

# Bracknell Forest adult social care **Annual Report 2024/25**



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This report shares how Bracknell Forest Council's adult social care services support adults across the borough who need care and support, helping them live as independently, safely, and well as possible.

Covering the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, it highlights what we have achieved, the challenges we've faced, and the opportunities we see ahead. Our aim is to be clear, open, and useful, so residents can see how we are working to make a positive difference in people's lives every day.

## How to get a copy of our adult social care annual report

A copy of this report can be read and downloaded from our website at:  
**[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk)**

If you would like to receive a printed copy of this report, then you can request one from Claire Garton, head of operations, people directorate

Email: [Claire.Garton@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Garton@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)  
Tel: **01344 352916**

Or in writing to:  
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People Directorate,  
Time Square,  
Market Street,  
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## Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2024/25 adult social care annual report, which reflects a year of significant progress, activity, and transformation within our services.

This year has been busy, with the ongoing rollout of our new target operating model — a major initiative designed to make it easier for residents to access the support they need and to improve outcomes for everyone in our community. By clarifying pathways and realigning teams, we have streamlined our processes, reducing the number of teams residents need to interact with and making services simpler to navigate.

We have also used insights from the Care Quality Commission inspection to guide improvements, helping to validate the quality of our services and identify areas for further development.

Despite rising demand, particularly in mental health and out-of-hours support, and a challenging financial environment, our staff have shown remarkable dedication and resilience. Their commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred care has continued to make a real difference to the lives of residents across Bracknell Forest.

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we remain focused on maintaining this high standard of care, while embracing opportunities to improve, innovate, and work even more closely with residents and partners. Together, we will continue to build services that are **accessible, responsive, and tailored to the needs of our community**.

**Grainne Siggins, executive director – people directorate**



## Our population

**130,806** the total population of Bracknell (ONS 2024 mid-year population estimates)

**51%** of the population are female

**49%** of the population are male

## Age range

**101,434** of the population are aged 18+

**20,882** of the population are aged 65+

**44** is the average age of the population

**39** is the median age of the population

## Demographics

**10%** of the population are 66+ and living alone

**1 in 7** of the population are from Black, Asian or Minority communities



## How did we support our residents?

### Supporting people who can't consent to their care or treatment

**811** new deprivation of liberty applications were received, of which 374 (46.1 per cent) were urgent applications

A deprivation of liberty application is when a care home or hospital asks permission to keep someone safe by restricting their freedom — for example, if the person can't make safe decisions for themselves and needs to be closely supervised or stopped from leaving.

**710** applications were signed-off during the year (including 107 applications that were made prior to 1 April 2024)

**208** remaining applications to be signed off after 31 March 2025

## Adult social care

**Over 10,200 requests** for support were received into adult social care

**510** Care Act assessments were completed for new clients

**486** Carers received their own separate carers assessment in 2024/25

**154** Carers received a joint assessment with the person they care for

**87.7%** of adults required no further support following a reablement service

**1450** people received long term support of which 432 people were supported in care homes

**1018** people were supported to live in their own home

**1388** reviews of long-term packages of care were undertaken by adult social care teams

**266** people received a direct payment during 2024/25

**443** carers received a direct payment during 2024/25

**92.75%** of (accepted) referrals into the urgent community response team achieved a two hour response time throughout 2024/25

**22%** decrease in the average number of resident falls compared to 2023/24 as a result of the falls prevention work being undertaken

**3.4%** reduction in avoidable admissions than in 2023/24

**27%** increase in families supported 1:1 in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.



## Learning Disability and autism

**89%** of adults with a learning disability were supported to be able to live in their own home or with family

**347** individuals with learning disabilities and/or Autism (aged 18+) were provided with support during this period.

**15** individuals were provided with employment support throughout 24/25



## Community mental health teams

### Older adults

**Over 800** registered with a dementia diagnosis in Bracknell Forest.

**151** people with dementia, along with their family members, were referred to the dementia advisory service for information/advice and support

**Over 410** people with dementia as well as their family members were supported through the dementia advisory service

**92** New Care Act assessments were carried out by the social work team

### Adults

**124** Mental Health Act assessments completed by approved mental health professionals

**21** individuals receiving Glenfield Outreach services

## Safeguarding

**1536** safeguarding concerns were received by the council (of which 289 lead to a s42 enquiry)

A Section 42 enquiry is when the local council looks into concerns that an adult may be at risk of abuse or neglect. They do this to find out what's happening and decide what help or protection the person needs.

## Bracknell Forest community network (now known as Mental Health recovery network)

**230** individuals were referred into the Bracknell Forest community network (BFCN)

**1248** attendances as Bracknell Forest community network organised activities in the community

**180** individuals were supported on a one-to-one level by Bracknell Forest community network

**62%** individuals were continuing to live independently without primary or secondary mental health provision at six month checks post one-to-one support with BFCN

**79%** increase in the number of clients supported on a 1:1 basis compared to 2023/24

## Forestcare

**48,156** support calls were handled by Forestcare in relation to Bracknell Forest residents compared to 41,162 in 2023/24

**241** residents and buildings were attended to by Forestcare compared to 345 during 2023/24

**627** out of hours housing repair calls were handled on behalf of Bracknell Forest residents



## Emergency duty service (EDS)

**1751** referrals were responded to by EDS relating to Bracknell Forest residents, which represents a 2.8 per cent decrease from 2023/24 (1801 referrals)

**667** of 1751 referrals were within adult social care

## Adult social Care - assessment suite

**61** occupational therapy referrals to assessment suite

**55** occupational therapy referrals required equipment from Nottingham Rehab Services (NRS)

**6** occupational therapy referrals required an onward referral

## New Hope – drugs and alcohol team (DAAT)

**354** adults were in treatment in April 2024 – March 2025

**205** new clients for treatment in April 2024 – March 2025

**23%** of all in treatment successfully completed – compared with 21 per cent across England

**87%** of individuals either remained in treatment for at least 12 weeks or successfully completed their treatment, compared to the national average of 82 per cent in England

## Sensory needs - assessments completed

**82** assessments completed

**6** median days to complete assessment:

**93.9%** assessments completed within target timeframe

**26** sensory support – support for visual impairment

**6** sensory support – support for hearing impairment

**5** sensory support – support for dual impairment

**45** sensory needs assessments completed for people with additional needs





## Housing

**186** households were formally prevented from becoming homeless following a statutory application for assistance

**238** Households who were either homeless or threatened with homelessness, were helped to either find or remain in existing accommodation for a minimum period of six months

## Welfare Services

**£1.1m** in household support funding issued to our local community

**106** households supported at risk of homelessness or experiencing rent arrears

**£143k** discretionary housing payments made during 2024/25

**1472** applications for the household support fund were successful

## Community Safety

**37** complex cases of crime or anti-social behaviour resolved by community safety's partnership problem solving groups compared to 26 in the previous year

**237** anti-social behaviour queries were managed, representing an 11.23 per cent decrease compared to 2023/24 (267 queries). This reduction may be attributed to the improved and up-to-date information and signposting available on our web pages, which has helped reduce the number of queries received

**8** serious adult violence and exploitation (SAVE) cases resolved in 2024/25. SAVE is a multi-agency operational group which supports adults experiencing serious violence and exploitation.

**27** victims of domestic abuse supported with reinforced safety measures in their homes (Sanctuary Scheme) with 100 per cent rating the service, support and sense of safety as excellent

**211** victims of domestic abuse supported by Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA), Bracknell Forest's commissioned domestic abuse service, an increase of 16 per cent compared with 2023/24

**11.6%** reoffending rate from the 86 people who completed the domestic abuse programme





## How well did we do?

In 2024/25, adult social care received 627 compliments from people using our services, their families, and other healthcare professionals:

- 438 compliments came directly from the individuals receiving care.
- 130 compliments were from family members.
- 59 compliments were from other healthcare professionals.

We also received 45 complaints from 42 people across our services, which is the same number as the previous year.

- 24 per cent of complaints were resolved within 10 working days.
- 38 per cent of complaints were resolved within 20 working days, usually for more complex cases.
- 36 per cent of complaints took longer than 20 working days, often because meetings were held, further information was needed, or additional investigation was required.
- 2 per cent of complaints were still being investigated at the end of the year.

We aim to respond quickly and fairly to all complaints, using the feedback to improve our services and ensure residents receive the best possible care.



# What did we hear?

**What residents and families told us:** our residents, their families, and other professionals shared their experiences of adult social care in 2024/25. Here is a snapshot of what they told us:

## **Appreciation for support and professionalism**

- Staff are dedicated, skilled, and make a real difference.
- “Social worker was brilliant getting my dad the support he needs and also very supportive of me as his main carer.”
- “Having you onboard has resulted in more constructive regular reviews and a better care package... I have been most impressed by your professionalism.”

## **Helping people regain independence**

- Support helps residents build confidence, improve mobility, and stay independent at home.
- “Worker was extremely helpful, patient, and understanding. I always felt supported and am grateful for the huge improvement in my mobility.”
- “The Physio was very informative. Worker gave me confidence and calmness while using the walking frame for the first time.”

## **Providing emotional support**

- Many people valued the encouragement and reassurance they received during difficult times.
- “Without your support I wouldn’t be alive, you really have been my rock through this.”
- “L has been fantastic. I felt supported during very low times, knowing there’s somebody to talk to makes it much easier.”

## **Learning and awareness**

- Training and talks by our teams help professionals understand issues like domestic abuse and deliver better support.
- “The talk was eye-opening and deeply impactful. It has influenced my practice to adopt a more empathetic approach.”
- “Your insights on recognising subtle signs of abuse and trauma-informed care were particularly valuable.”

## **Consistency and reliability**

- Families and carers appreciate having someone they can depend on.
- “The worker is a constant support, and she has worked hard to help us in many different ways.”
- “Having just one provider now has made reviews more constructive and the care package much better. I feel confident knowing support is consistent.”
- Lack of effective communication
- We addressed this by improving on our communications and use of plain English when explaining our processes.
- Developed a letter and/or leaflet explaining home first approach
- Carried out a reflective practice on complaints where learning points were shared during the Social Work Team meeting.

## **Lack of effective communication**

- We addressed this by improving on our communications and use of plain English when explaining our processes.
- Developed a letter and/or leaflet explaining home first approach
- Carried out a reflective practice on complaints where learning points were shared during the Social Work Team meeting.

These comments show that adult social care is not only supporting people with practical needs, but also building trust, confidence, and safety for residents and families across Bracknell Forest.

# You said, we did as a result of your feedback

203 feedback responses were received into ASC during Q4 2024/25

You said	We did
It was hard to reach services and communication was frustrating.	We called back, offered different ways to keep in touch, and booked appointments promptly. We're reviewing how to make contact easier for everyone.
Staff need better training and understanding, especially around autism and respectful care.	We shared this with managers and began planning autism awareness training across teams. We're reinforcing clear, respectful communication in all interactions.
Support wasn't always timely or helpful, and some needs were missed (help with benefits, medical appointments, and mental health support).	Managers reviewed these cases, introduced regular check-ins, and team learning. We now offer communication options early so people feel supported from the start.
Discharge from hospital and coordination between services was stressful and affected mental health.	We flagged this for improvement and are providing additional training on autism and person-centred discharge planning.
Carers need better skills and understanding of their role.	We added this to team learning sessions and supervision, so everyone knows what good support looks like.
You want services to respond quickly and keep you informed.	We reminded teams to respond within 7 days, use plain language, and improve coordination between services.
Sometimes follow-up isn't possible due to missing details or changes in circumstances.	Where we can't reach someone, we close the loop appropriately and record learning. We signpost when services sit with partner organisations.

## What's next

**We'll keep following up after services, share learning in team meetings, and publish regular updates so your voice continues to shape how we work.**

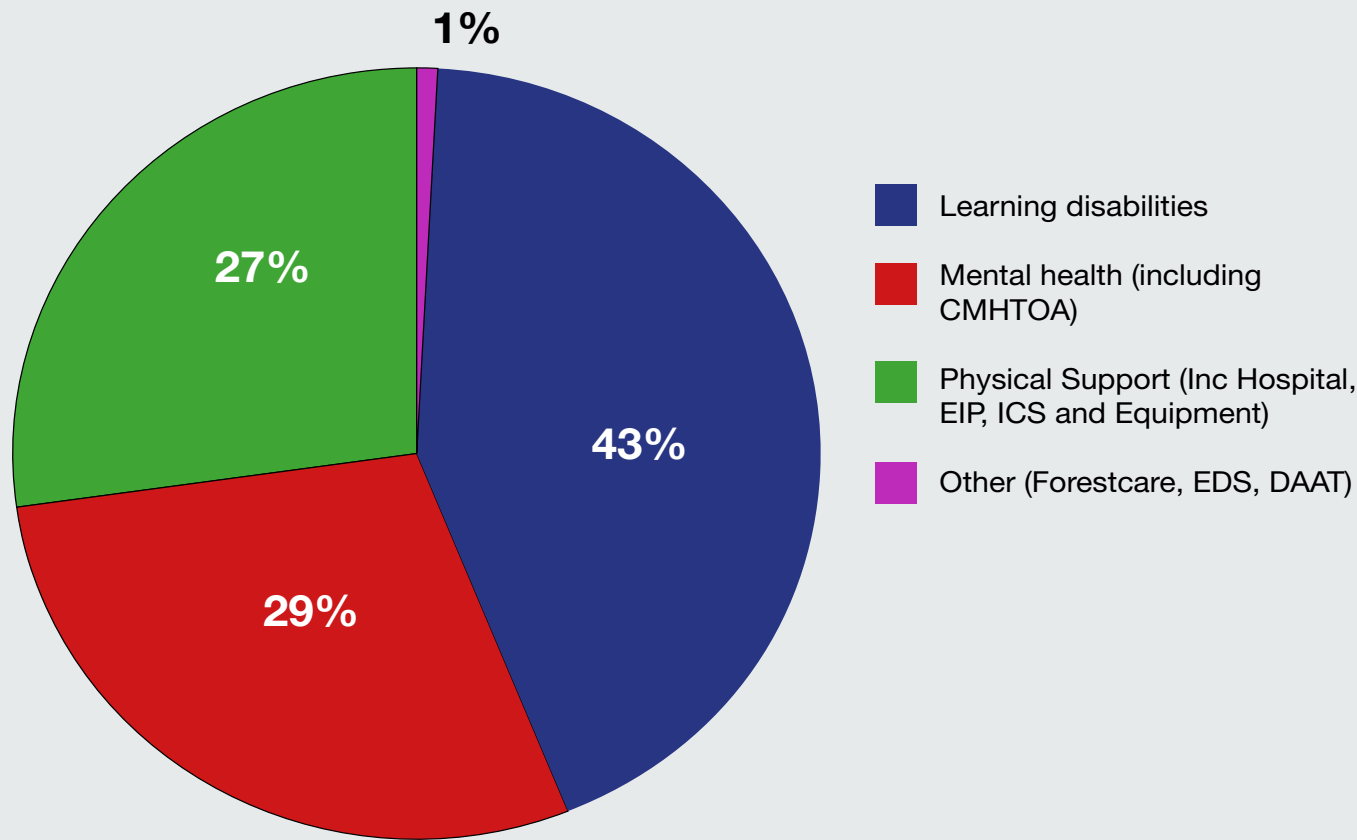
**If you'd like to share feedback, please contact our Adult Social Care team or use the online feedback form.**



# What did we spend?

- a total net spend of £37,742,346 was spent on supporting adult social care in 2024/25.

## 2024/25 adult social care spend by % total



Area of expenditure	2024/25 Spend	% of Total
Learning disability support	19,851,240	43%
Mental health support	13,193,231	29%
Physical support (including hospital, Early Intervention & Prevention, Intermediate Care and Equipment)	12,320,725	27%
Other (Forestcare, Emergency Duty Service, Drugs and Alcohol services)	321,244	1%
Total before Grant funding	£45,696.40	
Grant funding received	£7,944,094	
Total ASC spend after grant funding	£37,742,346	

## 2024/25 adult social care key achievements

**This year has been all about strengthening our services, supporting our staff, and making it easier for residents to get the care and support they need. Here are some of the highlights:**

- **Rated ‘Good’ by the Care Quality Commission:** We were one of the first councils in the country to be inspected under the new system – and we’re proud to say we were rated good, showing that we are meeting our responsibilities and providing a solid standard of care.
- **Strengthened social worker practice:** New roles appointed within our leadership team to make sure staff are well supported and residents get the best possible care.
- **Making services easier to use:** We have been improving how our services are organised, so it’s quicker and simpler for residents to find the right support when they need it.
- **Using data to make better decisions:** With new technology called Power BI, we can now see and understand our data more clearly. This helps us plan services better and respond more quickly to what people need.
- **Acting on feedback:** We have used the findings from the Care Quality Commission to guide our improvement plans – making sure we continue to learn and get better.
- **Working with local partners:** We have been part of important projects such as the local health and wellbeing plan and work on equality standards, ensuring our services reflect the needs of all communities.
- **Supporting our staff to grow:** We are developing an academy model to give our teams more opportunities to learn and develop their careers.
- **Building a stable workforce:** By taking part in a national workforce programme, we are helping more staff move into permanent roles, so residents see familiar faces and experience more continuity in their care.
- **Listening to residents’ voices:** We have expanded the ways we hear from residents and created a central system to bring together feedback. This means people’s views are at the heart of shaping future services.



# 2024/25 adult social care key achievements

## Hub, adult community team (ACT), early intervention and prevention (EIP) and hospital team

This year, we focused on helping people get the right support quickly, while also making sure our staff teams are strong and well-supported.

- All management posts across the adult community team are now filled, giving more stability and support to staff and residents. Five new social workers successfully completed their first year in practice, and two team members are working towards occupational therapy qualifications at university.
- The adult social care hub continues to be the first place people go when they need support. We've made it quicker and easier to get advice, information, and referrals to the right services.
- Together with the early intervention and prevention team, we're helping people stay independent for longer by focusing on strengths and tailoring support to individual needs.
- In the hospital team, we're helping more people return home safely after a hospital stay, instead of moving into a care home. The home first team is now fully staffed with therapists and coordinators, who work with hospital staff to make sure people get the right equipment and support as soon as they leave hospital. Residents told us they valued the "high level of attention and fast supply of equipment."
- We introduced grab bags – practical packs of equipment that support safe discharges or help avoid hospital admissions. Over the past year, 57 people have benefited from them.
- As of April 2025, more than 1,200 local patients are being monitored remotely, meaning they can stay safe at home while still being supported by health teams.
- Across all teams, we've invested in better data systems, helping us plan services more effectively day-to-day.

## Intermediate care service

Our intermediate care service helps people recover at home or after short stays in care settings, so they can stay as independent as possible.

- We provided tailored support with input from physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, and community staff – ensuring people received joined-up care based on their individual needs.
- By making the best use of equipment and technology, we helped reduce the need for long-term care packages.
- Teams from health, housing, and social care worked together to share information and track progress, while ensuring residents were fully involved in decisions about their care.

## Learning disability and autism

We've made big steps forward in improving support and opportunities for people with learning disabilities and autism.

- The new supported living accommodation at Bridgewell is nearly complete, and residents are expected to start moving in from autumn 2025. Future residents have already visited and given positive feedback on the design.
- A new supported living framework was launched in July 2024, giving people more choice and control over their support.
- We published an adult social care pathway in May 2024, co-designed with young people, families, and professionals, to help make the move from children's to adult services smoother.
- Our second preparing for adulthood roadshow in January 2025 brought together families, young people, and professionals to explore education, health, employment, and social care opportunities.
- The autism team successfully piloted peer support groups, which are now a permanent offer. These groups help people build confidence, develop life skills, and reduce isolation.



## 2024/25 adult social care key achievements

- We also introduced the reasonable adjustment digital flag (RADF) project, which makes health appointments easier for people with additional needs. Already, 134 residents have shared their needs with their GP through this system.

### Strategic commissioning

This year we have focused on improving services, creating more choice, and supporting people to live as independently as possible.

- **Support for carers**
  - A new all-age carers strategy was co-produced with local people.
  - The new carers partnership board was set up to help deliver the priorities within the strategy.
- **Independent living and accommodation**
  - The new independence support and supported living framework started, bringing in more providers and giving people greater choice.
  - Work on Bridgewell, our new supported living accommodation for adults with care and support needs, moved forward and is now close to completion. Preparations have begun to welcome the first residents.
- **Care at home**
  - The home care framework was extended to September 2027. This ensures people can continue to receive reliable, good quality care in their own homes.
- **Specialist services**
  - The new East Berkshire stroke support service was launched in April 2025, led by Bracknell Forest Council.
  - An all-age autism strategy was developed and is now in the final stages before being agreed.

- **Looking ahead**

- We will begin delivering the all-age autism strategy once it is agreed.
- The new East Berkshire integrated therapies service will start in April 2025.
- We will continue to make sure our supported living and care at home services provide high-quality, reliable support for local people.

### Strategic safeguarding and deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS)

**Keeping people safe is at the heart of what we do. This year, we strengthened our safeguarding work in several ways:**

- Introduced a new system to record safeguarding work, making sure people's voices are central to the process.
- Brought together different agencies through safeguarding and risk meetings to protect adults facing multiple risks.
- Provided expert support to staff dealing with complex cases, including concerns about providers or people living outside the area.
- Delivered safeguarding training to both council staff and external agencies.
- Streamlined DoLS processes, allowing us to respond more quickly to referrals, which rose by more than 22 per cent this year.
- Completed 18 per cent more DoLS applications than last year, despite having many new staff members in the team.
- Supported adults and families through the DoLS process, making sure they understood their rights and received the right support during difficult times.



## 2024/25 adult social care key achievements

### Adult social care – assessment suite

The assessment suite gives adults quick access to advice, equipment, and support to help them stay safe and independent at home. This includes things like grab rails, small adaptations, and technology solutions. By offering early help, we've supported more people to live safely without needing hospital care.

### Community mental health teams adults (CMHT)

The Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) in Bracknell supports adults and older adults facing complex mental-health challenges. It offers assessments, treatment plans and coordination of care (including medication, therapy and social-support links) so people can stay independent and live as well as possible.

#### Adults

- Between April 2024 and March 2025, the team responded to 204 safeguarding concerns, ensuring people at risk were supported quickly.
- We are working more closely than ever with NHS colleagues, creating a more joined-up service for people who need both health and social care support.
- The team is now fully staffed, with no waiting list for assessments, meaning people get timely support.
- We have strengthened support for young people moving from children's services into adult mental health care, helping make the transition smoother.
- Staff are being supported to grow their skills through apprenticeships, specialist training, and student placements.
- Our strong partnership with housing has helped people with mental health needs access accommodation and avoid unnecessary hospital stays.

### Older adults

- The CMHT for older adults continues to support over 400 people living with dementia or other mental health needs, as well as their families and carers.
- New staff have joined, reducing the need for temporary workers and bringing more consistency for residents.
- We've supported social workers through training and placements, ensuring the team continues to grow and strengthen.

### Bracknell Forest community network (BFCN)

Bracknell Forest Community Network helps adults in the Bracknell Forest area who are recovering from or at risk of mental ill-health. It offers one-to-one support to build confidence, life skills and resilience, plus group activities to get socially connected and prevent relapse.

The community network has grown significantly this year, helping more residents improve their wellbeing and independence.

- Referrals into the service have risen by more than 75 per cent compared with last year.
- More people are moving from one-to-one support into group activities, which help build confidence, skills, and connections.
- 70 per cent of clients reported they no longer needed primary or secondary mental health care after three months of support.
- The new community access panel makes sure people are referred quickly to the right service, reducing delays.
- Our Happiness Hub events and drop-ins welcomed over 570 attendances, tackling isolation and raising awareness of local support.

# 2024/25 adult social care key achievements

## Dementia advisory service (DA)

The DA service continues to provide vital support to over 420 people and their families, offering guidance, peer groups, and events.

- Weekly peer groups attract around 50 attendees, helping people stay socially connected.
- Carers have been supported through events and forums, with around 100 people regularly attending the dementia voice group.
- We have raised awareness locally about prevention, early diagnosis, and living well with dementia.

## Glenfield House

Glenfield House provides accommodation and outreach support for people experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges.

- This year, four residents moved from temporary housing into secure, independent homes.
- Outreach workers supported eight new clients, while the respite flat provided short-term accommodation to nine people.
- Activities and wellbeing programmes are running for both residents and outreach clients.
- Forty-eight people were supported to move successfully onto Universal Credit.

## New Hope – drugs and alcohol team

The New Hope team continues to play a key role in helping people recover from drug and alcohol misuse.

- Ranked in the top 25 per cent in the Southeast for successful treatment of people using opiates.
- More residents are completing treatment, with alcohol-only completions rising to 36.4 per cent.
- Peer support training has been introduced, enabling people in recovery to volunteer and support others.

- A new case management system has been commissioned, making services more transparent and effective.
- Staff will benefit from a new training programme in 2025–26, covering harm reduction, overdose prevention, and other essential skills.

## Emergency duty service (EDS)

The EDS team provides out-of-hours emergency support across Berkshire.

- We worked closely with partner councils and safeguarding boards to strengthen responses to urgent situations.
- The team is fully staffed with experienced childcare social workers, ensuring consistent and effective support for families and adults during emergencies.

## Forestcare

Forestcare provides technology-enabled care services that help people stay safe and independent at home.

- This year, Forestcare successfully passed its national quality standards assessment, confirming the service is safe, effective, and responsive.
- We began our digital equipment journey, modernising the technology residents use to stay connected and supported.
- We supported residents in Bracknell and Wokingham through the discharge project and new funding for assistive technology, helping people leave hospital more quickly and avoid unnecessary admissions.



- Forestcare maintained excellent accessibility – with 73 per cent of enquiries resolved at first contact – and delivered over 90 per cent of telecare equipment within three days of assessment.
- We worked in close partnership with health and social care teams, using a joined-up approach to improve outcomes for residents.
- Forestcare continues to support Bracknell Forest's 'home first' approach, focusing on prevention and helping people remain in their own homes for longer.
- The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) 2025 summary of people's experiences also reflected positively on Forestcare's role in delivering person-centred, preventative support.

## **Welfare support**

We've supported residents facing financial hardship during a difficult year.

- Our hardship officers secured more than £100,000 of additional income for residents.
- We continued to deliver the government's household support fund, helping those most in need.
- Bracknell Forest ranked in the top 25 per cent nationally for the speed of processing housing benefit claims.

## **Community safety**

This year, we worked hard to keep Bracknell Forest safe and welcoming.

- Published the new community safety partnership plan (2025–28) after listening to residents and partners.
- Took firm action against persistent anti-social behaviour in the town centre using community protection warnings and notices.
- Ran public events, 'have your say' meetings, and engagement sessions to rebuild trust and strengthen community cohesion.
- Commissioned new strategies on exploitation and domestic abuse, informed directly by the experiences of survivors.

## **Housing**

- Supported more than 1,700 households to prevent or relieve homelessness.
- Allocated 340 homes through the housing register.
- Delivered 82 Disabled Facilities Grants, helping people live safely and independently at home.

## **Carers support**

- Following extensive co-production to develop the strategy we published the Caring for our Carers Strategy
- We set up a Carers Partnership Board which oversees the implementation of the strategy
- We set up workstreams led by various partners across health, social care, commissioning, communities team and the voluntary sector to progress the action plan of the strategy
- We regularly monitor progress, celebrating achievements and working through any challenges to progress.
- We commissioned a new carers support service

## **Co-production**

We are committed to shaping services together with residents, families, and partners. Over the past year we have:

- Worked alongside young people and families to create the new adult social care pathway, ensuring the transition from children's to adult services is shaped by lived experience.
- Involved future residents in visiting and feeding back on the design of the new Bridgewell supported living accommodation, making sure it meets their needs and preferences.
- Co-produced the new all-age carers strategy with carers, health partners, and the voluntary sector to reflect what matters most to carers in Bracknell Forest.
- Delivered the preparing for adulthood roadshow with young people, families, and partners, providing a space to share ideas and connect with local opportunities.
- Developed the reasonable adjustment

digital flag (RADF) with local people to make GP and hospital appointments more accessible for people with learning disabilities and autism.

- Launched the dementia voice group and forum, where around 100 residents regularly share their views and shape awareness projects with local partners.
- Involved residents through the Happiness Hub and BFCN activities, where people's feedback is directly influencing the type of groups and events we offer.
- Introduced the community chest fund, supporting residents to design and deliver their own local projects.
- Updated our complaints policy so that feedback from people with lived experience directly drives service improvements.



# Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection – May 2024

**Our overall rating: Good ★★★★★**

In May 2024, Adult Social Care at Bracknell Forest Council was inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This was the first time local authorities have been inspected under CQC's new assessment framework for adult social care.

Following the inspection, CQC rated Bracknell Forest Council Good, recognising the positive difference our services make to residents' lives and the strong partnerships we have across health, community and voluntary services.

## What is the CQC inspection?

The CQC is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. The inspection looked at how well we support adults, carers and families, and how we work with partners to help people:

- Stay independent
- Feel safe
- Live healthier lives
- Be involved in decisions about their care

CQC spoke to residents, carers, staff, partners and community organisations, and reviewed data and case examples.

## What mattered most to residents – key findings

### ✓ Easy access to help and support

- Most people told CQC they could access support easily, with options online, by phone or in person.
- 73% of enquiries were dealt with at the first point of contact, helping people get answers quickly.

**“More than 9 out of 10 people felt listened to, supported and involved in decisions about them.” – CQC**

### ✓ Supporting independence and ‘home first’

- CQC found a strong focus on helping people stay independent and live at home for as long as possible.
- People in Bracknell Forest were 3.5 times more likely than the national average to receive reablement or rehabilitation after leaving hospital.

**“Interventions helped people remain independent for longer when they returned home.” – CQC**

**✓ Safe, timely hospital discharge**

- Most people had positive experiences of leaving hospital, with care arranged safely and quickly.
- Discharge arrangements were described as timely, safe and effective, supported by strong joint working with health partners.

**✓ Working well with partners and communities**

- CQC highlighted strong partnerships across health, voluntary and community organisations.
- Services such as the Happiness Hub and community networks were recognised for improving wellbeing and reducing loneliness.

“Bracknell Forest Council is highly integrated with system partners and works well with others to achieve good outcomes for people.” – CQC

**✓ Safeguarding adults**

- When concerns about abuse or neglect were raised, CQC found they were responded to without delay.
- Strong safeguarding arrangements were in place, with clear oversight and partnership working.

**What this means for residents**

- CQC’s ‘Good’ rating means residents can be confident that:
- Adult Social Care services are safe, caring and well-led
- People are treated with dignity and respect
- Support is focused on what matters to each individual
- The council listens to feedback and uses it to improve services

**Looking ahead**

CQC also identified areas where we can improve further, and we are already taking action. We remain committed to:

- Listening to residents and carers
- Co producing services with people who use them
- Building on what works well to deliver even better outcomes

This inspection provides an important foundation as we continue to improve adult social care for everyone in Bracknell Forest.



## Challenges faced during 2024/25

**Like many adult social care services across the country, we have faced several ongoing challenges this year:**

### **Recruitment and staffing**

Attracting and retaining qualified staff in our Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered services and key frontline roles remains difficult. While we have made progress in building a more stable and permanent workforce, reducing our reliance on agency staff continues to be a priority.

### **Financial pressures**

The cost-of-living crisis has placed additional strain on care providers and affected the cost of care packages and placements. This has led to rising unit costs and uncertainty in the local care market.

### **Increasing demand and complexity**

More people are coming to us with complex needs, including frailty, mental health challenges, and safeguarding concerns. This has meant teams need to work more intensively with residents and families, often alongside health and housing colleagues.

### **Hospital pressures**

Supporting safe and timely hospital discharges remains challenging. While new initiatives like 'home first' and grab bags have helped, there continues to be pressure on beds and community services.

### **Safeguarding and legal processes**

The number of deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS) referrals rose by more than 22 per cent compared with the previous year. This increase puts additional pressure on staff capacity, even though the team has worked hard to complete more applications.

Despite these challenges, we remain committed to working with partners, carers, families, and residents to build resilience in our services and to keep improving outcomes for local people.





# Our challenges and opportunities for 2025/26

We know that the year ahead will bring pressures, but we also see real opportunities to build on the progress we've made and to work differently with our residents and partners.

## Managing demand and budgets

- Like all councils, we face ongoing financial pressures alongside rising demand for adult social care, including mental health and emergency support. This is a challenge, but it also drives us to be more innovative, focus on prevention, and make sure resources are targeted where they make the biggest difference.

## Working closely with health partners

- Changes and reductions in funding across health services will require us to strengthen collaboration even further. This is an opportunity to design more joined-up services that put residents at the centre, avoid duplication, and achieve better outcomes together.

## Supporting care providers in a tough climate

- We know providers are under financial strain and supporting them while ensuring fair costs of care will remain a challenge. By working in partnership, we can maintain stability in the local care market and protect vital services for residents.

## Rolling out a new operating model

- The second phase of our new operating model offers us the chance to modernise how we work and provide more effective, streamlined services that are easier for residents to access and navigate.

## Investing in our workforce

- The launch of our new academy model will support staff development, helping us build a skilled, confident, and resilient workforce that can meet the changing needs of our community.

## Listening and learning from residents

- We are developing stronger ways to capture the voices of residents and carers, making sure services are responsive and shaped by lived experience.

## Promoting equality and diversity

- We are committed to being an equitable and inclusive employer. In 2025/26, we will take part in national programmes such as the **social care workforce equality standards** and **diverse by design**, to reflect and celebrate the diversity of our workforce and community.

## Preparing for future inspections

- Building on our 'Good' rating from the Care Quality Commission, we will continue to strengthen our improvement plans so that we are fully prepared for the next assurance visit and, most importantly, so that residents feel the benefit.

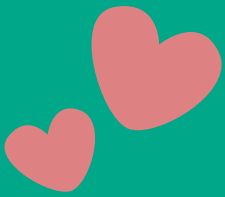
# What are our improvement priorities for 2025/26?

**Adult social care is focused on improving services, supporting residents, and making sure everyone in Bracknell Forest can live safely and independently. This year, we are concentrating on:**

- **Making services easier to access** – our new operating model will help residents find the right support quickly, with clearer pathways and joined-up care.
- **Listening to residents** – we are building better ways to hear the voices of people who use our services, so their experience shapes everything we do.
- **Investing in staff** – Our new academy model will help staff learn, grow, and provide the best possible support to residents.
- **Working together with partners** – by collaborating with health, housing, and voluntary services, we aim to keep people independent for longer and support smooth hospital discharges.
- **Supporting a stable care market** – we will work with providers to ensure services remain strong and care costs are fair.
- **Promoting equality and diversity** – we are committed to being an inclusive and equitable workplace for staff, and an organisation that serves everyone fairly.
- **Continuing to improve** – we will keep learning and developing so that residents experience high-quality, safe, and person-centred care.

**In short: 2025/26 is about making care simpler, stronger, and more responsive – building on our successes and creating services that work for everyone in our community.**





Bracknell Forest adult social care  
**Annual Report 2024/25**

If you need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with us, please call 01344 352000 or email: [customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk).