

**CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER**

**MARKET POSITION STATEMENT 2025 - 2035**

# Foreword

## *“PLAY YOUR PART”*

Welcome to our all-age Market Position Statement (MPS) for Cheshire West and Chester.

Our [vision](#) for Cheshire West and Chester is for greener, fairer and stronger communities. We are committed to working closely with people, partners, providers and wider stakeholders to achieve our vision so that everyone in the borough can thrive and live a great life.

We believe that lasting change is needed to tackle the climate emergency; to see more children and young people have a better start in life; to create more good jobs; to have healthier communities, living longer more independent lives; to see more neighbourhoods that are great places to call home; and ensure an efficient and empowering council.

We all have a role to play, and we want to actively work with providers of all shapes and sizes to create and deliver services which help people and our communities to thrive.

We want to build new relationships and partnerships so that you as providers can play your part to reach our vision.

Cheshire West and Chester are a great place to live, work and do business and we are keen to have conversations with a range of organisations about our plans going forward.

We hope that this document helps you to understand what our vision means for care and support services and the type of market we need to enable people to live great lives.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

## Summary

We are continuing to shape the market, to support and enable people, whatever their age and ability with the primary focus on helping, to live a great life at home.

We want a market with services that build on people's own strengths and work with existing assets and services within our communities to prevent, reduce and delay the need for longer term care and support.

When people need more support, we want a market with the right housing and care options to enable them to continue living the life they want.

We are looking to work with providers and organisations who are high quality, innovative and share in our vision that everyone, regardless of age or ability, can live a great life.

Our commissioning intentions focus on two things:

- living a great life at home
- living a great life in supported accommodation

To help us develop the market we need, we are transforming the way we commission:

- We will be looking to commission new models of care and support which disrupt the norm and offer new approaches to supporting people at home, in their community.
- We will create a more diverse and resilient market full of services offering greater choice and accessibility.
- We will increasingly integrate with NHS commissioning to deliver the Cheshire West Plan.
- We will work with a broader range of providers, developers, organisations and individuals who are prepared to work in partnership with us, to be flexible to meet changing demands and to bring innovative ideas to the table.
- We will co-produce the services of the future with the people who will benefit from them.

# Enabling Great Lives - Our approach to commissioning

Our vision is for people to live great lives. People will live healthy, happy and independent lives, in the place they call home and with the people they love because we will commission services which are based on what people want to enable them to live a full and independent life.

- For children and young people this means ensuring they are enabled to have the best start in life with access to services which support a safe and healthy childhood and work seamlessly when moving to adulthood.
- For everyone, regardless of their age or ability, our vision means they will be able to live their lives well in their community with a range of universal and specialist services which support a healthy, independent and fulfilling life.
- For older people this means they will age well at home in their community with their family and friends. When more support is needed, it will start with a conversation about what makes a great life for them and there will be just enough of the right kind of support to enable them to keep living the life they want.

To achieve our vision, we are transforming the way we commission. We will be:

- Focussing on people's experience and their outcomes – successful services will be those that provide good experiences and support people to live great lives.
- Thinking and working whole-life – joining up our thinking and planning to seek opportunities which support people across their whole-life.
- Forward thinking and outward looking – creating new partnerships, finding new ways and planning further ahead to shape resilient care and support models and markets of the future.
- Taking a strengths and asset-based approach – designing services which enable people to live their lives in the place they call home and to utilise the things in their community.
- Embedding co-production – involving people who use services and their families and carers in the design and production of new services.
- Continue to strive for outstanding quality by working collaboratively with providers to improve people's lives by strengthening resilience and maintaining high quality standards.

# Our Market Position Statement

Our Market Position Statement is all-age, which means it covers the services we commission for children and families, public health, older people, people with a learning disability or autism and people with a mental health condition.

It is a strategic document. It sets a vision for what we want the market in Cheshire West and Chester to look like in the next five to ten years. It provides a narrative focusing on what we believe to be the priorities to achieve our vision. The Market Position Statement is here to stimulate a conversation with you and to help you to align your thinking and plan and shape your business models and strategies accordingly.

We intend for this to be a 'living' tool to help you plan. It will be refreshed every 12 months around February and March time. It is a rolling five to ten year look ahead at the kind of market we want, and we hope will support a better dialogue and stronger partnership with you so that we all can play our part.

We have organised the Market Position Statement into three parts – **Start Well, Live Well and Age Well** - and each part is split by our key areas of focus:

- **living a great life at home**
- **living a great life in supported accommodation**

We want our Market Position Statement to stimulate more conversation and collaborative working to transform our market.

We welcome further enquiries from providers and other organisations who would like more information or would like to work with us on any of the topics outlined in this document.

For further information or a conversation with a commissioner please email Cheshire West and Chester Council's People Commissioning Team at [AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

All of our tendering opportunities will be published on The Chest: Northwest Procurement Portal.

We have developed the Market Position Statement with the help of a number of providers, but we are keen to ensure this meets your needs as well as ours. To provide feedback on the Market Position Statement please email [AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk).

## Key messages

- We are shaping a market for the future to enable people to live a great life at home and in doing so prevent, reduce and delay the need for long-term health and care support.
- We see all of our commissioning through a [Community Led Support](#) lens. Community Led Support is a strengths-based approach which means we seek to enable people to live a great life by building on what they are able to do and provide just enough help and support for them to continue to live the life they want.
- Providers should start to develop models and services which take a strengths-based approach and focus on providing a good experience and achieving the outcomes people want.
- Coproduction is at the heart of all that we do, we want to work together with providers and people with lived experience to achieve good outcomes and effective services.
- We want to support people to live at home and in their community for as long as possible. We want to grow services that take a preventative and re-enabling approach in the way they are delivered, to reduce and delay the need for longer term care and support services.
- We want to develop and grow our specialist supported accommodation in line with our [Specialist Housing Prospectus](#) which provides housing and care options for people to continue to live a great life.
- We value providers who want to work in partnership with us, to continually improve quality and adapt models of care and support.
- We will continue to invite providers to engage with us through regular Market Shaping collaboratives and Provider forums to strengthen our partnership working.
- Providers must share in our ambitions to reduce inequalities, promote fairness and opportunity for all.
- Social value is a key part of our commissioning and procurement activities across our services. When tendering, providers must take care to demonstrate how they will meet our social value requirements. Our [Social Value Portal](#) contains more information about our approach.
- We expect all providers we commission to pay the Local Living Wage.

- We take a trauma-informed approach, and we expect providers to adopt the principles of [our way of working](#).
- We value our Community Sector, and we are keen to create the space and environment for it to flourish. Our [Compact](#) sets out our commitment to supporting and working with Community, Voluntary and Faith organisations including how we will commission services from them.
- As the Council faces times of financial pressures, we want to ensure that we are receiving value for money on all services, whilst maintaining high quality support for residents of our borough
- Tackling the climate emergency is a key aspect of the Council Plan. We want to work with providers who consider the impact on the climate and who have a low carbon footprint or are actively working to reduce it.

## Our influences

**What people want:** We know from talking to people who use services that they just want to live the life they want. They want more personalised services which complement rather than determine their lives. People want services which are high quality and work for them. Our Market Position Statement focusses on how we want services to help people live a great life.

**Demand:** What we know about demand and future demand is key to determining the kind of markets and services we need. We know demand for some types of service is increasing whilst for others reducing or changing. Our Market Position Statement focusses on areas of our market we want to grow and change and specifically on how we prevent, reduce and delay demand for longer-term care and support.

**Finance:** The Council's budget is key to determining what kind of market and services we have. We know that we can no longer continue to meet the same and rising levels of demand using the same models of care and support – they are simply too expensive. Our Market Position Statement is clear that we need different and more cost-effective ways of meeting outcomes for people.

**What our providers say:** We know from having regular conversations with providers that there are challenges but that there are also opportunities for doing things differently. We want to commission resilient models of care and support which work for people, providers and the workforce we need. Our Market Position Statement emphasises the partnership we want to create with providers to make things better.

## **Cheshire West and Chester Council Adult Social Care Key Information:**

- Population 371,652
- 80,283 people aged 65 and over
- 79,185 people are aged 19 or under
- 8.8% ethnic minority population
- Median local household income £39,200 p.a.
- Employment rate 82.1%
- 83.7 years life expectancy for women; 79.6 for men
- 12,017 requests for adult social care support
- More than 1,550 adults receiving care at home commissioned by the Council.
- 1,426 older people living in care homes commissioned by the Council (including people receiving short break or temporary care).
- 4,905 people have been placed by the Care Connections team over the past two years.

- 82% of regulated adult social care market rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by CQC.
- 91% of our commissioned Adult Social Care providers have achieved a Good or Excellent PAMMS\* rating (\*In-house Quality Assessment framework)
- 32,620 informal carers
- 102,944 children and young people aged 0-25
- 538 children in care (end of March 2026)
- There were 230 children placed in private provision placements (including CWAC Foster Carers), equating to 43% of the care population.

More information like this is available on our [State of the Borough](#) site.

## Summary of Commissioning Intentions:

### General

#### Our Commissioning Intentions

- We have developed a model for co-production linked to the local voices framework to ensure services that we commission are what people want to live a great life. For example, all of our commissioning work will be informed by coproduction; our specifications will start to include 'I statements' and we will expect providers to demonstrate how they will meet these; we involve people with lived experience in the procurement process; and we focus our quality assurance processes on people's experience.
- We want to continue our work with the Community, Voluntary Sector and Faith sector to create an environment which encourages and nurtures the development of a vibrant and diverse communities.
- We will continue to hold regular provider forums which give providers, the Council and partners the opportunity to come together to explore challenges, celebrate successes and continue to improve,

- We have established Market Shaping Collaboratives for Specialist Housing and the Community Sector to shape the markets of the future and want to work with people who use services, providers and other organisations on some of our more important and challenging issues. In 2026/27 we will establish Market Shaping Collaboratives to focus on the following:
  - Preparing for adulthood (Thriving futures)
  - Day opportunities for people with a learning disability or autism.
  - Ageing Well
  
- We have established good working relationships and will continue to provide support in order to maintain continuous quality improvement with our commissioned providers.
  
- We will work with Community and Voluntary Sector and providers to maximise alternative funding opportunities, where possible to support self-sustainability.

## HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME

### Our Commissioning Intentions

- We will develop our commissioning intentions for the 0 –19 Starting Well service.
  
- We will develop the commissioning intentions for residential placements for children and young people who are looked after.
  
- Cheshire West and Chester are looking to work with care providers and housing providers to develop an accommodation and support offer which provides a home for young people aged 16 -25, offering physical security and emotional stability and on a medium-term basis, preparing the young person for adulthood and supporting the corporate parenting responsibilities of all partners.  
 The work will consider different options for young people and will transform the way the council and partners support young people to live independently. We will require 60 units of this type of accommodation with support for young people by March 2027.  
 The following groups of young people will be in scope to receive accommodation and support.
  - Care leavers
  - Disabled young people who have eligible needs under the Care Act
  - Young People with Mental Health needs – eligible under Section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983

- Young People with Learning Disability
- Neurodivergent young people
- Young people who cause harm

Help will be provided from 14 years to enable the young person to be ready to access accommodation and support from 16 to 25 years. This will support readiness to live in group accommodation and develop independent living skills. Accommodation will be available from 16 – 25 or when the young person is ready to live in alternative accommodation. The accommodation and support will be registered with Ofsted and the CQC.

- In 2025 we will review the Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy in preparation for the recommissioning of services to commence in April 2027 and we welcome providers to take part in this review.
- We are developing a Sufficiency Plan to ensure there are appropriate and sufficient services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability to access services within their local communities.
- We will develop our commissioning intentions for children and young people who need support with their emotional health and well-being. T
- We want to work with providers to develop our approach to outcome-based commissioning and welcome providers or other organisations who have experience of this to work with us to develop our approach.
- We will continue to pilot and grow the use of micro-providers in adult social care and seek to roll this out to children and families following evaluation.

## **LIVE WELL**

### **Our commissioning intentions**

- Throughout 2026, we will review our day services provision for, people with a learning disability or autism and people with a mental health condition; building on what people have said they want - a strength and asset-based approach. We will continue to work with providers to ensure accessible services which are available across the borough utilising a reablement and progression model approach.
- Working in conjunction with our skills and employment team, we will look at creating employment opportunities for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism locally and support people to learn new skills and gain paid employment.

- We will promote our new approach to direct payments including those who previously may not have been able to manage a personalised budget on their own before.
- We have an ambition to utilise Personal Budgets, where possible. We will support providers to develop an individual service fund offer for those accessing personal budgets.
- We intend to develop the commissioning intentions for the Domestic Abuse - Refuge and dispersed (Safe Accommodation) commission. This will involve engagement with the market in preparation for the start of a new commission in 2026.
- In 2026/27 we will commission 5-10 learning disability and autism short break beds for people with the highest needs and for emergencies.
- Following a review of our short breaks and temporary stay policy, we will work with providers to deliver new and alternative models to support people who need a short stay or temporary break.
- We will continue to commission new supported living capacity in line with our Specialist Housing Prospectus, which meets the needs of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health, in particular accommodation which will suit them as they age and accommodation which offers people their own front door.
- We intend to develop the market for specialist one bed supported living units to support with high level mental health need close to Chester or Ellesmere Port in the West and Northwich in the East.
- we will continue to work with housing organisations, providers and developers through our market shaping collaborative to implement recommendation detailed within our specialist Housings Prospectus.
- The Council will continue to review services that are delivered in-house to ensure we are achieving value for money and the needs of the people we support.
- We intend to nurture growth in more suitable high need specialist mental health bed capacity.
- In 2026/27 we will review our approach to the way we commission Learning Disabilities, Autism and Mental Health following the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 to replace the current Dynamic Purchasing System.
- We will continue to grow our Shared Lives service to maximise alternative opportunities to people who require support.

# AGE WELL

## Our commissioning intentions

- Following the implementation of an integrated Health and Wellbeing Community Grants Fund in 2024 and pausing in 2026, the council will review how it works with the Community, voluntary and faith sector and codesign a new Community Infrastructure Fund to support its ambition of being a Community Led Council.
- Following the successful tender for an integrated care at home and extra care service. The service will mobilise and commence in 2026, implementing a hub and spoke model by incorporating Extra Care Schemes and Care at Home across the borough across 7 different localities.
- We will continue to grow the numbers of micro-providers to support people at home and in the community, particularly in our Rural area.
- We will commission fewer general residential care beds.
- We will nurture growth in the specialist dementia residential and nursing market.
- In 2025/26 we created a capital grant programme to support care homes who wish to change their registration to specialist dementia and/or increase dementia bed capacity. By providing capital investment through a competitive process, we will continue to support successful providers with the development of new specialist dementia capacity.
- In 2026/27 we will develop options using capital grant funding to support the market to find alternative solutions to meet our vision of Enabling Great Lives by utilising Smart Support
- We will commission services specifically for dementia, to support the increasing demand.
- In 2026/27, we will tender for an all-age SMART Support (Previously known as Technology Enable Care) service to ensure we meet future needs including the use of SMART technology and AI.
- In partnership across Cheshire Place the Council, Cheshire East and ICB will deliver an Integrated Community Equipment Service in 27/28 to support people to maximise their independence through equipment.
- The Council would like to work with providers to find alternative models of short breaks and temporary stay to support carers continue their vital role.

- In 2026/27 the Council would like to in partnership with the ICB and providers to find alternative models of support to reduce and prevent hospital and premature admission to long term care
- In 2026, the Council will co-produce an Ageing Well Commissioning Strategy detailing its direction of travel and aspirations for the next 5 years linking to the refresh of Age Friendly partnership.
- In 2026/27, the Council will refresh its Carers JSNA and Strategy which will be co-produced detailing the need and demand within borough to shape commissioning intentions in 2027/28.
- We will continue to invest in the skills and knowledge of care home staff through programmes such as My Home Life
- We will continue to work with education partners in the borough to ensure a workforce development offer is available to providers.
- We will continue to use provider and quality feedback to address areas of focus.

## Summary of Key Messages:

### HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME

#### Key messages

- Demand for residential placements in the borough is growing, particularly placements which can support children and young people with more complex needs.
- Demand for accommodation and support for 16 – 25-year-olds is growing for those young people who are require continued support before they can live independently.
- We want more choice when it comes to short-breaks and respite which provide children and young people opportunities to experience new things or gain new skills.
- We are committed to improving quality standards across the Children's social care market.

For children and young people our vision means ensuring they are supported to have the best start in life with access to services which support a safe and healthy childhood and work seamlessly when moving to adulthood.

Our Children and Young People’s plan sets out our vision for children and young people in Cheshire West focussing on emotional health and wellbeing, SEND, Early help and prevention. [West Cheshire Children's Trust](#)

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy makes clear the Council’s and our Partner’s commitment to supporting children and young people in our care throughout their lives. [corporate-parenting-strategy](#)

Over the next five years we will be transforming the way we support children, young people and their families within Cheshire West and Chester by ensuring that we have the right services in place to intervene earlier and prevent the need for longer term care and support.

Cheshire West and Chester have a smaller proportion of children and young people compared to the national average.

Age group	Female	Male	Total
Aged 0-4	8731	8689	17420
Aged 5-9	9691	10324	20015
Aged 10-14	10472	10957	21429
Aged 15-19	9781	10540	20321
Aged 20-25	11997	11762	23759

*Source: Cheshire West and Chester Population Estimates Mid - 2024*

In Cheshire West there are 4603 children and young people aged 0-25 with an EHCP maintained by CW&C on 31 March 2026, which is a 12% increase from 31 March 2025, and 6704 children identified as receiving SEND support in CW&C Local Authority schools.

At the time of writing, there were 538 children in care, of those 128 (24%) have a disability. 59% are placed within the borough and 41% placed out of borough. The majority of children and young people are placed with both long and short-term Foster Carers – 346 children and young people.

We take a trauma informed approach. Our way of working is about developing a common and consistent approach to working with families. It has been researched and driven forward by the Children’s Trust and has a strong preventative approach at all levels across the continuum of need. It is based on shared language and shared understanding across all partners. Many of the families we work with can experience a broad range of difficulties that need support and interventions. We want to work with them in a new, integrated and targeted way.

# Living a great life at home

## *Starting Well 0-19 Service*

The Starting Well Service delivers the Healthy Child Programme for 0–19-year-olds along with delivery of our children’s centres core offer. It is an essential service to help support children and families to live happy and healthy lives in their community.

The aim of Starting Well is to give children the best start in life by focussing on their health needs and preventing health conditions which could prevent them from leading the life they want.

Starting Well is a significant area of spend for the Council.

	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>0 -19 Starting Well Service spend '000s</b>	5,667	5,828	5,828	6,113	6,224

### *Starting Well 5 years spend*

#### **Where we are now**

A 0-19 service delivering 0-5 Healthy Child Programme, 5 – 19 Health Child Programme within an integrated Children’s Centre delivery is commissioned until 30 June 2027.

The 0 – 19 Starting Well Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is available and will support the development of the service.

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\) | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

#### **Where we want to be**

We want to secure a long-term approach for the service, offering increased stability, secure the Council’s ability to ensure their mandatory services are delivered and aligns with the principles of health integration intended by the Health and Care Act 2022.

#### **Our commissioning intentions**

We will establish a co-operation arrangement with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership to achieve common objectives in the performance of the 0 – 19 Starting Well service. The 0 – 19 Starting Well (25 SEND) model aligns Health Visiting, School Nursing and

Children’s Centre services to ensure a seamless transition between ages and stages of development.

### **Short breaks for families and carers**

Short breaks are services that can help families with a child or young person with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). They give SEND children the chance to have time away from their families, make new friends and have fun. They give parents a break from caring for their child; give parents the chance to spend time with their other children; and are designed to meet different levels of need.

	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Short Breaks spend ‘000s</b>	513	550	491	581	520

### **Where we are now**

The Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy 2021 – 2025 outlines the commissioning intentions of the borough following rigorous consultation with parents, carers and other key stakeholders.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 Cheshire West and Chester have commissioned community based short break groups which provide both weekend and holiday provision for children and young people with SEND.

In addition, we commission information, advice and practical support via a support worker for children and helps them to access activities which meet their interests of whilst providing a short break to their parents/carers.

The Council’s Pinewood overnight short breaks facility is open four nights per week providing a maximum of 3 beds a night. Quality of provision is judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding. The provision is run efficiently and maintains capacity at 80% or above on a regular basis. There is limited availability of beds currently and Pinewood experiences difficulties recruiting due to the days and hours staff are required to work. The staff working in Pinewood are highly skilled and achieve good outcomes for children and young people.

### **Where we want to be**

We want to increase the choice of short breaks to include opportunities to support young people with the development of independent living skills so that they can thrive in their local communities.

We will review the Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy in preparation for April 2027. The strategy will be coproduced with families, and we will liaise with providers to shape the strategy.

### **Who we need.**

We want to work with providers and organisations who can support children and young people who have more complex needs to provide short breaks and/or childcare after school and during school holidays in order to respond to the requirements of the national wraparound childcare programme.

The national wraparound childcare programme is part of the childcare reforms announced at the 2023 Spring Budget. The government's ambition is that by 2026, all parents and carers of primary school-aged children who need it will be able to access term time childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm, so that parents can access employment and improve labour market participation. To support this ambition, the government announced that it will provide up to £289 million of start-up funding over two academic years to support local authorities and providers in England to introduce or expand childcare provision on either side of the school day, which parents of primary school-aged children will be able to pay to access. This programme will only focus on primary school-aged children from reception to year 6, Monday to Friday during term time. Our expectation is that all wraparound provision is 8am-6pm, enabling parents to work a full day with travel time, unless data shows that local demand is for different hours, for example reflecting local labour market patterns.

We want to work with providers who can provide support to enhance independent living skills or can support children and young people with different experiences as part of short daybreaks and overnight stays.

### **Our Commissioning Intentions**

- In 2024/25 we will work with both childcare and short break providers to deliver the national childcare programme
- In 2024 we will review the Short Breaks Commissioning Strategy in preparation for 2025, and we welcome providers to take part.

### *Care at home and in the Community*

We provide children and young people with direct payments so that they can employ personal assistants to support them to do things in their community or support them at home.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Care at home and in the community spend '000s	241	371	432	303	692

## Where we are now

Support has continued to be spot purchased through agencies and is costly due to the recruitment issues. Outreach in the community tends to be a fall-back option when families cannot recruit a PA through Direct Payments.

Many children need a couple of hours support before school and after school which does not provide value for money.

We want to support more children to be able to live their best life at home and in their community. We want a more progressive approach to providing support which offers a range of strength-based flexible options for children, young people and their families.

During 2023/24 we developed some approaches which we are piloting with two providers on a short-term basis.

Pilot 1 - The aims of the service will be:

- To provide outreach in the community for children and young people with complex and multiple needs
- Deliver appropriate short break groups for children who have previously been accessing the outreach in the community support to step down into a group.

Pilot 2 – The aim of the service is to:

- Provide more flexibility and choice for families to provide strengths-based support not only to the child with additional needs but the wider family too, including siblings.
- Develop a Family Support Hub in Ellesmere Port. The hub will provide space from which to deliver interventions and a staff base to provide outreach.
- Deliver holistic support to the family as well as providing outreach in the community.
- provide support in times of crisis or emergency.

We will evaluate the pilot to understand the impact they have had. The learning from this will support the development of a commissioning model for a new service.

## Where we want to be

We want to grow community led micro enterprises which can offer more personalised and flexible options. We want to see more group-based community activities emerge for children and young people with more complex needs which utilise community assets and which parents can use direct payments of short break individual payments for.

### **Who we need.**

We want to work with high-quality care at home and community sector providers.

We want to hear from people, individuals, or small groups, who want to support their neighbours and local communities by establishing themselves as 'micro-providers'.

### **Our commissioning intentions**

- We want to work with providers to develop our approach to outcome-based commissioning and welcome providers or other organisations who have experience of this to work with us to develop our approach.
- We will continue to pilot and grow the use of micro-providers in adult social care and seek to roll this out to children and families following evaluation.

## **Living a great life in supported accommodation**

### *Residential Care*

The [Children in Care and Care Leavers Accommodation Strategy](#) 2022 - 25 outlines our commitment to building our offer of suitable and targeted accommodation for our children in care and care leavers; both at the point they need care, including the family time we support for them with the people important in their lives, through to how we best provide homes fit for purpose as our young people transition to independence.

Local, regional and national challenges regarding sufficiency of accommodation have experienced further pressures as a result of the global pandemic. Over the past 12 months, the numbers of children coming into our care has grown as we recognise the impact upon families of this unprecedented time. We know that we can build upon positive work within borough to ensure we can be the best corporate parents to those children who need us.

### **Where we are now**

Increased demand and children and young people experiencing greater levels of need have meant placements are harder to find locally, leading to a rapid growth in cost and placements out of borough. The average cost of residential placements is expected to have risen by 30% between 2022-2024. Around 20% of all children in residential care are placed outside of the borough. It is recognised that there is a lack of sufficiency locally to meet the needs of our children in care, with some providers demanding significant sums to place young people with more complex needs.

Some of our children have increasingly complex needs which are challenging for foster carers to manage. Including:

- Increase in teenagers using high risk self-harming strategy as a coping mechanism, e.g., cutting, overdose, ligaturing.
- Impact of chronic neglect compounded by autism spectrum disorders/ADHD
- Increase in number of young people exhibiting complex sexually inappropriate & harmful behaviours.
- Increase in young people being sexually and criminally exploited.
- Increase in number of adoption breakdowns and the impact of emotional harm caused by the rejection.
- Increased number of young people aged 15yrs requiring care who are exhibiting violent behaviours.

There is a lack of integrated residential care and education provision in Cheshire West and Chester which contributes to children being placed out of borough.

### **Where we want to be**

We need a children's residential market with sufficient numbers of placement options to meet the rising demand and complexity of need.

We need more emergency residential care that can offer short term/time limited high intensity placements to meet the needs of more complex young people while a more permanent placement can be found.

We want a market that can deliver innovative accommodation solutions which respond to the increasingly complex needs of our looked after children, offering them support they need to live a great life.

We want a market that provides a broader, more flexible and accessible range of quality residential solutions which ensures that the needs of our most challenging and complex children/young people are met.

We want to develop a fair cost of care within the market that provides value for money.

We want innovative and collaborative solutions, and we are keen to explore opportunities to develop integrated residential and education provision and the role of the Community Sector to support young people in alternative accommodation and independent living solutions.

## **Who we need.**

We want to work with high quality care providers. We are interested in working with organisations who have an appetite to work collaboratively to explore opportunities such as integrated residential and education provision or other partnership models.

We want to work with Community Sector organisations to explore opportunities for service delivery.

### *Supported Living and Group Living Accommodation*

## **Where we are now**

The Floating Support 'Step forward Service' and Supported Lodgings service has been commissioned for the next 5 years (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023). The service supports young people who are ready to develop their independent living skills and be supported to have their own front door.

We have grown the number of supported Group Accommodation in the borough. There are two Supported Group Living Accommodation location for care leavers based in the Chester and Winsford area, consisting of five self-contained flats, staff office and staff accommodation. A commissioned service providing care leavers with support to live independently is provided until 31 March 2025.

## **Where we want to be**

We want supported living to enhance young people's lives and support them to learn skills for independent living.

## **Who we need.**

We want to develop relationships with Registered Social Landlords to identify suitable accommodation.

Work with organisations to explore opportunities for private capital investment to secure appropriate accommodation which will provide long term options for our care leavers.

# **LIVE WELL**

## **Key Messages**

- People want a different day service offer which adapts more to their lives and is accessible in the community they live.
- Demand is growing for specialist residential and supported housing within Cheshire West and Chester to support people with higher learning disability and mental health needs.

- We are in short supply of specialist learning disability and autism Short Break beds.
- We are implementing a transformational model to the way we support people aged 16-64 who require care and accommodation.

Regardless of someone’s age or ability, our vision means they will be able to live their lives well in their community with a range of universal and specialist services which support a healthy, independent, and fulfilling life.

We want to commission care services for people with learning disabilities, autism or a mental health condition that give them every opportunity to live a great life and to reach their full potential.

*Learning disabilities and autism*

Across Cheshire West and Chester, there are an estimated 7,000 people aged 18 plus who have a diagnosis of a learning difficulties and approximately 2942 people aged 18 plus who have autism. Not all these people are known to adult social care. Only those who have been identified as having an eligible care need will be known to the council.

As of 31 March 2026, the local authority commissioned care services for approximately 1081 people aged 18 and over who were assessed as having a learning disability and an eligible care need.

No. of people in receipt of services for a Learning Disability	1202
No. of people in receipt of services for Autism	285
No. of young people ‘transitions’ with LD and Autism	211

The Council spends a significant amount on Learning Disability and Autism services each year and this has increased by 31.8% over the last five years alongside an increase in the number of people supported.

	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Learning Disability and Autism spend ‘000s</b>	58,855	63,885	69,757	67,494	77,542

Our joint Council/NHS commissioning strategy for Learning Disability and Autism (link) sets out our vision for how NHS and Council will work together to commission the right services for people, emphasising early intervention/pre-post diagnosis autism support in the community as well as reducing the number of out of area placements enabling more people to return from inpatient stays into their local community before transitioning back home. This will be reviewed shortly through co-production.

## Mental Health

We estimate that there are around 50,000 people in Cheshire West and Chester living with some form of mental health condition and it is anticipated that this number will rise slightly over the next five to ten years.

<b>Mental health - all people Cheshire West &amp; Chester</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>
People aged 18-64 predicted to have a common mental disorder	38,186	38,665	38,766
People aged 18-64 predicted to have a borderline personality disorder	4,847	4,908	4,920
People aged 18-64 predicted to have an antisocial personality disorder	6,640	6,711	6,715

*Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England, 2016*

The Council has a duty to support people who have eligible needs under the Care Act and is currently supporting 621 people with mental health needs.

In 2024/5 the cost of delivering externally commissioned mental health support was £10.3 million and was £11.0million in 2025/26 it is predicted to be remain stable in 2026/27 (excluding inflationary increases).

	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Total - Mental Health spend '000s</b>	5,046	6,104	8,177	10,298	11,015

In 2024, an integrated all-age Mental Health Strategy was published with the following outcomes:

- To promote positive mental health and wellbeing
- To reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.
- To increase the availability of evidence-based interventions that improve mental health and wellbeing.
- To co-produce the design of services with people who use them to ensure they meet their needs

The vision for the strategy is to achieve parity of esteem between community based physical health services and mental health services, in recognition of the importance of both physical and mental health and the intrinsic links between them. A Mental health alliance was created with key strategic partners including Health, The Council and Community and Voluntary sector. With a focus on 6 key priorities, identified via engagement with key stakeholders:

1. Voice of Lived Experience
2. Prevention
3. Early Intervention
4. Crisis Care
5. Supported Discharge
6. Transition

## **Living a great life at home**

### *Day Services*

We want to support as many people as possible to live independently in their community. Day opportunities provide vital support to people to help them live their lives and access activities which lead to a fulfilling life.

Day opportunities support everyday living activities and can be delivered in a community setting or in a building-based location. These services help people to attend a regular group or centre that provides them with the opportunity to meet other people, develop friendship groups, be offered support with everyday activities, learn new skills, and participate in leisure activities.

### **Where we are now**

75% of day care service sessions are delivered by the Council. Provision includes a skill centre and more traditional building-based day care model. These services help people with learning disabilities, autism or mental health conditions to carry out everyday activities. They provide opportunities to meet other people, develop friendships and learn new skills.

Mapping of day care service provision indicates current opportunities are biased towards building based services offered across urbanised areas of the Borough, with fewer opportunities being offered in community settings such as colleges and other mainstream services. There is little to no provision in rural areas.

There are limited opportunities to support people to achieve any form of employment status.

During 2026/27 we will review our day services provision for people with a learning disability or autism focusing on enabling people, supporting progression and where appropriate. Following investment into our skills and employment teams we will be working with individuals to maximise their potential and creating greater independent opportunities.

### **Where we want to be**

We want to implement the co-designed model. We will want a new day service model which follows a progression model offering more choice and greater availability to people in their communities.

We want a model which offers choice by being more integrated with existing community assets, services, and organisations as well as building-based services for those who require greater levels of support.

Our new model will have a range of options which suit what people want and where they live, including a range of skill building opportunities in many different industries to encourage people to learn new skills and potentially gain future employment or volunteering opportunities.

### **Who we need.**

We want to work with innovative providers who understand our vision for a new model of day services.

We need providers who can work on a group basis or individually.

We need providers who can offer short-term support to people to access universal and mainstream services.

We want to work with community sector providers and existing businesses and services to develop new ways of supporting people in the community which utilise existing assets and services.

We want to work with universal service providers who are interested in working with care providers to support people to access their service. For example, leisure organisations and private businesses.

We want to work with providers to look at creating employment opportunities for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism locally and support people to learn new skills and gain paid employment.

### **Our commissioning intentions**

- We will create opportunities for creative provider to work with the Council in 2026/27 to support people through personalisation or direct commissioned services to support people who have a learning disability and or autism.
- In 2027/28 we will look to review day services provided to older people and people with a mental health condition, building on the coproduction lessons that the Council has learnt within the Learning disability and autism area.

### *Community Mental Health Support*

We support people to remain independent through community-based mental health services across the borough. The aim of these services is to prevent adults in the

community escalating into health and social care systems and reaching crisis. The provision is led across the borough by a community sector organisation. The contract was let in December 2024 for a 3-year term with option to extend for 2 years.

Jointly they have supported 2484 adults in 25/26 in the community to gain early mental health support preventing escalation. This includes easy to access 1:1 support, therapeutic support, group activities, outdoor groups and a range of low-level wellbeing support. There has been increasing demand for this support so flexibility in being able to continue to deliver what people need is important. This was evidenced during the pandemic period where community in-person led services shifted quickly to a telephone and digital services enabling easier access to support.

Community Led Mental Health support for Carers is sub-contracted under the main Carers contract. The service supports carers with mental health conditions to develop peer networks to support their caring role. The service also provides support and education for carers caring for someone with a mental health condition.

### **Where we want to be**

We want to develop our community mental health offer with more innovative ways of supporting people in the community.

We want to grow the market in areas of the borough which have been harder to serve, such as south of Chester, Neston, Frodsham, and Winsford.

We want to develop a market with services that follow and can evidence a strength-based and outcome focussed approach to mental health support.

We want to develop high quality and cost-effective services that are responsive to demand.

### **Who we need.**

We would like to work with new and existing community sector providers who are keen to think differently and can demonstrate a strength-based approach to delivery which will prevent people's mental health deteriorating.

We will be developing outcome focussed measures of impact and want to work with partners who are keen to understand what works for people to keep them well in their community.

### **Our commissioning Intentions**

- In 2026/27 we will review community-based Mental Health services which prevent people needs escalating
- The review will look at opportunities to integrate services across health and social care.

## *Short Breaks*

Informal and family carers do so much to support people in their own homes. We value the role that carers play and are committed to providing appropriate support and rest to enable them to continue to live a great life.

There are many different types of caring roles within the community, whether it's caring for an older relative, a son or daughter with a learning disability or someone with a mental health condition. The Council wants to ensure that services are available to all carers who require it.

### **Where we are now**

The Council is committed to offering a wide range of offers for carers for short breaks, including less traditional offers to bed based care and greater promotion of direct payments to enable flexible self-directed options.

Planned short breaks are for people with assessed eligible needs to support carers to fulfil their caring responsibilities and allow them to have breaks from their caring role throughout the year. Currently they are predominately spot purchased and bed based with a small proportion commissioned from council in house services or the general care home market. These services provide traditional accommodation for a range of client needs to facilitate overnight stays whilst supporting residents to attend their usual activities / day services. Short breaks are utilised most significantly at the weekends although weekday provision is also provided.

Some learning disability and autism residential services have recently closed leaving a shortage of supply of residential respite for people with learning disabilities.

In 2025/6, we reviewed our policy for short breaks with people, their carers and practitioners redefining what we mean by Short Breaks. We are currently wanting to create a more diverse market and choice for people.

### **Where we want to be**

We will continue to have a small bed-based offer for overnight breaks for people with higher needs and for those requiring emergency support. Over the next five years it is estimated we will need approximately 5-10 beds for people with a learning disability 4 for mental health and 4-9 for older people.

To complement residential Short Breaks, we want to create more choice and availability by growing a diverse market of innovative short break opportunities for people and their families which provide much needed respite for carers whilst enhancing people's lives. These should include a whole range of activities and support which are delivered mid-week, in the daytime and evening and which could work in tandem with an overnight residential placement.

## **Who we need.**

Providers who want to develop our small bed-based offer.

A mix of innovative providers who are prepared to redefine short breaks and work with us on new models which focus on enhancing people's lives and utilising existing assets in the community.

We want to work with universal service providers who are interested in working with care providers to support people to access their service. For example, leisure organisations and private businesses.

## **Our commissioning intentions**

- In 2026/27 we intend to commission 5-10 learning disability respite beds, 4 mental health and 4-9 for older people with the highest needs and for emergencies.

## *Supported Living*

We support people to live the life they want in their own home through supported living.

Supported Living is traditionally small groups of people living in shared houses with care and support provided in the home. People living in Supported Living predominantly hold their own tenancy agreements with a registered social housing provider or/ non-for-profit landlord and care is provided by registered care provider.

## **Where we are now**

Our demand predictions for learning disability, autism and mental health indicate the amount of specialist and supported housing required will continue to rise over the next ten years. Our work with people who live in supported living now or who may in the future tells us that lifestyles are changing and people prefer different housing options to help them live the life they want.

To meet this new demand, it is estimated Cheshire West and Chester will require at least 350 NEW units of specialist supported accommodation for people with a learning disability, autism or mental health need to be developed over the next 10 years. We will require at least 25 new demand units and 20 replacement units to be built within the next 12 months (by March 2026) with a further 25 new demand and 10 replacement units by March 2027 (to enable people placed out of borough to return to Cheshire West).

There is currently limited accommodation for those with complex mental health needs who require 12-24 hours of support/oversight per day, sometimes also with physical health needs.

There are regularly people waiting for discharge from hospital with relatively high levels of need and they can be difficult to house.

## **Where we want to be**

We want to continue to develop our supply of supported living accommodation for people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs. Future information can be sourced in our specialist housing prospectus

Engagement with people with a learning disability who live in supported living houses has told us that more people want to move away from shared household living and would prefer to live in an independent environment with their own front door, perhaps with shared communal areas.

We want to develop a market of smaller, individual apartment style complexes (of no more than 6 apartments) where people have their own front door, and which are situated in accessible parts of the community.

We want to increase our supply of accommodation which is adapted to people with higher level needs and the supply of properties that have been developed with an ageing population in mind.

We want a model where independence and reablement is promoted by working in strengths-based ways so that individuals can improve their own skills, resilience, and ability to live the life they want to live.

We want to work with providers to deliver high quality care to people that meet the required standards for both CQC and our own in-house quality assessment framework.

We want to continue to purchase placements that are fairly priced and offer transparency around costing.

## **Who we need**

We want to work with housing developers, social care providers and Registered Social Landlords or/ non-for-profit landlords to identify new opportunities and to develop our strategy for future development.

## **Our commissioning intentions**

- We will continue to commission new supported living capacity which meets the needs of people, in particular accommodation which will suit older people and accommodation which offers people their own front door.
- We intend to develop the market for specialist one bed units to support with high level mental health need close to Chester or Ellesmere Port in the West and Northwich in the East.
- We intend to develop the market for accommodation with reablement and floating support for 16–18-year-olds with mental health support needs.

- We intend to work with housing organisations and providers to develop a supported living vision and development strategy for supporting people with learning disabilities, autism or mental health needs in the right accommodation. Within our Market Shaping Collaborative focussed on supported accommodation and welcome providers to engage with us.
- We intend to provide capital investment to kickstart the development of new supported living accommodation which meets the changing requirements of the people who will live there.

## Living a great life in supported accommodation

### *Specialist Mental Health Residential Care*

We commission residential care placements for those people with the highest needs.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Residential care spends '000s</b>	687	979	1,883	1,954	2,269

### **Where we are now**

We currently commission the following provision:

Approx 20 - 25 residential / nursing placements for people with long term multiple diagnosis that need 24-hour care, including a handful out of area.

We have a very limited number of suitable residential placements as very few homes are able to provide the right environment and staffing. Some care homes are experiencing financial difficulties due to the age, layout, and condition of the buildings they operate in, which causes both a cost pressure to deliver improvements and may also make the home a less attractive environment for people to live in.

Fee rates for residential/nursing homes vary depending on the type and complexity of support required by the person and the level of support towards recovery that the home offers. Additional 1:1 agreed with health partners is often required to meet the needs of some residents.

### **Where we want to be**

We want to encourage development of new care homes with elements of specialist support.

We want to become much clearer about fee rates structures at care homes. We want to have a clear contract and a clear set of expectations of care homes that is in line with a Care Act assessment. In the future we will be looking for closer relationships with providers and a good understanding of what a fair cost of care is.

We want care homes to support staff with longer term contracts and minimise agency use for 1:1 support.

### **Who we need.**

We want to work with care providers and developers to identify opportunities for new developments which can meet the needs of people with the highest level of needs.

### **Our commissioning intentions**

- We intend to nurture the growth in more suitable high need specialist mental health bed capacity.
- We intend to provide capital investment to kickstart the development of new mental health specialist accommodation.

## **AGE WELL**

### Key messages

- There is a need for more services which prevent and delay the need for long-term health and care services.
- There has been a reduction in demand for long-term residential care beds, and we now have an oversupply of general residential care beds for older people.

- There is an increase in demand for specialist residential and nursing dementia long-term care home beds.
  
- We need to work with providers who can flex capacity to reach rural areas.
  
- There is a need for more specialist housing options.

Over the next five years we are transforming the way we support people to live a great life in Cheshire West and Chester through preventative services and building on people’s strengths with just the right amount of care at the right time.

The older population (age 65 plus) of Cheshire West and Chester accounts for 22.05%, compared to 19.13 % across the Northwest region. By 2035, the population of over 65s is expected to increase further to 25.33% <sup>1</sup>. Just over half of the population aged 65 and over are female (44,100 – 53.65%) with 13.6% (11,200) being aged 85 and over. Life expectancy is high for both males and females, although across the borough this fluctuates due to inequalities and across the borough 8.8% of the population are an ethnic minority and 1% of the older population are an ethnic minority.-

	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045
People aged 65-69	21,700	25,600	25,900	24,300	22,700
People aged 70-74	18,700	20,700	24,400	24,800	23,400
People aged 75-79	18,500	17,100	19,000	22,500	23,000
People aged 80-84	12,100	15,500	14,400	16,200	19,400
People aged 85-89	7,300	8,500	11,100	10,500	12,000
People aged 90 and over	3,900	4,900	6,100	8,000	8,500
Total population 65 and over	82,200	92,300	100,900	106,300	109,000

Cheshire West and Chester Older population forecast [www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk)

People are living longer, therefore ensuring the right kind of care and support is available at the right time is key.

84%<sup>2</sup> of people aged 65 or older with care and support needs are benefitting from a good or outstanding Care at Home provider, a figure we would like to increase. We would also like to ensure, when the time comes, that residents have appropriate provision to ensure they have a dignified death in a place of their choosing.

Over the next five to ten years, we will develop a market where we can support our ageing population to live a great life at home for as long as possible using a strength-based approach. When the time comes, we need the market to provide enough support in the correct accommodation to meet higher needs, particularly for those people with dementia.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.poppi.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> NW ADASS Fair Cost of Care Report. Over 65s Care Market Summaries

# Living a great life at home

## *Prevention and early intervention*

We want to support more older people to live a great life at home and in their community for as long as possible.

Living independently at home for longer means people get to continue to live their lives with the things, people and places they love. When more support is required, it will start with a conversation about what makes a great life for them and there will be just enough of the right kind of support to enable them to keep living the life they want.

By taking this approach, we aim to enable people to be healthier and happier at home and in doing so prevent, reduce and delay the need for them to need longer-term care such as residential or nursing care.

## **Where we are**

Over the last five years, the Council has invested consistently in preventative services such as:

- Technology Enabled Care
- Community equipment
- Falls prevention.
- Home improvement
- A range of early intervention and prevention services provided by the Community and Voluntary Sector.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Prevention spends '000s</b>	5.4	5.9	5.9	6.6	6.9

*5 years spend on Preventative services.*

We have been piloting a new approach to adult social care since 2021. Community Led Support is a strengths-based approach which looks at someone's need differently and with a different conversation about the things that makes someone's life good. The idea is that care and support should enhance those aspects of a person's life and not create a dependency.

As part of Community Led Support, we have established 'Let's Talk' zones in locations throughout the borough. The 'Let's Talk' zones offer people the opportunity for an early conversation with professionals about things that might be impacting on their quality of life and be sign-posted to help and support without the need for a social care assessment. The main topics of conversation have been about housing related matters, people's mental wellbeing and financial concerns.

## **Where we want to be**

In five years', we expect there to be more people living a great life at home, in their community with the people and things they love. Over the next five years we will do more to prevent, reduce and delay the need for more formal care and support so people can continue to enjoy their lives at home for as long as possible.

We will utilise our 'Let's Talk' sites across the borough so that we can help more people earlier with a broad range of support from universal and preventative services and review our front door.

We want to see a growth in preventative community-based services that people can be sign-posted to, and that are easily accessible for people in their local community. Services which support independent living in people's own homes and community, which maintain and improve health and wellbeing and complement more formal care and support.

We want to reduce the number of unplanned hospital admissions and see a growth in 'step-up' care to reduce the number of people going into crisis.

We want to create a diverse and colourful market of services, projects and initiatives which promote independence, health and wellbeing.

We want to continue improving standards of care for people who need commissioned services to enable their lives.

## **Who we need.**

The Council continues to seek alternative, new and effective ways of preventing and delaying the need for long term care and support, whilst enhancing people's lives.

We would like to work with new and existing community sector providers who are keen to think differently and can demonstrate a strength-based approach to delivery which will reduce and delay the requirement for long term support.

We want to work with providers that offer good and outstanding standards of care.

## **Our intentions**

- In 2026, the council will review how it works with the Community, voluntary and faith sector through the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Fund to support its ambition of being a Community Led Council.
- In 2026/7 we will review our information and advice provision and explore digital options for our front door.
- We will continue to work with representatives to create an environment which encourages and nurtures the development of a vibrant and diverse community sector market.

## Support for Carers

There are approximately 32,620 carers living in Cheshire West and Chester. We know through census data that 50% of carers in Cheshire West and Chester provide over 20 hours of care per week. The majority of carers are aged 50- 64 years.

Cheshire West and Chester Council recognise the very significant role Carers hold within families and communities across the borough. Cheshire West and Chester council want all Carers to feel valued, empowered and have access to good support when they need it. We are committed to working closely with Carers, health and social care colleagues through the Carers Partnership Board to continue to improve outcomes for Carers.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Carers spend '000s	494	678	638	337	300

*Carers five year spend.*

## Where we are

Cheshire West and Chester commission a carer support service via the voluntary and community sector to deliver carer services and carer breaks. These include:

- Carers Helpline
- Information, Advice and Support
- Benefit Advice and advocacy.
- Carer Events
- Carer Breaks
- Young Carers activity and one to one support
- Wellbeing sessions
- Carer training programmes
- Personal Budget and Emergency Care fund
- Carer Respite
- Carers Assessments

Our contract with our current provider will come to an end in September 2028. We are currently refreshing our JSNA and All Age Carers Strategy through co-production which will be published in 26/27 detailing our commissioning intentions.

## Where we want to be

We are committed to ensuring Carers feel valued, empowered and have access to the right support at the right time. Cheshire West and Chester want to champion the diversity of Carers throughout the borough and work closely with Carers as well as health and social care partners to provide appropriate support where needed to

improve quality of life and the health and wellbeing of Carers of all ages so they can continue to support people to live a great life.

Our commitment and vision for Carers is set out in the published Cheshire West and Chester Councils All Age Carers Strategy 2021-26. [All age carers strategy 2021-2026 | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

We want a service model based on what people have told us they want. A model that is:

- Responsive to the needs of carers including young carers.
- Has the right level of support?
- Integrated with health partners
- Is quick and easy for people to navigate.
- Accessible to all

### Who we need.

We want to work providers who understand our vision and the model we want for people.

### Our Commissioning Intentions

- In 2026/27 we will produce a Carers JSNA and All Age Strategy

#### *Care at home*

When more support is required to help people to live at home, care at home provides a range of services.

In Cheshire West and Chester, Care at Home is one of the Council's largest areas of spend (£21.5m in 2024-25). In the last five years, the Council has seen a 28% increase in the number of hours of care at home required to support people at home and the amount spent has almost doubled.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Care at Home spend '000s</b>	13,422	17,198	18,837	21,468	23,727

#### *Care at Home 5 year spend.*

We expect this trend to continue over the next five years as we seek to support more people at home rather than in residential placements.

There are challenges with meeting demand as care at home providers have struggled to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of staff to meet demand.

## **Where we are now**

The Council's current approach is a Prime and Framework model, and the contract is in place until May 2026. The borough's geographical make-up and the shortage of workforce have meant the model has been particularly susceptible to fluctuations in demand.

On average around 13,000 hours of care and support are delivered each week to around 1,000 people. Demand tends to be greatest in our urban areas, but the large rural areas are harder to serve.

The quality of care provided according to CQC is good with 87% rated good or outstanding and just 13% Requires Improvement.

## **Where we want to be**

During 2025 we tendered for a new model of care at home which moves away from 'time and task' and supports people to live a great life by being strengths-based, outcome focussed and re-enabling. We will bring together our Care at Home and Extra Care Housing Carers contracts together to produce a hub and spoke model in which we support people for longer in a place that they call home, whilst utilising community assist

The new model will be more efficient and resilient and to build on work we are doing to trial neighbourhood approaches using efficient ways to build care runs and encouraging walking and cycling routes for carers.

The future of care at home should be that of an integrated community health and wellbeing approach. Linking in with both Social Work practice, Community Response Hubs and local neighbourhoods. We acknowledge the importance of care at home providers and workers being part of the wider care communities and working together with local authority, NHS and community sector services to meet people's needs.

We want there to be a plentiful workforce who are valued for their work, receive at least the Local Living Wage and have career progression opportunities. We will continue our commitment to Unison's Ethical Care Charter and require our providers to do the same.

We want to nurture smaller independent 'micro-providers', rooted in local communities which complement traditional care at home and are able to overcome geographic challenges and changing needs.

## **Who we need.**

The Council would like to work with high-quality care at home and extra care providers who are committed to tackling the issues that face the sector to help us develop the future service model for care at home.

Providers of our future care at home service must have a strengths-based and re-enabling approach and be ready to move from traditional 'time and task' to a model focussed on reablement, outcomes and driving quality improvements.

We want to hear from people, individuals, or small groups, who want to support their neighbours and local communities by establishing themselves as 'micro-providers'. More information about this is available on [Chester and Cheshire West - Community Catalysts](#) website.

### **Our commissioning intentions**

- In 2026 we will mobilise our new approach for care at home and extra care housing model.
- We want to work with providers to develop our approach to outcome-based commissioning and welcome providers or other organisations who have experience of this to work with us to develop our approach.
- We will continue to pilot and grow the use of micro-providers particularly in our Rural area.
- We intend to create a Health and Care Workforce Academy to create a sustainable pipeline of future carers along with attractive career pathways.
- We will continue to support quality improvement for care at home providers who we hold a contract with.

## **Living a great life in supported accommodation**

When people need more support to help them live a great life we have a range of accommodation-with-care options that we commission.

We know how important good housing is to people's lives and how when people age there needs to be a good range of options for people to help them to continue to be as independent as possible.

The majority of homes within Cheshire West and Chester are privately owned, with 15% being social housing and 16% privately rented. By 2033 there is an expected 23% increase in adults aged 65-74 and 22% of adults aged 66 and over who will be living alone within borough.

We are developing our Ageing Well Strategy. The strategy focuses on how the Council will support residents aged 55 and over to live a great life in appropriate housing with suitable care to meet their needs.

When someone's own home is no longer possible, having a range of accommodation types to meet changing needs including assisted living and care homes is required. The aim is for a place to call home being affordable, adaptable and accessible to the community that it is situated.

## Extra Care

Cheshire West and Chester have a variety of Sheltered Housing and Extra Care schemes ranging in size and location. These types of property are important to support independence as people age.

	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>ECH spend '000s</b>	2,912	3,176	3,190	3,804	4,205

*Extra Care 5 year spend '000s.*

### Where we are now

There are nine Extra Care schemes commissioned by the Council across Cheshire West. The largest scheme has 131 apartments and the smallest 17. Each scheme is managed by a Registered Social Landlord, with a registered care provider delivering care and support.

Currently we do not believe we are making the most of the opportunities Extra Care presents to support people with care and support needs to live independent lives in their community. There are a mix of people living in our extra care schemes with differing needs - 6% have high needs, 14% medium needs, 16% low needs and 64% have no social care needs.

We believe there is much greater demand for Extra Care for people with care and support needs.

### Where we want to be

Over the next ten years we need to change the way Extra Care housing is utilised to support people in their community and prevent and delay the need for residential care. Over time we will work towards a more balanced mix where the majority of Extra Care apartments will be available for people who have care and support needs.

Over the next ten years we will work with people, existing landlords and care providers on a new model of Extra Care which is focussed on creating communities of people with mixed social care needs.

We will work with developers who wish to explore new Extra Care developments for aged 18+, particularly in areas of the borough currently under-served and develop alternative models using extra care housing such as step down to assess, Short Breaks and intermediate care.

To provide a better experience and quality of life, the Council would like to encourage Extra Care and other assisted accommodation providers to open their facilities up to

local communities to help promote greater opportunities for these facilities to be focal points in the community to improve health and wellbeing and quality of life for the people living there.

### Who we need.

We want to work with existing Extra Care providers and landlords as well as new developers.

### Our Commissioning Intentions

- We intend to work with housing organisations, developers and providers to develop a supported accommodation vision and development strategy. We shall establish a Market Shaping Collaborative focussed on supported accommodation and welcome providers to engage with us.

### Care homes

When people can no longer be supported at home or in Extra Care, we commission care homes to provide 24 hr care and support.

Care homes provide people with a good quality of life in the last few years of their lives.

Care homes are an area of significant spend for the Council with the amount spent increasing by almost two thirds in five years.

	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Care Home spend '000s</b>	35,766	45,998	51,462	57,008	60,608

*Care Home 5 year spend.*

Demand for care homes is changing. The Council predicts that there will be a surplus of general residential Care Home beds within borough over the next 5 years. Conversely, we expect an 11% increase in Residential dementia demand over the same period.

### Where we are now

We commission 65 care homes which supply a mix of general residential, residential high needs, nursing and nursing high needs beds. Care homes that we commission are currently home to around 1,320 people.

	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
Residential	428	354	371		321
Residential high needs	397	414	443		337
Nursing	418	361	340	352	334
Nursing high needs	325	297	310	312	248
Total	1568	1426	1464	664	1240

*Care home mix of bed types.*

Care homes in Cheshire West overall are good quality with 78% rated good our outstanding by CQC.

All commissioned Care Homes in Cheshire West have received a PAMMS in-house Quality Assessment with 85% rated Good or Excellent.

The supply of residential and nursing high needs beds is not sufficient to meet current demand.

### **Where we want to be**

The overall vision for Adult Social Care is to support people at home for as long as possible, but when 24-hour care is needed, we require a supply of good quality care homes offering the right kind of care.

Over the next five years we will reduce the number of general residential beds we commission, and we will develop a market with more specialist dementia residential and nursing care placements available.

We want a care home market full of high-quality providers who create homes for people in the last years of their lives including dual registration to reduce the need for people to move. To work in partnership with the Council, the NHS and each other to continuously improve and drive-up standards.

We want there to be a plentiful and skilled workforce who are valued for their work, receive at least the Local Living Wage and have opportunities to progress in their career.

### **Who we need.**

The Council would like to commission high-quality providers rated Good and Outstanding who work in a strengths-based way and who want to work with the Council and NHS as equal partners to improve people's lives.

We want to work with providers who want to be an active part of their care community and work with us and the NHS to identify gaps in care pathways.

We want to work with providers to support higher level needs through specially trained staff in suitable environments including Residential high needs and Nursing high needs homes promoting and sustaining strength-based skills.

We would like to work with existing providers who currently deliver general residential care and are interested in changing their provision to provide more specialist dementia care.

We would like to work with new providers/developers who are interested in creating new specialist residential and nursing high needs homes in the borough.

We would like to work with providers who are interested in creating gender specific homes or parts of homes for dementia.

### **Our commissioning intentions**

- We will commission fewer general residential beds.
- We will nurture the growth in the specialist dementia residential and nursing market.
- We will work with the Cheshire West Integrated Care Board to create a single contract for care homes that are commissioned by both Council and NHS to streamline our monitoring, join up quality assurance and improvement work and make it easier for providers.
- By providing capital investment through a competitive process, in 2026/27 we will continue to support successful providers with the development of new specialist dementia capacity.
- We will continue to support quality improvement for care home providers who we hold a contract with.
- We will continue to invest in the skills and knowledge of care home staff through programmes such as My Home Life.

## **Be Outstanding**

We want to enable people to live great lives by commissioning outstanding quality services for the people of Cheshire West and Chester and to work with providers to continuously improve the quality of service delivered.

Overall, the quality of services in Cheshire West is good. The vast majority of adult social care providers commissioned by the Council were rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by CQC. This is really encouraging but we want to ensure that everybody receives a good experience no matter what type of service they receive.

We want to work with providers who are consistently good, who strive for outstanding and who will continue to engage with Cheshire West to share good practices.

Our in-house quality assessment framework allows us to focus on people's experiences, their outcomes and quality of life.

Providers should consider how they capture feedback from people about their experience and how their service is contributing to achieving outcomes.

We want to continue to build positive relationships with providers and work with them to continuously improve quality both individually and across sectors. We want to work with providers who are keen to play their part and actively engage with us and work collaboratively with other providers to improve how things are done and to make things better for the people who rely on the service.

Working with Cheshire West and Chester Council means regular contact with our Quality team, quarterly provider forums, individual and collective support, and ongoing offers of sector wide and bespoke training sessions.

In return we expect high quality and safe services, a commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to engage with the Council and partners.

## **Market Oversight**

We work closely with regulators and our partners via a monthly Market Oversight group to monitor risk and emerging challenge in the market. We do this by analysing and acting upon information about individual providers and wider sectors. We will always act to reduce risk by supporting and working with providers to improve.

## **How you can play your part**

We want the Market Position Statement to stimulate more conversation and collaborative working to transform our market.

We welcome further enquiries from providers and other organisations who would like more information or would like to work with us on any of the topics outlined in this document.

For further information or a conversation with a Commissioner please email Cheshire West and Chester Council's People Commissioning Team  
[AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

All tendering opportunities will be published on The Chest: Northwest Procurement Portal. [The Chest: Northwest Procurement Portal \(the-chest.org.uk\)](https://the-chest.org.uk)

## **Tell us what you think.**

Please tell us what you think of our Market Position Statement so that we can continue to make it better. [AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:AgeingWellCommissioning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

## **Further Reading**

[Council Plan](#)

[Inclusive Economy Strategy](#)

[Fairer Futures Strategy](#)

[Place Plan](#)

[Children and Young People's Plan.](#)

[Social Value Portal](#)

[Trauma Informed Practice - Our Way of Working](#)

[Community Catalysts](#)

[Community Sector Compact](#)

[Market Sustainability and Cost of Care exercises](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#)

[All Age Carers Strategy 2021-2026](#)

[State of the Borough](#)

[Children in Care and Care Leavers Accommodation Strategy](#)

[The Climate Emergency | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Specialist housing prospectus