

Adult Social Care Local Account  
**Our Annual Report 2020/21**



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# Introduction

Welcome to the 2020/21 edition of the Adult Social Care Local Account.

Within these pages we describe who we are and what we do. You can read about our performance in 2020/21 and how we adapted to continue providing services during the coronavirus pandemic despite the pressures that our adult social care services faced.

One of Newcastle City Council's priorities is to ensure that people have the right health and care support when they need it so that our residents are able to live healthy, fulfilling lives.

Our response to the coronavirus pandemic has seen us continue to support the residents of the city by working collaboratively with other organisations, maintaining services to protect the most vulnerable people and providing services in new innovative ways. Some of this additional support has come at a higher cost resulting in increased budget pressures as we have helped people live through the pandemic. We recognise the affect the pandemic has had on the health of residents and workers in the city and we will continue to work in different ways to support people.

Throughout this document, we have set out the ways in which we are working to achieve this ambition, including the development of innovative ways of working to ensure that our resources are being used effectively and that we are able to continue to respond to the changing needs of the people who use our services..



**Alison McDowell,  
Director of Adult Social Care  
and Integrated Services**



**Councillor Karen Kilgour,  
Cabinet member for Health  
and Social Care**

# Healthwatch Statement

## Healthwatch Newcastle response to the Adult Social Care Local Account 2020/2021

Healthwatch Newcastle, the independent champion for people using local health and social care services in the city, welcomes the opportunity to comment on this Adult Social Care Local Account.

Newcastle City Council continues to respond to a difficult operating environment, including financial challenges, demographic pressures, and the multiple effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

We are pleased to see that Newcastle City Council has managed to effectively maintain adult social care service provision during such a challenging period. We commend the efforts of all involved in delivering a strong adult social care sector that is so vital to the health and wellbeing of people and communities across the city. We support the progress made in collaborative working and finding new ways to provide services to people who need them.

This report highlights a reduction in requests for support from new clients and more contacts from long term users of services. This decrease in requests from new clients may reflect hidden unmet needs, increased support from family, friends, neighbours, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

### Comparison with the previous year's report shows:

- An increase in contact from those whose primary support need is around mental health; this follows a decrease in 2019/2020.
- Fewer contacts for support where the primary support need was learning disability; this follows an increase in 2019/2020.
- Significantly fewer contacts this year where the primary reason was for social support. During the coronavirus pandemic when people were subject to lockdowns and restrictions contact on social support might have been expected to increase.

There has been an increase of 8% in spending on adult social care services, this is welcome and will undoubtedly have supported people across the city to live through the coronavirus pandemic. However, we are concerned about the impact of future budgets. The pandemic is not over and is likely to continue to impact on individuals needs and therefore on the need for adult social care services.

### Preventing the need for social care services – short term support and reablement

We are pleased to see the increase in people finishing their short term reablement with either no, or lower-level support needs. We are interested in the use of different technology in falls prevention and in enabling people to keep in touch with family and friends during periods of shielding. It will be interesting to see future developments and the difference that new technologies can make to both people's quality of life and to service delivery over the medium and longer-term.

We appreciate the impact of reablement services support to people discharged from hospital to free up beds and help the NHS during the pandemic. Also the logistical support around Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) offered by the transport function.

## Ongoing, long-term support

We will be interested in the results of the User Survey when it is undertaken in early 2022.

We note the impact the pandemic has had; the cancellation of support packages and people not coming forward for support. We have concerns about unmet and under-met needs and the longer-term impact this has for those needing support, their families, and carers. Also, how this hidden need can best be understood to inform future planning and resourcing alongside the work to understand the increase in demand for learning disability and autism services.

### We note the increase in spending, including on:

- Mental health up by 16%
- Learning disability up by 23%

As mentioned earlier we welcome the increasing partnership and joint working through Collaborative Newcastle and other initiatives and share the ambition to tackle the widening health, social care and other inequalities experienced by some people and communities within the city.

We are interested in supporting the Newcastle Neighbourhoods work, this aligns with our Healthwatch priority for work in the Outer West of Newcastle which is in its early exploratory phase. We look forward to sharing our learning and to hearing more about the work to develop and deliver local place-based approaches.

## Safeguarding

We are concerned about the increase in safeguarding concerns and Section 42 Enquiries, noting that this increase is mirrored nationally. These do reflect the reality of people spending more time at home during the past year. The significant rises in self-neglect and domestic abuse are particularly worrying. We were pleased to be able to contribute through the delivery of our priority on 'Services for children and young people affected by domestic abuse in Newcastle'.

We are also pleased to see the actions to understand the links between poverty, deprivation and abuse and neglect and that the recommendations from the work on this have been incorporated into the Newcastle Safeguarding Adult's Board Strategic Plan for 2021-22.

## Carers

As we have noted in our previous statements the importance of support for unpaid carers cannot be overstated. The coronavirus pandemic saw a substantial increase in the number of new unpaid carers and in the support delivered by these and existing carers. The opportunities to take a break from their role was severely diminished during this period. We are pleased that Newcastle Carers and the British Red Cross remained open to carers, flexing their support to meet need, keep people safe and in line with coronavirus restrictions.

This report highlights the steps taken to support and protect those most in need, we applaud the work of everyone involved and appreciate the commitment to work in different ways to continue to support people. We are eager to continue working with the council, especially in supporting it to engage with and listen to the views of service users and carers.

# Reflecting on 2020-21

2020-21 was an incredibly challenging year for adult social care across the country. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic posed a disproportionate threat to people that rely on care and support to live the lives that they want to live and created huge anxiety for many.

Newcastle was no exception. In March 2020 we quickly grasped the scale of the challenge to ensure people were safe, supported, and had as little disruption to vital support as possible. Staff from every part of the workforce worked tirelessly to deliver essential services, change delivery models, understand and implement the latest infection control learning, support health services to release essential hospital capacity, support care providers to remain financially viable, and to provide a much-needed source of certainty and hope for the people drawing on support.

We are exceptionally proud of the way that the adult social care workforce across the city has gone above and beyond every day to make sure people remained safe and well cared for in the most challenging of times.

You will see reflections of this excellent work throughout the report and we would specifically like to recognise the sectors' achievements in:

## **Keeping essential care services running**

- all home care, residential and nursing care, and direct payment support services continued to be delivered without disruption every day during the pandemic.

## **Transforming support services**

- while day centres and many day services were forced to close for periods of the pandemic, staff worked creatively and decisively to change how these services were provided. This included offering telephone and online welfare calls, virtual meetings to ensure people remained connected to one another, and delivering activity packs and essential support packages to peoples homes.

## **Keeping people safe**

- working closely with our Local Resilience Forum we quickly mobilised to ensure staff had all the of the vital Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they needed and that teams across the city had access to the latest infection control guidance, as well as providing additional wraparound support from colleagues in Commissioning and Procurement and Public Health.

## **Stabilising services**

- our Commissioning and Procurement Team and Business Finance Teams moved quickly to provide emergency funding for providers and people who use direct payments to fund their care so that they could meet the additional unforeseen costs of the pandemic. We created new, more regular contact sessions with care providers so that we could understand and respond to issues that were arising immediately, and we worked with providers to create more robust resilience plans which could respond to the unique challenges of the pandemic.

## **Supporting the wider system**

- all of our teams worked very closely with our health partners to ensure health services had the capacity they needed to respond to people who required hospital care, this included fundamentally changing our hospital discharge processes, jointly commissioning new services, and working together to coordinate the vaccination programme - becoming one of the first places in the country to vaccinate all care home residents with the first vaccine dose.

Each of these achievements was delivered against a backdrop of fundamental change and uncertainty that was impacting every part of our working and home lives; we do not underestimate this and we are immensely grateful for the efforts of every single social care worker who made this happen.

# What do we do

Adult Social Care is responsible for making sure the most vulnerable people in the city get the care and support they need.

## What we do...

Assess your needs

Organise and plan your support

Arrange your services, where appropriate

Work to prevent the need of some residents for Social Care Support

Help support those who are caring for a loved one

## Did you know

Social Care staff assess needs, arrange personal budgets and services and provide professional support including in the community, outreach, employment and guidance and advocacy.

We also have a statutory requirement associated with safeguarding adults. The Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Annual Report has full details of this service and can be found on the Newcastle City Council website.

## What we do...

In 2020/21 we had 8563 requests for support from new clients who do not already receive social care support from us, 986 fewer requests than last year.

Due to the affects of the pandemic many new people did not seek support through contacting social care, especially during the periods of lockdown.

We did receive more contacts from our long term service users. In 2020/21, 4954 people received ongoing long term support. Of these:

**1,722** people aged 18 – 64, 63 fewer than last year

**3,232** people aged 65 and over, 68 fewer than last year

**2,263** with a primary support reason of physical disability, 21 fewer than last year

**1,042** with a primary support reason of learning disability, 20 fewer than last year

**550** with a primary support reason of mental health, 17 more than last year

**686** with a primary support reason of memory cognition, 9 fewer than last year

**75** with a primary support reason of sensory support, 20 fewer than last year

**338** with a primary support reason of social support, 78 fewer than last year

**Our Workforce**

**9,300** people in Newcastle work in the Adult Social Care support sector

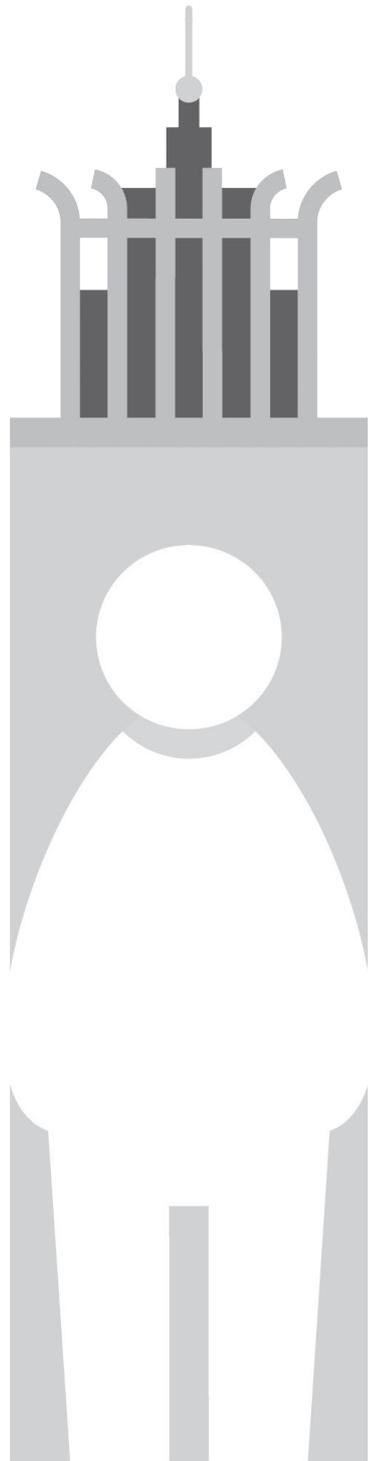
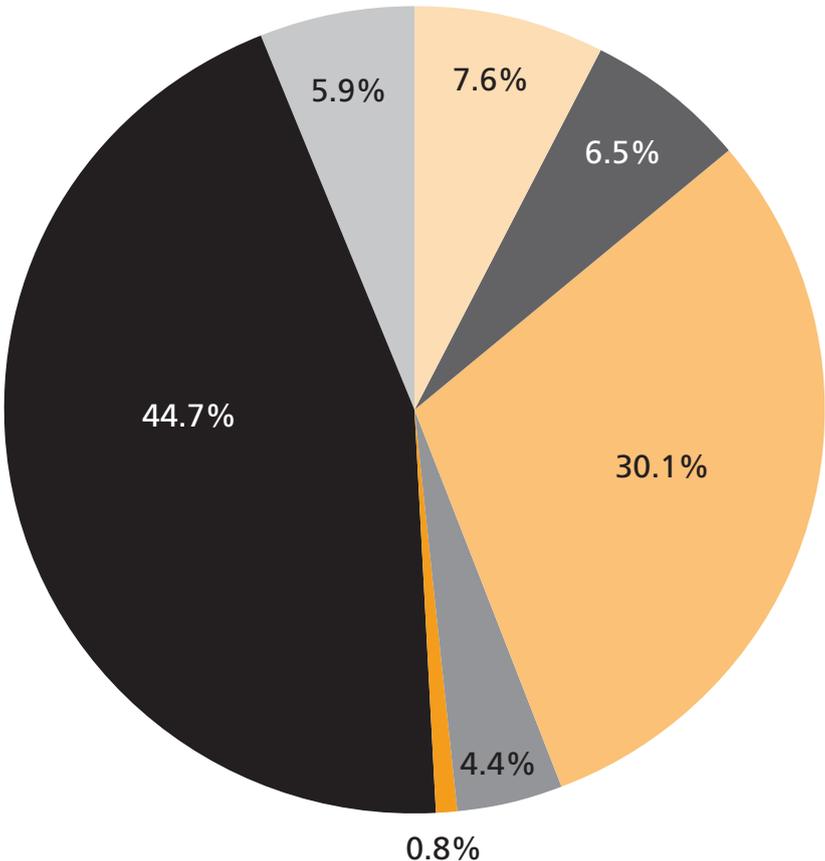
**867** people in Newcastle work in the Adult Social Care support sector are employed by Newcastle City Council, including social workers and care workers  
Stats taken from Skills for Care website - <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data>

**How we spent our money**

In 2020/21 we spent £77.33 million on adult social care services:

- Care Services - £5.9 million
- Mental Health - £5.0 million
- Older People - £23.3 million
- Other Social Care Services - £3.4 million
- Specialist Services - £0.6 million
- Learning Disability - £34.6 million
- Physical Disability - £4.6 million

Adult Social Care Net Spend



# Preventing the need for social care services

We support people to live as independently as possible by working to prevent, reduce or delay their need for care and support. We do this by providing information and advice, arranging short term services to help people to regain skills and confidence, or working with partners to deliver vital services that help people move out of hospital.

## Did you know

Reablement is a personalised, short term service which helps users recover and live independently at home. A reablement service may be suitable following a stay in hospital, a change in your needs or a loss of confidence.

Reablement support encourages users to develop confidence and skills and can include support for people to get around the home, make meals and personal care such as using the bathroom or dressing.

Requests for support to our Social Care Direct team aim to prevent and reduce need by offering information and advice as well as offering initial assessment and support where it is needed. Over the last year we have seen an increase in complexity for people who have not successfully been supported through our information and advice offer. We've seen an increase in those people who have been providing informal care through lockdowns making contact either through SCD or through our safeguarding process. We've seen people who are not known to us and may not usually have referred through to Adult Social Care in the past, for example those with low level mental health issues preventing the need for social care services

**Preventing the need for social care services**

**1,981**  
people received short term support from our reablement service



**86%**  
of people are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital in to a reablement service



**77.3%**  
of people finished their short term reablement with either no ongoing care needs or support at a lower level



Our reablement services supported large numbers of people who were being discharged from hospital during the pandemic to free up beds and help the NHS.

**Transport – PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)**



In response to Covid the Transport function adapted throughout the pandemic to support staff across the Local Authority and Independent Sector. Early in the pandemic when some of the day centres closed, we used the service to help with the huge logistical challenge of collecting, storing, and distributing PPE across the City. The Transport service continued to support the Welford Centre in Gosforth, adapting their offer to ensure social distancing and good infection control practice. Deliveries from the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to the Independent Sector have been co-ordinated with the help of the Business Continuity Team.

## Reablement pilot – digital falls prevention

The digital falls prevention project was set up to address the prevalence of falls in the population using the reablement service. It used digital technology to support people with care and support needs so that they can live independently for longer – enabling safer movement around the house, remote communication with carers and loved ones, and automated reminders to eat and drink.

The aims of the project:

- To improve independent living for people with care and support needs.
- To reduce the prevalence of falls during at home reablement.
- To improve and standardise methods of recording information about falls, to ensure all organisations involved in a person's care can access correct and up-to-date records.
- To better understand how different care and support needs can be addressed remotely, using technology in the home.

Types of Technology used

- Voice-activated smart speakers – To prompt regular food and drink intake during the day
- Smart lighting - Phillips Hue light bulbs and motion sensors to support with navigating throughout the home
- Video calling - This is being used to support with increasing activity alongside a programme developed with Active Newcastle
- Temporary flexible in home connectivity



## Video calls during covid and lockdowns

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City have been working with partners to ensure people had access to the equipment they needed to keep in touch with vital services and their loved ones. One example of this was the Council working alongside Technology Providers, Local Authorities and the NHS (National Health Service) representatives in partnership with Barclays UK (United Kingdom). The Health Tech Forum allowed technology partners to hear first-hand some of the issues facing frontline health and social care response and offer innovative technology solutions. Initial discussions focused on how Barclays could help to keep families digitally connected during the lockdown phase of the pandemic. 15 iPads used by digital eagles in Barclays branches were repurposed and distributed across Connie Lewcock, Byker Lodge and Eden Court Resource Centres helping residents stay connected with family and friends while they shielded.

# Providing long term support

When people are eligible for long term social care services, we will help them and their families to find the right support, in the right place. We can arrange services on behalf of people, work with partners to deliver services, and support people to manage or arrange their own services.

## Providing long term support

We provided long term support to

**4,954**

adults during 2020/21, 65% of whom are over 65



### Did you know

We usually carry out a User Survey every year to help us understand the experience of people using adult social care services. In 2020/21, this survey could not take place due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The next user survey in the city will be taking place between January – February 2022 and we look forward to hearing the views of our service users on their experiences over the last two years.

During the pandemic year 2020-21, there was a reduction in the number of people accessing long term support across both age-groups as people cancelled packages or did not come forward for support. This reduction suggests that there was undermet need within communities which corresponds with the additional demand for services such as learning disability, autism, and mental health support.

Of those receiving long term support, 70% are living and receiving support in their community rather than living in a residential or nursing care home.

We have seen increased demand for learning disability and autism support and services from both new and existing service users within our Learning Disability and Autism team during 2021, many requests have increased complexity. Work is ongoing to understand the reason for this increase. This additional demand puts significant pressure on both the teams' capacity and budget due to the larger number of people requiring a learning disability and autism care package.

## Collaborative Newcastle

Collaborative Newcastle is an innovative partnership which aims to transform the health, wealth and wellbeing of everyone in the City. Working alongside our health partners we are committed, through radical new ways of joint working, to reduce inequality and provide better opportunities for everyone who lives and works here. In 2020-21, the Council and our NHS partners developed a governance agreement to speed up progress towards a fully integrated health and social care system and ultimately improve health and social care outcomes for Newcastle's residents. The Collaborative Newcastle Collaboration Agreement provides us with an opportunity to combine our efforts in a more formal way, working together to harness this city's great potential and tackle the widening health and social care inequalities that hold many people back. We can achieve more together for Newcastle's residents than we could hope to achieve individually and all the partners that make up Collaborative Newcastle, including the Council, have a shared commitment to be ambitious in that endeavour.

To find out more about the projects that Collaborative Newcastle are currently working on, please visit: [www.collaborativenewcastle.org/health-and-care/](http://www.collaborativenewcastle.org/health-and-care/)

## Looking ahead - Newcastle Neighbourhoods

Newcastle Neighbourhoods is a new programme aimed at ensuring our care services are designed and built around people's strengths, are innovative, integrated, and that they continue to evolve to meet the ever changing needs in our communities.

Newcastle Neighbourhoods is part of our work with Collaborative Newcastle. We started to use this approach to 'champion communities' to further develop person and community centred approaches to service delivery. By doing this we want to create evermore connected community services and responses that tackle health inequalities, whilst recognising the strengths and capabilities that communities have to deliver their own solutions.

Through Newcastle Neighbourhoods, we will:

- Review and further develop the way we deliver services **at a neighbourhood level**, aligning services and workforce to better reflect the individual at the centre of a personalised care offer;
- Change how our adult social care teams work so they are **closer to local neighbourhoods**. Ensuring we have an Adult Social Care Workforce that continues to be **responsive, dynamic, and efficient** in meeting the needs of our local communities;
- Focus on prevention and **delaying the onset of long-term care**, working with key partners as enablers to ensure people have the right levels of support, balancing statutory support alongside an **individual's own support networks**;
- Promote and support people's choice by listening to their views and aspirations, focusing our conversations on the **strengths of the person** and the support they have around them. Understanding what is strong within an individual and their community;

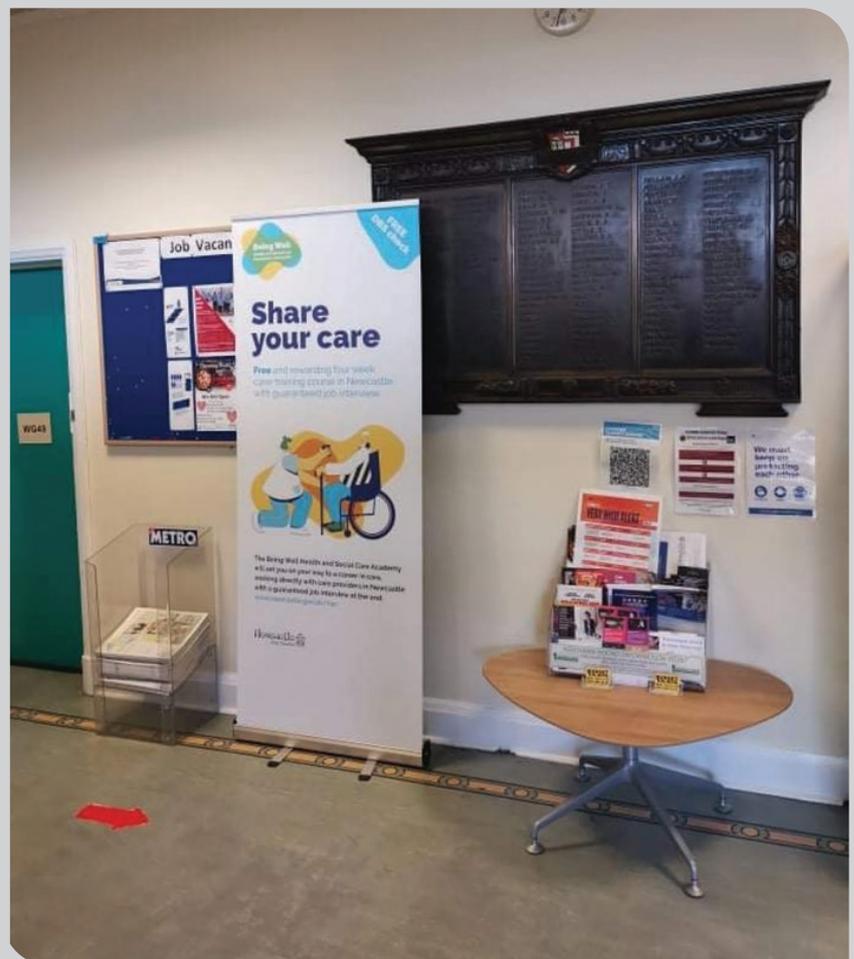
- Focus on our conversational models across our social care teams, building on our strength-based conversations within our assessment processes;
- Continue, as part of Collaborative Newcastle, to identify, develop and deliver integrated services and responses, developing local **place-based approaches** with partners across NHS, local government, private companies, voluntary and community sector organisations and communities themselves.

During 2020/21, we introduced and partnered on a number of small spark initiatives in neighbourhoods to begin supporting **collaborations and partnerships, strengthening communities** alongside improving **access to community resources**.

This included:

- **Lifting Neighbourhoods Together** 5-year community renewal plan in Walker aiming to end poverty. Led by Building Futures East with NCC as 'Time Donor' working as part of project 'donations of time' work in practice
- **Dementia Friendly City** Learning from the dementia friendly city work strengthening the Grainger Market model. Dementia Wellbeing Space has continued to strengthen the partnership with School of Pharmacy Newcastle University, Public Health and Adult Social Care in carrying out Hypertension checks and giving health improvement information and advice as well as the Pharmacy student gaining experiences of how to work directly with residents of the city.

Looking ahead, we will continue to grow community development capacity, engaging with local communities to initiate local action and to develop local neighbourhood networks.



# Safeguarding Adults

We are committed to ensuring that Newcastle is an increasingly safer city for adults at risk of abuse or neglect. Adult Social Care are the lead agency for safeguarding adults in the city, providing staff that support and coordinate the work of the Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board as well as staff within our Social Work teams who lead on safeguarding adults enquiries.

Last year we received

**10,774**

safeguarding adults concerns, 6,762 of these concerns were progressed as safeguarding adults enquiries.



In

**86%**

of safeguarding adults enquiries the risk was either reduced or completely removed



## Safeguarding adults in the pandemic

Over the course of the past year staff within Adult Social Care and Integrated Services have been at the centre of efforts to keep the people of Newcastle safe, working creatively to support adults who have been at increased risk of abuse or neglect.

The level of safeguarding activity undertaken in 20/21 represented a 42% increase in the number of safeguarding concerns and a 33% increase in Section 42 Enquiries - a Section 42 Enquiry is an enquiry carried out by the Council and its partners when we believe an adult is at risk of harm or neglect. This is mirrored nationally through the Local Government Association Safeguarding Insights Project which reported that Local Authorities from across the country had seen rises in the volume of safeguarding concerns over the course of 2020-2021.

60% of Section 42 Enquiries related to abuse or neglect perpetrated in a person's home reflecting the reality that people have been spending more time at home. This was a 12% increase on the previous year. The most common form of abuse reported was emotional abuse. Significant rises were seen in relation to self-neglect and domestic abuse.

## Reducing the risk of harm

As part of the preventative work of the NSAB, opportunities have been used to:

- Promote the services and support available to support people's mental health
- Introduce Safe Spaces at pharmacies and the Ask for ANI codeword scheme
- Update and promote guidance, training and communications for the wider public
- Produce a range of recommendations to tackle the link between poverty and safeguarding adults

## Poverty and Safeguarding Adults

Are people who experience poverty more likely to experience abuse and neglect? If so, what can agencies working in Newcastle do to reduce the likelihood that a person will be affected by poverty? And what more can we do to support people who are at risk of abuse?

These questions were considered as part of the NSAB Strategic Annual plan for 2020-2021. To progress this work there was close collaboration between staff in Active Inclusion and the Safeguarding Adults Unit.

An analysis of ward-level data relating to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and safeguarding adults activity revealed that the wards experiencing the highest levels of deprivation also had the highest levels of safeguarding adults concerns and safeguarding adults enquiries.

Practitioner input was provided via a survey and workshop in September which sought to further understand the relationship between poverty and abuse and neglect. Conversations demonstrated that the relationship was complex but poverty can create circumstances under which abusive or neglectful behaviours are more likely to transpire. Those involved in the workshop highlighted the impact that poverty can have on the probability that someone will experience self-neglect.

Following the workshop, an audit of 29 resident's cases who had been subject to safeguarding adults procedures were reviewed to understand their financial and housing circumstances and to identify potential opportunities to provide future advice and support to prevent or reduce crisis.

The findings from the survey, workshop and audit resulted in the following recommendations:

- Safeguarding Adults Plans for people at risk of self-neglect need to address the risk of poverty
- Self – neglect practice guidance should include the risk of poverty
- Professionals from all agencies should be aware of the support available to informal carers
- The NSAB should consider how routine conversations about finances and money can be built into the safeguarding adults process.
- All agencies should promote the Active Inclusion training programme
- Agencies working in Newcastle should ensure that staff are aware of sources of advice, support and information about both financial inclusion and safeguarding adults.
- Take a more coordinated approach to those with mental health problems

These have been incorporated into the Strategic Plan for 2021-22.

# Carers

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who can't manage without their help because of a disability, mental or physical illness, substance misuse issue, or who needs extra help as they grow older.

For some, taking on a caring role can be sudden and for others, caring responsibilities can grow gradually over time. The amount and type of support that carers provide varies considerably ranging from a few hours a week to providing emotional support or personal care day and night.

The COVID 19 pandemic saw a substantial increase in the number of unpaid carers and for those already caring, the provision of more care as restrictions impacted friends, family, care and support services and everyday lives.

Carers worried about being able to care safely and effectively whilst maintaining their own health and wellbeing, worried about the person they were caring for losing their skills, functionality and mental wellbeing, faced digital exclusion, food poverty, financial exclusion, and experienced difficulties in taking a break from their caring role.

Our commissioned carer support services, Newcastle Carers and the British Red Cross emergency contact scheme remained open for business, repurposing their activities to better meet the needs of carers and saw increased numbers of carers accessing those services which included telephone information, advice and support, online resources, virtual individual and group support, and some essential face to face delivery as required/identified.



**1,583**

carers supported by NCC 19/20  
(SALT: Short and Long Term, statutory  
return)

**100%**

of eligible carers  
received a direct  
payment from ASC



**281**

routine referrals sent to British Red Cross

**363**

routine referrals were sent to Newcastle  
Carers

**7,332**

carers were invited for  
their first COVID vaccination



