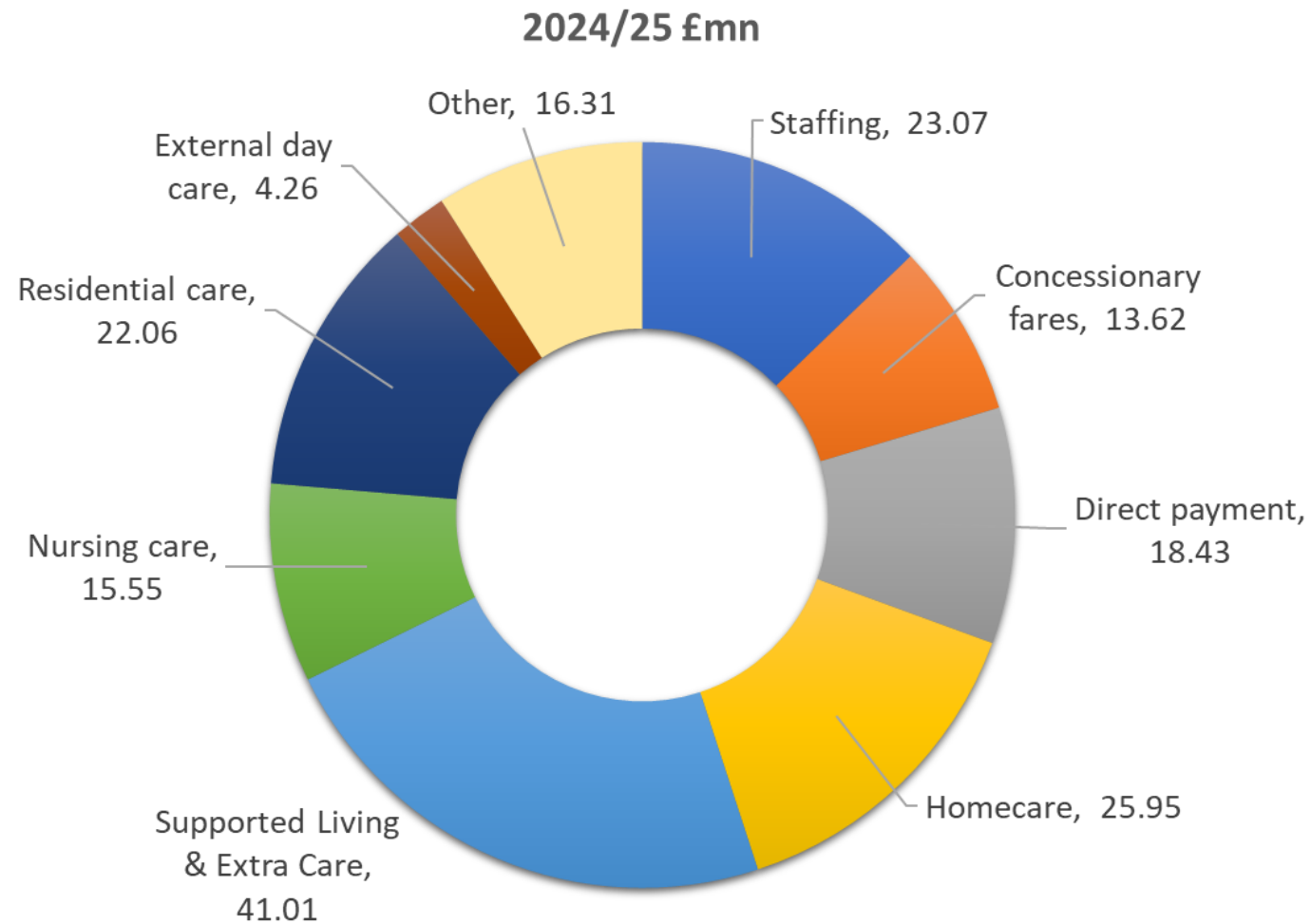
Services were provided across many of the communities in Brent with Female service users making up the largest group (55%). There is an even representation of ethnicity across Black/Black British, White and Asian/Asian British. The largest age group receiving care and support are 16 – 64 years old followed by residents 85 years and older.

Demand for adult social care services continues to grow at around 5% per annum, but there are areas where demand is greater such as mental health services and learning disabilities. The increase in demand has impacted certain services more than others.

Throughout 2024-2025 there has been almost no change in the number of people in residential and/or nursing care. Growth in extra care/supported living placements rose by 15% and in home care services by 13%.

Coupled with the increase in demand we are seeing a notable increase in the cost of care services. Our total spend in 2024-2025 was £180.25mn.

Adult Social Care – what we spend



Key challenges in Adult Social Care

The health and social care system in Brent is facing a number of challenges that cut across services and communities. As people live longer and with more complex conditions, more people are likely to need adult social care to support them to live the lives they want. Along with responding to this increased demand, local authorities, who fund care and support in their areas – including Brent - for people who are eligible, are under significant financial pressure. This is driven primarily by the following key factors that need to be addressed in the short, medium and long-term and which are key to this strategy:

- Demand and complexity: more people with more complex needs requiring support across all ages
- Financial pressures: inflation increasing the cost of care
- Rising costs in supporting people with health needs pressuring local partnerships and budgets
- Demand and complexity: Increasingly specialist solutions for people when leaving hospital
- Workforce: recruitment and retention pressures
- Quality: ensuring and sustaining high quality and consistent service provision
- Market and capacity factors: supporting capacity, innovation and resilience across the care market including in VCSE
- System integration: strengthen integrated commissioning opportunities and make best use of resources such as the BCF



Our vision for adult social care and what we want to achieve

Our vision for Adult Social Care in Brent is:

Working with you to live your best life.

- We will work with residents and carers, as partners in their own care and support, to live independent, safe, happy, and fulfilling lives.
- We will enable and support our staff and partners to meet our community's needs and deliver excellent outcomes for you.
- It will be everyone's business to create a culture of continuous improvement, with inclusion, equity, and equality at its heart.



Outcomes and impact - achieving this vision will mean:

People are supported to live their best life.

- Residents are able to achieve more of what matters to them
- Support is provided in collaboration with the community and focuses first and foremost on what the community can offer
- We achieve better outcomes through early intervention and preventative solutions that reduce demand
- Residents find the right solution, first time and in the right place
- Residents empowered to achieve their version of 'their best life'
- High quality, accessible services and support are provided based on understanding local needs, strengths and developed in partnership
- Service users and other partners are co-designers and co-producers of the positive outcomes which commissioning strives to achieve
- People who use services are satisfied and feel they have control over their daily life

Our approach to commissioning

In Brent, the way we think of commissioning isn't just about the way we buy or even plan and design services. It includes the way we develop deep understanding of local communities; how we embrace co-design and coproduction approaches that strengthen the voice and influence of our communities and how we work together with others to draw on the full range of options and resources available to explore more creative and effective ways of meeting needs.

1. **Understanding the current needs and strengths** of individuals and communities to ensure that health, care, and wellbeing requirements can be met and also prevented, reduced or delayed
2. **Developing and influencing strategy**, including that of partners to achieve what is required
3. **Shaping and developing the marketplace** so that it can meet the needs and outcomes identified and provide both **choice and flexibility**, we will use data and insights to inform how we work with and engage the care sector in Brent
4. **Working with people with lived experience** throughout the commissioning cycle and life of contracts to ensure that services and solutions that are developed and delivered reflect what residents need and want
5. **Encouraging innovation, flexibility and creativity** in service design and provision, allowing for tailored solutions that meet the diverse needs and preferences of service users
6. Ensuring what is procured provides **good value**, that **quality** does not suffer at the expense of cost and that we continue to **learn** together and **improve**



Guiding principles

We are committed to adopting a more collaborative approach to commissioning that aims to involve the Council, partners including the VCSE and community working as equals to design, fund and deliver services and support that place a full understanding of people and community needs at the heart. We are also seeking to further develop our approach to commissioning at a place and neighbourhood level, working with our partners in health and wider, to identify opportunities to establish shared place priorities, commissioning intentions and resourcing. To support this shift, the following principles shape all our commissioning work:

Co-production: we will co-produce services and support with those who use them and their families, involving them across the commissioning cycle and requiring providers to co-produce delivery models

Insight-led: we will use a wide range of data, insight and feedback to understand needs and strengths, demand, supply and resident experience. We will use this to inform commissioning decisions, service design and market shaping activity

Strengths and asset-based: we will shape and design commissioning solutions and services that capitalise on community and resident strengths and assets wherever possible rather than 'one size fits all' approaches

Commission for learning: we will build this principle into all service specifications, requiring providers to test new approaches, undertake and share continuous learning and adapt services in response

Market shaping: we will review the current market using data and insight and seek to draw on all the resources and levers available to us to further develop and shape the care market to respond to need and offer choice and diversity

Working together: we will work closely with partners across the health and care sector and beyond to identify how to best understand, design, plan, and resource commissioning solutions for residents requiring or likely to require care and support.

Place: we will commission services and support at the lowest possible geographic level, with a focus on developing shared placed based commissioning intentions, outcomes and initiatives

Innovation and VFM: we will commission the highest possible quality, most effective services and support from the budget envelope that we have available to us and adopt new and best practices to improve value for money and outcomes

Working in partnership

Adult social care works with others as part of a wide network of support and services including care providers, health partners, VCSE, housing and other local authorities. Commissioning involves identifying what services local people are likely to need in the future. To support this, we work closely with others to shape and support the development of markets to provide the services that will be needed. In doing this we also aim to draw on the full range of resources available to us.

Market Intelligence

Collection and analysis of intelligence on need, demand and supply to determine 'the health of the market', whether it is likely to meet future population need, what additional provision needs to be developed, and how sustainable the market is both now and in the future.



Market Shaping

Market shaping describes two key sets of tasks that commissioners should undertake to ensure a health and care market that delivers diversity of choice for all who need care and support, including unpaid carers

Market Influencing

A range of activity that seeks to influence the current and future range of care and support available to Brent based on market intelligence and insight

Our overall commissioning goal and strategic themes

Our overall commissioning goal is to:

Work closely with individuals, communities and partners to co-design and develop commissioning solutions, services and support that are prevention focussed and enable people to live their best lives

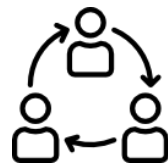
To help us achieve this, five strategic themes guide and shape our commissioning priorities and intentions



Theme 1: Community capacity and neighbourhood support - *effective, community-level support in partnership with local organisations*



Theme 2: Early help and independence – *supporting you to stay independent for as long as possible*



Theme 3: Co-production and engagement – *working with you to shape and develop services and support*



Theme 4: Market shaping and management – *shaping and maintaining a sustainable, diverse, good quality and effective care market*



Theme 5: Innovation, quality and best use of resources - *smarter, more sustainable ways of delivering care and support and maximising innovation*

Theme 1: Community Capacity & Neighbourhood support

Aim

Strengthen local communities, empower more neighbourhood-level solutions and community-led action, and expand the ability of residents, community groups and the VCSE sector to support prevention, wellbeing, independence.

Key strategic actions and areas of focus

- Align our commissioning approaches with our Working in Neighbourhoods strategic direction, collaborating with partners including NHS and VCSE across the borough to develop more community-led support and integrated neighbourhood working
- Support and grow the impact of Age Friendly Brent Network to improve outcomes for people aged 50 and over
- Focus on opportunities for bespoke commissioning in our neighbourhoods – supporting smaller groups to thrive and grow to provide vital support and services in line with prevention aims e.g. live and stay well, community connection, isolation, skills development
- Trial a trusted assessor model with the VCSE sector with potential to grow and scale across VCSE
- Work with partners to ensure Brent's Community Hubs support people early with support around issues such as money
- Support the development, testing and expansion of local coordination models (e.g., the initial approach in Harlesden) to strengthen neighbourhood-led support pathways
- Maximise opportunities to support community and VCSE networks and groups by providing small multi-year grant funding to Brent's cultural and creative organisations including Creative Community Brent and Vi Brent in recognition of their role in reducing isolation, promoting wellbeing, and expanding community-led service delivery.
- Work with care providers to better connect and integrate them with community and neighbourhood networks
- Grow community-based information, advice and guidance, work with VCSE and community organisations to build capacity to offer community-based information, advice, guidance
- , debt, housing and connect with social care where needed
- Align our commissioning to support work with Primary Care Networks (PCN's) and the community to try to deliver prevention and management to people in Brent that do not normally access healthcare services
- Align commissioning to support development of services that enhance care in the community in line with ICP priorities e.g. reablement,

Theme 2: Early Help and Independence

Aim

Supporting residents who may or do need social care support to be as independent, healthy and well as possible through proactive, preventative help and support. Promoting early help and independence is a key part of our plans to help address growing demand, complexity and pressures.

Key strategic actions and areas of focus

- Commission care services that promote independence and enable people to live in the least restrictive settings possible
- Jointly commission evidence-led prevention interventions that address health inequalities such as mental wellbeing, loneliness, healthy eating,
- Commission and accelerate use of care technology to help people live more independently, improve well-being and reduce placement demand
- Support development of a unified and accessible 'social care front door' focused on community connection, support and enablement
- Reduce the number of long-term residential placements commissioned and expand the support offered to people in their own homes, e.g., through reablement, supported living and community support
- Review our independent advocacy commissions, thereby ensuring that people have access to timely information, advice and guidance and where needed access to an independent advocate
- Complete commissioning of new day opportunities framework and continue to shape market, enabling people to access community assets, volunteering and supported employment opportunities
- Maximise opportunities through partnering with arts, creative and cultural sector to commission and connect people to activities
- Develop commissioning plan for vulnerable residents housing including future provision of housing related and floating support
- Work with NHS, public health to review and commission future falls detection and prevention offer
- Explore the potential provision of a direct payments support service as part of continued promotion of direct payments
- Support the development of long term strategy for supported accommodation for vulnerable people – with specific focus on supported housing and addressing priority needs such as dementia and autism
- Work with providers and other services to ensure workers are able to spot issues that impact on well-being and independence where financial support could offer help

Theme 3: Co-Production and Engagement

Aim

Meaningfully involve service users, carers, residents, communities and partners in commissioning activity so that they become co-designers and co-producers of the services and outcomes we aim to achieve. We will build on the Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) principle that ‘those who use a service are best placed to help design it’.

Key strategic actions and areas of focus

- Working with people with lived experience throughout the commissioning cycle and life of contracts to ensure that services and solutions reflect what residents need and want
- Identify and support innovative community-led ideas, projects and new service models, with a strong focus on demonstrating impact and tangible improvements to services and outcomes
- Support design and development of a range of neighbourhood prevention initiatives including test and learn development of Family Group Conferencing for Adults and co-development of relational asset and strengths based practice approaches that can be used across Council, NHS and VCSE
- Strengthen our established provider and service-user forums to enable co-production, co-design and meaningful involvement in service design and delivery
- Actively seek out service user and lived experience voice in quality assurance processes and evidence this has changed and improved the way services are delivered
- Support care providers to be based in local neighbourhoods, helping them build strong connections and trusted relationships with residents
- Encourage and expect our providers to strengthen their engagement with service users and communities in a meaningful way with clear evidence that this has changed and improved the way that services are delivered
- Continue to have co production principles across the commissioning cycle with service user supporting with service design via service specification development and involvement in tender evaluation
- Explore opportunities for innovation by working in partnership with the Creative Community Brent network, using culture and the creative arts to develop new, inclusive approaches to engagement and the delivery of support
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Theme 4: Market Shaping and Management

Aim

Our aim is to ensure that the local care market can best meet current and future needs - offering a diverse, flexible and sustainable range of services that provide choice, quality and good outcomes for residents in line with our vision of helping people live their best lives

Key strategic actions and areas of focus

- Work with NWL Councils to provide a shared vision of what good looks like in market management and shaping to support more effective interventions on the cost of care
- Develop our marketplace intelligence with particular focus on spend, volume, location placement data for working age and older adults' residential and nursing and supported living; developing home care and day care analytics.
- Convene and support a range of provider forums that bring providers together to share good practice, work together to review and improve services, explore joint bids and share market and operational insights
- Co-develop market position statements / specific commissioning plans organised around care sectors and reflective of place and population
- Review use of spot purchasing of residential and nursing care and consider development of a framework or approaches that offer better value for money – engaging service users to co-design this approach.
- Ensure future tender opportunities open to local VCSE SME market as well as culturally specific providers
- Review of joint commissioning approaches, pooled budget arrangements to support strategic changes e.g. BCF
- Review of joint commissioning approaches, pooled budget arrangements and aligning commissioning with the NHS forward plan
- Strengthen our understanding of long-term care home and accommodation needs, particularly for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs, and work with providers to develop services and manage gaps in provision.
- Deliver service reviews and re-commissioning in line with our commissioning and procurement pipeline – including:
 - Tender for new homecare provision in 2026/27
 - Complete day opportunities framework
 - Carers Support Services
 - Advocacy Support
 - Technology Enabled Care
- Establish Market Sustainability and Oversight Board – strengthening strategic focus and oversight of work to support sustainable care market and services

Theme 5: Innovation, Quality, and Best Use of Resources

Aim

Find smarter, creative and more efficient ways to deliver care and support, whether through digital tools, integrated services, or new models of support, so residents can live and stay well for longer. We aim to support continuous improvement and ensure that the services we commission deliver safe, high-quality care for our residents and offer the most efficient use of limited resources

Key strategic actions and areas of focus

- Maintain a contracts register and procurement pipeline for all contracts and future tendering activity
- Explore the development of a 3 year pricing strategy linked to quality improvement and outcomes from 2027
- Development and greater utilisation of technology and digital solutions to deliver better outcomes for customers and achieve better services
- Set fee rates at a sustainable level, in line with commissioning priorities, to help shape markets and enable Adult Social Care providers to recruit a skilled workforce and stabilise and improve workforce capacity
- Partner with commissioned providers to improve recruitment, invest in workforce development and support a sustainable workforce for the future.
- Partner with the care sector to maximise social value for local communities, aligned with our vision for Adult Social Care, including contributions that strengthen prevention and early support.
- Make better use of data tools and resources that support demand modelling, cost and price benchmarking, inflation forecasts and annual uplift processes across standard of care categories
- Strengthen integrated commissioning opportunities, priorities and governance, building on existing work in partnership with health, ICP and resources such as the BCF to better support people and their experience through the health and care system
- Work across NWL boroughs to use consistent approaches to reviewing need, costs, demand, cost of care and to shape and deliver shared commissioning intentions where appropriate
- Explore the potential for digital brokerage platforms that offer more personalised, digital-led ways to access and commission care and support

Key Opportunities and Messages to the Market - Summary

The following summarises key messages about what we want to see for residents. This will be further developed through a market position statement – which is currently under development.

Community and VCSE

- We will explore options with the VCSFE sector to create networks of care and support for people with emerging adult social care needs promoting a community coordinated approach and community-led support
- We want to work with community organisations to harness individual strengths and community assets to reduce dependency on traditional social care services

Homecare

- We aim to develop a flexible, outcomes-focused home care market that supports independence, rapid response to changing needs, and safe hospital discharge. We will retender home care in 2026–27, moving to a Home Care Neighbourhoods model aligned with the Council’s strategic neighbourhoods model
- This will require providers to be active partners in local communities, integrated within neighbourhoods, building local connections, and contributing to community resilience.

Housing based support – Supported living / Extra care

- We aim to strengthen Supported Living and Extra Care so that residents with complex learning disabilities, mental health, autism and older people receive personalised, high-quality support that promotes safety, independence, and choice.
- We want to work with providers who act as active partners and embed themselves within Brent’s diverse neighbourhoods.

- We are seeking providers with the skills, expertise, and values to deliver specialist support for people with higher levels of need, including develop positive behaviour plans, sensory support, Makaton, behaviours that may challenge

Residential & Nursing Care

- We are strengthening a resilient residential and nursing market capable of supporting people with complex needs, including dementia. We are seeking providers who deliver creative, person-centred care with a strong focus on dignity, wellbeing, and meaningful engagement.
- In 2026–27, we will work with the market to develop block purchasing arrangements that improve stability, continuity of care, and value for residents and the system. We will also work closely with North West London partners to explore joint commissioning opportunities, particularly for specialist dementia and nursing provision.
- Providers are expected to maintain strong quality standards, deliver personalised care, and collaborate with health and social care partners to ensure safe, responsive, outcomes-focused support.

Care Technology and Innovation

- We will explore options to strengthen our technology-enabled care offer, using digital tools to enhance residents’ care experience and generate data and insights that inform future care package design.
- We are committed to being innovative in this area and using technology to shape more personalised, responsive support.

Governance and Monitoring

Governance and monitoring

This strategy will be monitored through the Adults Improvement and Assurance Board and the Transformation Board.

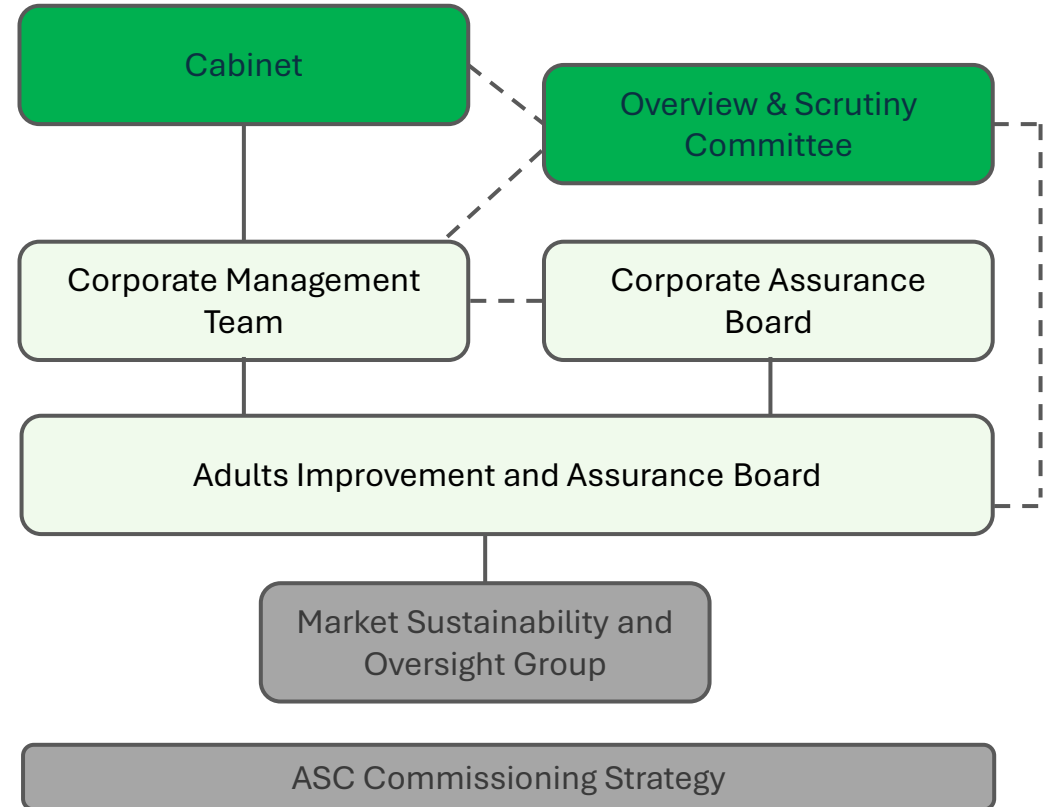
This ensures progress can be considered alongside the delivery of other inter-dependent strategies such as the ASC Prevention Strategy and the ASC Transformation Programme.

These groups have a reporting link to corporate council-wide Boards including the Corporate Assurance Board and the Corporate Management Team.

Our Contract Management and Quality Assurance (QA) processes will continue to provide proactive oversight of commissioned social care providers, supporting improvement, monitoring performance, and identifying risks.

Key findings, risks, and progress will be escalated to the Improvement and Assurance Board to ensure effective oversight and assurance.

We provide regular updates to the Adults Improvement and Assurance Board on providers within the Provider Support Pathway, outlining progress against improvement actions, emerging challenges, and any further required interventions



How to get involved

Provider and Community Forums

Commissioning teams host a range of sector-specific provider forums to strengthen collaboration across the care market. These forums support best practice sharing, market development, and provide updates on changes to care pathways. They create space for open dialogue, joint problem-solving, and exploring innovation that improves outcomes for the people we support. Through this partnership approach, we aim to build a sustainable, resilient, and high-quality care market

Our forums include

- **Home Care**
- **Nursing & Residential Care**
- **Day Services**
- **Supported Living/Extra Care**

Our provider forums create a dedicated space for providers to come together, engage directly with the council, and connect with peers across the sector. They support collaboration by sharing best practice, offering updates on commissioning and care pathways, and promoting innovation.

The forums also include contributions from guest speakers and market leaders, helping providers stay informed about emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities. Overall, they strengthen partnership working and support the development of a sustainable, high-quality care market.

Co-Production Champions

In Brent Adult Social Care, we want to work with residents, service users, carers, and professionals to improve our services. Find out more, including how to be a Co-Production Champion.

[Coproductioin programme | Brent Council](#)

Tendering and procurement opportunities

Brent promotes planned tender opportunities on our website:

[Tenders and procurement | Brent Council](#)

You can also sign up to our Procurement Portal to register to become a supplier with Brent Council here:

[Tenders and procurement | Brent Council](#)

Market engagement

We undertake regular market engagement events and activities to inform, shape, and prepare the market in advance of most planned commissioning and tender opportunities, supporting transparency, early dialogue, and market readiness.