



FINAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT
ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

REVIEW OF THE CARE ACT (INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE)

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Reviewed by: Head of Audit and Assurance

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REVIEW OF THE CARE ACT (INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE)

INTRODUCTION

1. This report sets out the results of our audit of the Information, Advice and Guidance element of The Care Act. The audit was carried out as part of the work specified in the 2019-20 Internal Audit Plan agreed by the Section 151 Officer and Audit Sub-Committee. The controls we expect to see in place are designed to minimise the Council's exposure to a range of risks. Weaknesses in controls that have been highlighted will increase the associated risks and should therefore be addressed by management.

The Care Act places duties and responsibilities on local authorities regarding care and support for adults. Under the Act, local authorities are required to provide comprehensive information and advice about care and support services in their local area. This is to enable people to understand how care and support services work locally, the care and funding options available, and how people can access support services. Local authorities must also help people to benefit from independent financial advice in order that they may obtain support to plan and prepare for the future costs of care.

All information and advice must be provided in formats to aid people's understanding, regardless of their needs. This may include a range of types of information, and include working with partners to provide information on different services together.

2. We would like to thank all staff contacted during this review for their help and co-operation.

AUDIT SCOPE

3. The original scope of the audit was outlined in the Terms of Reference, the objective of which was to confirm that statutory duties under the Care Act are being adhered to.
4. The key risks reviewed within this audit were:-

Information, advice and guidance is not available about local care and support services to enable people to understand how such services work, can be accessed and the funding options available. Specifically:-

- The types and range of care and support available
- How the care and support options can be accessed

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- Where Independent Financial Advice may be sought
- How people can raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of someone who has care and support needs

AUDIT OPINION

5. Our overall audit opinion, number and rating of recommendations are as follows.

AUDIT OPINION	
Reasonable Assurance	(Definitions of the audit assurance level and recommendation ratings can be found in Appendix B)

Number of recommendations by risk rating		
Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
0	1	0

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6. Based on our audit testing, controls noted to be in place and operating effectively at the time of our review include:-

The local authority produces, in partnership with Contractor A, the ‘Bromley Guide to Independent Living, Support and Care Services’ on an annual basis.

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The Guide is intended to provide essential information to help residents stay as healthy, independent and safe as possible in their own homes and support residents to maintain control of their lives. This is available both electronically and in printed form, with the e-book being 'Recite Me' compatible for those requiring information in the spoken word, other languages or with visual adjustments such as font size or colour.

The Contractor B service, funded by Bromley Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group, has been established to provide information, support and guidance about staying well and low level support for those who do not yet need statutory assistance from the Council.

7. We would, however like to bring to management attention the following issue:-

Information available on the Bromley website www.bromley.gov.uk is disjointed and lacks logical flow. The structure and content does not effectively support people to make decisions, find solutions within the community and third sector or plan for the future.

Branding and format is inconsistent across the documents and functionality is limited, with, for example, no translation options currently available.

Ownership of the Adult Social Care content, both of individual areas and as a whole, could not be evidenced.

Issues identified as requiring attention and rectification, include:-

- Broken links and links leading to out of date or incorrect information
- Incorrect telephone number
- Out of date postal addresses
- Page stating 'alternatively you can contact us by telephone', with no telephone number provided
- Document containing the names of responsible officers no longer in that role or employed by the Council

It is acknowledged that the development of online information has been identified as an area requiring attention and forms part of the Front Door Development Plan as advised to the Adult Social Care Transformation Workstream Board in January of this year.

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DETAILED FINDINGS / MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

8. The findings of this report, together with an assessment of the risk associated with any control weaknesses identified, are detailed in Appendix A. Any recommendations to management are raised and prioritised, together with management's responses and timescales for implementation. Appendix B details the definition of the audit assurance and priority ratings.

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DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX A

1 Online information (www.bromley.gov.uk)**Finding**

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Risk

The Information, Advice and Guidance offer may not enable people to make the best decisions about how to retain control over their lives or navigate the process to identify, and understand, the care and support available.

The Authority may not be fulfilling its general responsibilities under the Care Act in its provision of information, advice and guidance.

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APPENDIX A

DETAILED FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN

<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>The structure and content of the Information, Advice and Guidance suite of pages and documents on www.bromley.gov.uk should be reviewed, both as individual elements and the 'offer' as a whole. Ownership should be defined, together with ongoing responsibilities to ensure the information and advice published enables people to make the best decisions about care and support and understand how these may be accessed.</p>	<p><u>Rating</u></p> <p>Priority 2</p>
<p><u>Management Response and Accountable Manager</u></p> <p>The iBCF Projects Officer, Process and Systems Officer and the Policy and Resource Development Officer are in the process of redesigning the website layout. A first draft process map is in place and will be reviewed by all relevant parties when ready. They will also be updating the webpage content to ensure it is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Of the 20 individual anomalies identified during the audit, 16 have now been rectified and four are in progress.</p> <p>(Director, Adult Services, led by Head of Assessment and Care Management)</p>	<p><u>Agreed timescale</u></p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>September 2020</p>

OPINION DEFINITIONS

Assurance Level

Assurance Level	Definition
Substantial Assurance	There is a sound system of control in place to achieve the service or system objectives. Risks are being managed effectively and any issues identified are minor in nature.
Reasonable Assurance	There is generally a sound system of control in place but there are weaknesses which put some of the service or system objectives at risk. Management attention is required.
Limited Assurance	There are significant control weaknesses which put the service or system objectives at risk. If unresolved these may result in error, abuse, loss or reputational damage and therefore require urgent management attention.
No Assurance	There are major weaknesses in the control environment. The service or system is exposed to the risk of significant error, abuse, loss or reputational damage. Immediate action must be taken by management to resolve the issues identified.

Recommendation ratings

Risk rating	Definition
Priority 1	A high priority finding which indicates a fundamental weakness or failure in control which could lead to service or system objectives not being achieved. The Council is exposed to significant risk and management should address the recommendation urgently.
Priority 2	A medium priority finding which indicates a weakness in control that could lead to service or system objectives not being achieved. Timely management action is required to address the recommendation and mitigate the risk.
Priority 3	A low priority finding which has identified that the efficiency or effectiveness of the control environment could be improved. Management action is suggested to enhance existing controls.