

Living Better Lives in Lancashire

Our Local Account 2025/26



Your annual update
on the achievements,
improvements, challenges
and vision of Adult Social
Care in Lancashire



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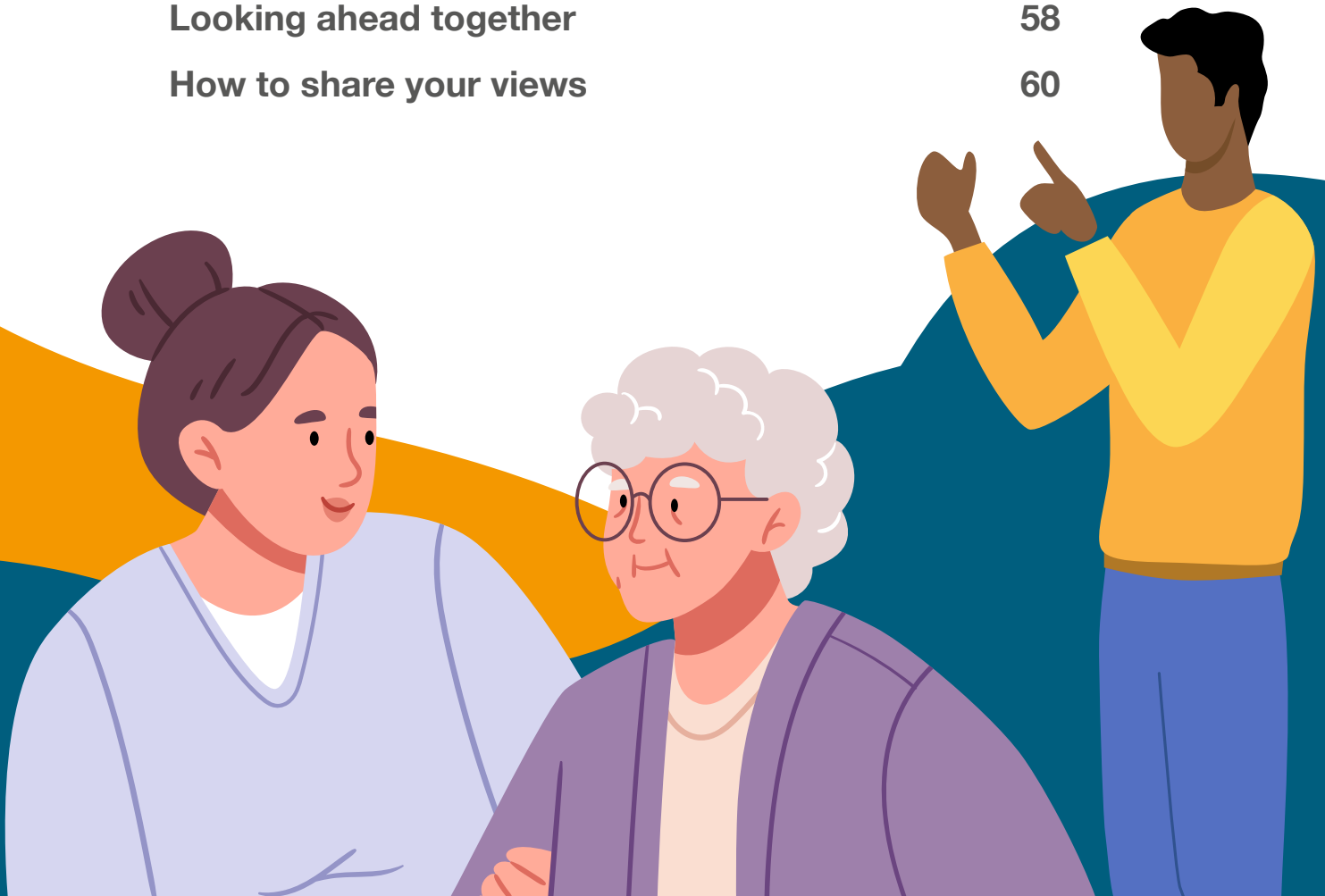
ACHIEVEMENTS, IMPROVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND VISION OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE IN LANCASHIRE

*Please note that some names in this Local Account have been changed to protect the privacy of the people we support.

Contents

This Local Account is guided by four themes - helping people to live independently, providing the right support, ensuring safe, high quality care, and strong leadership and a skilled workforce - which run throughout the document.

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Our Local Account in summary

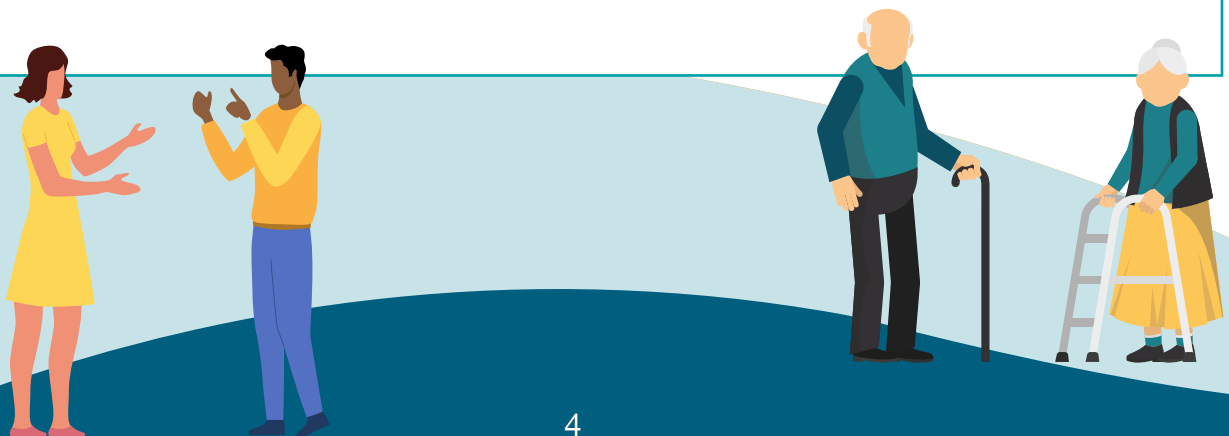
We know this document contains a lot of detail, so here is a summary if you are short on time.

This year's Local Account shows how we are delivering our *Living Better Lives in Lancashire* vision: helping people live safely and independently, providing the right level of support and providing care at or close to home wherever possible. Our focus has been on strengthening early help, improving access to information and advice and ensuring long-term accommodation-based care is only used when it is truly needed.

In 2025, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessed our adult social care services and rated us 'Requires Improvement'. This has strengthened our determination to improve. The findings have helped us focus on the areas that matter most - including access, timeliness, consistency and partnership working - and this Local Account shows the progress we are already making and what's next.

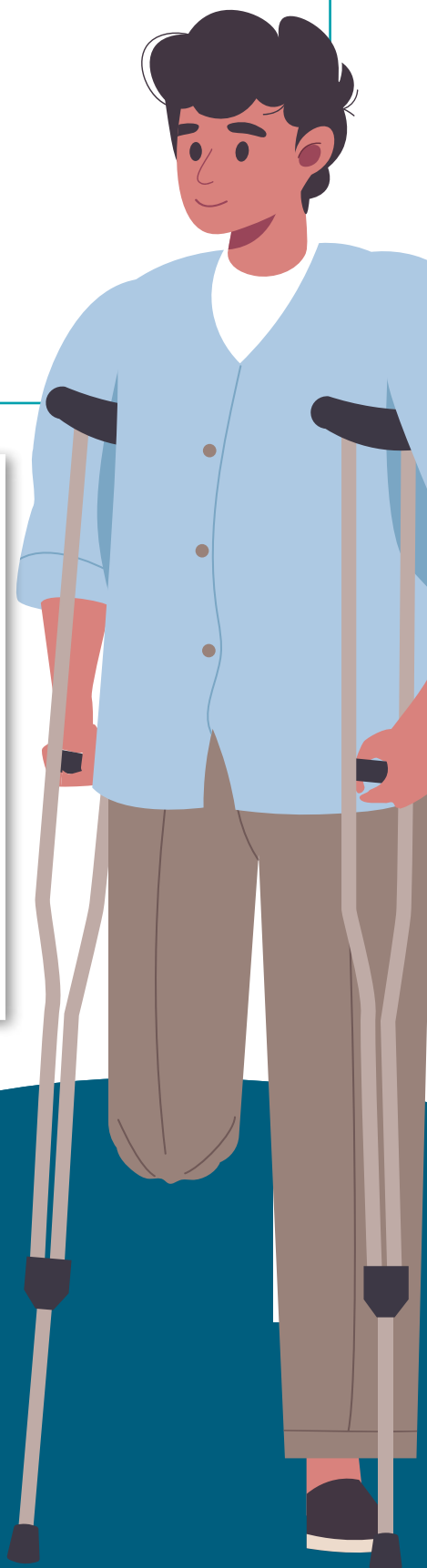
While we continue to learn from national expectations, including the CQC assessment, we are driven by our ambition to help people stay independent for longer, reduce reliance on formal care and ensure support is personalised, preventative and rooted in local communities. Strong leadership and a supported workforce are central to this. We have reshaped our leadership team, brought Public Health into the directorate and invested in learning and development, including new staff conferences that bring teams together to share good practice.

We are building a more joined up, community based approach that offers early help before people reach crisis. Neighbourhood working has expanded, with closer collaboration between local providers and the introduction of Village Agents in rural areas. Improving access to information and advice remains key, including the Convo Now BSL app and the life changing work of our Sensory Impairment Team.



Co-production is becoming a stronger part of how we work. Our work in Lancaster is creating a model where people, carers and communities shape services as equal partners, with their feedback already influencing how support is designed. Technology is also improving safety and independence, from everyday devices to 800 Nobi smart lamps in care homes that help staff prevent and reduce the likelihood of falls.

We have strengthened support for young people moving into adulthood and improved help for unpaid carers through tailored advice, counselling, social groups and personal budgets. Together, these improvements show how we are delivering our vision: earlier help, more personalised support, stronger communities and care that is the right level, prevents problems and helps people stay independent.



Introduction



Welcome to our update on how we supported adults in Lancashire to live safely and independently in 2025/26.

Our *Living Better Lives in Lancashire* ambition is to make sure people get the right level of care at the right time, in the right place and only for as long as is needed. Over the past year, we have focused on strengthening independence, offering personalised and proportionate support, working closely with community organisations and ensuring people who use our services - along with families, carers and providers – are helping to shape how we work.

We have also continued in our efforts to build a strong and sustainable care sector, improved how quickly and responsibly we arrange support and deepened our partnerships with health colleagues so shared resources are used effectively. These shared priorities are helping us deliver care that is more joined up, more responsive and more focused on what matters most to the people of Lancashire.



Foreword from Helen Coombes, Executive Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing



Our Local Account provides the opportunity to reflect on the improvements we have made and our future plans for Adult Social Care in Lancashire. This report covers the period from April 2025 to the end of March 2026 and follows themes that link both to the CQC framework and our overall ambitions, which are:

Helping People to Live Independently, Providing the Right Support, Ensuring Safe, High-Quality Care and Strong Leadership and a Skilled Workforce.

People are at the heart of everything we do in Adult Social Care. Every decision we make, every conversation we have and every service we design starts with one simple question: what matters most to the person in front of us?

Our role is to help people live as independently as possible and to connect people with the right support, at the right time, in the right place when they need it. We take a strengths-based approach because we care about people's abilities, not just their challenges. When we focus on what people can do, we empower them to live well, stay connected and lead happy, healthy lives.

I am incredibly proud of my colleagues across Adults, Health and Wellbeing. They show passion, compassion and commitment every single day. Their work changes lives, often in quiet ways that aren't always seen, but are deeply felt by the people and families we support.

We are also in a period of real transformation. Since our CQC inspection, we have been strengthening our services and our ways of working. We were pleased that many of our improvements were recognised, but we know there is more to do. We are determined to build services that not only meet people's needs today but will continue to support Lancashire residents long into the future.

We have strengthened our leadership team, welcomed Public Health into our directorate and invested in learning and development for our workforce. We are also working closely with our valued partners in health, the police and the voluntary, community and faith sectors to provide safe, joined-up support that wraps around people in the places they call home.

Finally, I want to say to the people who draw on our support and their loved ones, please keep talking to us. Your feedback helps us to learn, improve and continue to build services that truly work for you.

Foreword from County Councillor Tom Pickup, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care



Every day in Lancashire, people show remarkable strength. I see this in our communities, in the way people support one another, and in the dedication of those working across adult social care. As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, I am proud to champion this work and the difference it makes to people's lives.

This report sets out how we are supporting adults across Lancashire today and how we will continue to strengthen that support in the years ahead. Our focus is simple: helping people earlier, helping people stay independent and making sure support is easy to find when it's needed.

Many people do not need formal care. Often, the right information, some practical guidance, or a connection to something local is enough to help people stay well and live independently. When people do need more support, we want it to work around them - recognising their strengths, their goals and what matters most in their lives. Good care is not just about meeting needs; it is about helping people live the life they want.

Looking ahead, our approach will continue to be shaped by our local communities. Whether someone lives in a rural village, a coastal town or a busy urban area, they should be able to find help close to home, in a way that works for them. We are committed to building a system that prevents crisis where possible, reduces isolation and gives people confidence in their own abilities.

Reflecting on his time as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, County Councillor Graham Dalton said:

“

Throughout my time in this role, I saw daily examples of the strength and resilience of people across Lancashire; individuals managing long-term conditions, families supporting one another, and older people determined to stay independent for as long as possible. I also saw the dedication of our staff - carers, social workers, support teams and volunteers - who bring compassion, skill and commitment to their work every day. As a registered nurse, I know how demanding this work can be and how deeply it matters.

I have always been proud of the care we provide, and even prouder of the people who deliver it. I leave this role confident in the future of adult social care in Lancashire, thanks to the dedication of our workforce and the strength of our leadership.

”

I want to echo that pride and extend my thanks to everyone who plays a part in this work. Together, we are creating a future where adults in Lancashire can live independently, stay connected and feel supported at every stage of life.

The changing picture in Lancashire

More people need our support every year. People are living longer and many are living with health conditions or disabilities that mean they need more help to stay safe, well and independent.

The illustrations on this page show some of the pressures we are working with and why our support matters more than ever.

Budget in 2025/26

This incorporates:

- Income from grants
- Income from the NHS
- Staff and overheads
- Paying independent and voluntary organisations to deliver care
- Providing people with a direct payment to arrange their own care and support

The net cost of delivering adult social care was

£531m

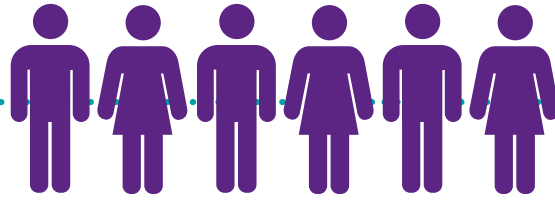


compared to a budget of **£528m**

During 2025/26,

the council supported nearly
23,000
people





Demographics:

The people who make Lancashire

Lancashire is home to approximately

1.3 million people

and is the **fourth largest**
county council in England

(mid 2024 population estimates)



Lancashire's population
has grown by

9.4%

over the last
10 years

(mid 2024 population
estimates)

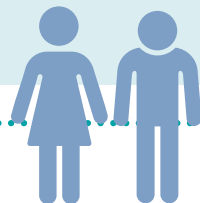


Lancashire's population is aging
and at a faster rate than the
national average

Those aged

65

and over to
grow each
year



Those aged

80

and over
projected to
almost double
in 2047



Life expectancy in Lancashire is **lower than the national averages**



FEMALES
82 YEARS



MALES
77 YEARS



There are significant health inequalities across our neighbourhoods.

Social Care Workforce:
the **people who provide care**
and **support** in Lancashire



There are approximately

 **33,000 people**
working in social care in Lancashire



30,000 work
in the **independent sector**
(i.e. not run by government or NHS)

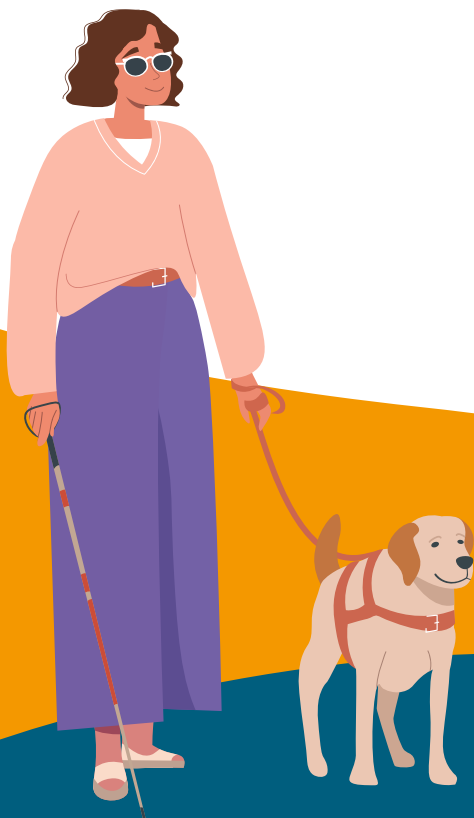
Lancashire's CQC Assessment: What we learned and how we're improving

Every adult in Lancashire deserves safe, high-quality care and support. In 2025, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessed how well we are delivering adult social care and rated us 'Requires Improvement'.

They recognised our committed staff, strong safeguarding and positive partnership working in places. They also identified areas where we can improve. Since then, we've been working quickly, with a clear improvement plan and strong oversight.

Why this matters

The assessment gives an independent view of what's working well and where we need to strengthen our approach. It helps us continue improving services and be open about our progress.



What CQC told us, what we've done since and what's next

Access, timeliness and people's experience

CQC told us: People didn't always receive help as early as they could have, waiting times were too long and getting in touch could be difficult.

What we've done: We're re-thinking the way people can get support from us, helping people to help themselves using digital tools, offering earlier advice and strengthening community support while people wait.

Still to do: Further reduce waiting times, with a clear aim for assessments within 28 days and expand our reach through initiatives like the Public Health van.

Delays in assessments and reviews

CQC told us: Some people were waiting too long for assessments, therapy support and reviews.

What we've done: Improved how we prioritise people with the greatest needs and more consistent processes for staff.

Still to do: Continue reducing waiting lists, including in the Sensory Impairment Team and expand the Trusted Reviewer model, which allows some providers to complete reviews, meaning people can access support more quickly.

Strength-based and rights-based practice

CQC told us: Not all social care assessments fully reflected what matters most to people and staff training needed to be more consistent.

What we've done: Strengthened quality assurance, expanded training and done more to embed a strengths-based approach to social care practice.

Still to do: Continue building staff confidence to work in a strengths-based way through ongoing learning, tools and practical guidance.



Partnership working and integration

CQC told us: Joint working with partners could be more consistent.

What we've done: Refreshed the Health and Wellbeing Board, strengthened our work with the NHS and improved how council and health services work together.

Still to do: Build stronger neighbourhood working with the NHS, expand the ways we connect people to support in their communities and develop closer links with local and voluntary sector partners.

Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

CQC told us: Some people didn't always feel listened to and DoLS waiting times were too long.

What we've done: Improved the way we respond to safeguarding concerns and reduced backlogs.

Still to do: Deliver a safeguarding improvement plan focused on earlier support, better use of data and stronger multi-agency working.

Leadership, workforce and communication

CQC told us: Staff experience needed to improve, including morale, sickness levels and visible leadership.

What we've done: Introduced a new leadership team, improved communication and clarified roles.

Still to do: Continue building a stable, well-supported workforce through development opportunities and staff involvement in shaping and delivering change.

What happens next

We have a clear improvement plan with strong oversight. Progress is already being made and we remain focused on delivering consistent, compassionate care with timely and fair access, in line with our *Living Better Lives in Lancashire* vision.

Care and collaboration: Co-production leading the way



We are on an important journey in Lancashire to make sure people's views, feelings and ideas shape how we design and improve care. This approach, known as co-production, means working side by side with people who use services, carers and communities, recognising the expertise they bring through their own experiences. When people are treated as equal partners, services become more personal, flexible and focused on what truly matters.

Building the foundations

We have begun this work in Lancaster, where we are creating the foundations of a strong and sustainable co-production network. Our focus is on making involvement easy and welcoming, and ensuring people's contributions are valued and acted on. Although we are still at an early stage, these principles are already shaping how we design support and work with partners. Our aim is to build a model that can grow across Lancashire so that people's experiences become central to everything we do.

What we've learned so far

A recent workshop in Lancaster showed the energy and creativity within the community. People shared positive experiences of local groups and projects and told us what would help co-production thrive: clearer communication, flexible ways to take part, consistent follow up and fair recognition for people's time. These insights will guide our approach across all districts.

Our principles

We are committed to:

- Equal partnership - people with real life experiences and professionals working together from the start
- Strengths-based approaches - focusing on what people can do and what matters to them
- Inclusion - ensuring a wide range of voices are heard
- Continuous learning - improving together as we go

How co-production will shape future services

People who draw on care and support will help design, deliver and review services at every stage. We will work closely with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, recognising the vital role they play in supporting people where they live. Commissioning decisions will be shaped with communities, so services reflect local priorities and strengths. We are also planning a Collaboration Zone, a space where staff and local people can come together to share ideas and shape solutions.

Working with communities to help people live

Helping people live better lives starts in the places they know best; their neighbourhoods, communities and local support networks. This relies on strong partnerships with VCFSE organisations who are trusted by local people and often provide earlier, more personal support that prevents problems from becoming crises.

We are focusing on building community strength and supporting services delivered locally by people who know their area well. This includes simpler, more flexible funding routes so smaller groups can contribute and closer working with the NHS as part of Lancashire's integrated care approach.

This direction reflects the Care Act 2014 and the Care Quality Commission's expectations that councils promote wellbeing, prevent or delay the need for care and work well with partners. Strengthening our relationships with the VCFSE sector helps us show how we are meeting these expectations in practice – through early help, community based support and closer collaboration across the system.

Our goal

Our goal is simple: to make co-production the way we work in Lancashire. By listening, learning and designing services together, and by working hand in hand with community organisations, we can create support that truly meets people's needs and helps them live well, independently and with dignity.

If you want to share your ideas and help shape future services in Lancashire, please get in touch at coproduction@lancashire.gov.uk.

“I heard a loud and clear commitment from all professionals that they want to come on this co production journey together, which is fantastic.”



Ollie, young person and valued co-producer

Working together to improve care and support in Lancashire



Adult social care is under real pressure nationally. In Lancashire, we are responding by working differently with providers, community groups and the people who use our services. Our aim is simple: to help people live fulfilling lives in their own communities, with person centred, strengths-based support.

We are shifting from contract-focused arrangements to relationship-based partnerships. Over the last year, we've developed a clearer picture of the adult social care market, helping us work more closely with providers, spot pressures earlier and respond more effectively.

Good support often starts in communities. We're working with neighbourhood groups, faith organisations and local networks to strengthen local connections and help people stay well for longer. Local charities and community groups are key partners, and we involve them earlier and value their insight. We also bring providers together through regular forums for residential care, homecare and supported living.

This now includes a new VCFSE Market Shaping Forum, where we share opportunities, hear what organisations are seeing locally and learn from what works. This helps us shape services together and root support in local strengths.

Together, we are building a more joined up system where people get the right support, in the right place, at the right time.



“We are reshaping how we work in Lancashire by building stronger relationships with providers, communities and the people who draw on care. This isn't about new processes – it's about listening, learning and working side by side to create support that is personal, reliable and rooted in what matters to people.”

Matt Emerson
Director of Strategic
Commissioning & Quality



Health comes first: supporting independence across Lancashire



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By Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health,
Lancashire County Council

Good health plays a vital role in helping people live independently and stay connected to the things that matter most to them. It's not just about healthcare, it's about how we live our daily lives, the support we have around us, and the strength of our communities.

In Lancashire, we are increasingly focused on preventing health problems before they lead to a need for more formal care and support. This means working closely with adult social care, local communities and partners to support people earlier - helping them stay well, maintain their independence and avoid crisis wherever possible.

For many people, small changes can make a big difference. Access to the right information, local support, or community activity can help someone stay active, manage a long-term condition or reduce loneliness. These are the building blocks that support independence and reduce the need for more intensive services later on.

We also know that some people face greater challenges than others. Differences in health between communities mean that some people are more likely to need support earlier or more often. That's why we are working alongside adult social care to better understand these differences and target support where it can have the greatest impact.

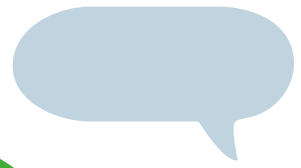
Partnership working is key. By bringing together public health, adult social care, the NHS and our voluntary and community sector, we are building a more joined-up approach - one that supports people as whole individuals, not just through services but through the communities around them.

By focusing on prevention, early support and stronger communities, we are helping to create the conditions for people in Lancashire to live well for longer - with the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

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**How
we have
supported
people
this year**



Helping people sooner: What's changed

A key part of helping people sooner is making sure they can find clear, reliable information to support themselves before problems escalate. A new, easy to use service directory, the 'Lancashire Service Finder' is being developed so people we support, their families and professionals can quickly find help locally, via community groups, equipment, advice and practical help. This will make it easier for people to stay independent, understand their options and get the right help at the right time - often without needing formal Adult Social Care.

Faster responses when people first contact us

At the start of 2026, many people were waiting several weeks at our Wellbeing and Early Support services for an initial conversation. We changed the way we work with people when they first get in touch with us and since January 2026, waiting times have reduced significantly. People are now being seen much sooner, with no one waiting more than two weeks for an initial conversation and many people hearing from us within 24 hours. While this is a real step forward, we know this is not yet consistent across all services and we are continuing to improve so that everyone benefits from faster, more timely support.



A new approach focused on better outcomes

These improvements are part of a wider programme to make services more consistent, efficient and centred on what matters to each person. Our new ways of working help us:

- understand needs earlier
- offer the right support at the right time
- reduce avoidable delays
- use our budget more effectively

This approach is now being rolled out across Neighbourhood Teams so people experience the same high quality support wherever they live.

Long term improvements underway

In April 2026, we began a full redesign of our Prevention and Initial Contact services - the first phase of a wider transformation of Adult Social Care. Our aim is to provide timely, personalised support that helps people stay independent, safe and connected.

“

The current way of working feels much more effective. It allows us to assess situations while they are still current and to make timely decisions about directing people to the most appropriate services or putting appropriate support in place before issues escalate. It also creates a much smoother experience for the person contacting us.

”

Hannah Whitehead,
Social Worker



The power of local partnerships: Helping people before they reach crisis

Across Lancaster, a new way of working is helping people get support earlier, preventing crises and reducing pressure on Adult Social Care. With backing from Lancashire County Council, a partnership of local organisations - Lancaster District CVS, Positive Futures, Citizens Advice North Lancashire, Bay Volunteers and neighbourhood groups - is giving residents a clear, compassionate route to help when life becomes difficult.

The partnership was created because many people contact Adult Social Care not for formal care, but because they're struggling with money, housing, loneliness, mobility or caring responsibilities and don't know where else to turn. By working together as one team, community organisations can step in early, offer practical and emotional support and stop situations from escalating.

Since launching, the partnership has accepted every appropriate referral, provided thousands of hours of support and helped people stabilise their lives. It has reduced avoidable contacts with Adult Social Care and allowed social workers to focus on people with the most complex needs - while ensuring residents feel safe, heard and supported.

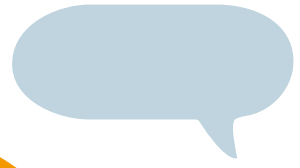
One person who benefitted is Arun*, an international student who had recently moved to Lancaster from India. He was experiencing significant anxiety, depression, social isolation and several health concerns and felt overwhelmed by the healthcare system.

Through the Community Support Offer, Arun was connected to a range of local support; nature based wellbeing sessions at Fork to Fork, specialist advice from Citizens Advice, and a 'Living Life to the Full' course to build confidence and coping skills. This wrap around support helped him feel less alone, understand his options and regain a sense of control.

Arun told us that without this help, he would have struggled to cope. Instead, he is now more connected, more confident and better able to manage his health and wellbeing.

Too often, people reach Adult Social Care not because they need formal care, but because they don't know where else to turn. By working together locally, we're able to provide support earlier, spend time and connect people to the right support before a crisis develops. This had made a real difference for individuals and for the system.

“



Helping People to Live Independently



Introducing Village Agents: Our rural heroes

We are supporting more people at home by helping small local providers grow and by expanding the role of Village Agents, who offer practical, community-based support across rural Lancashire. By connecting people with services, resources and social groups close to home, Village Agents help people stay independent, build confidence and get the right help at the right time.

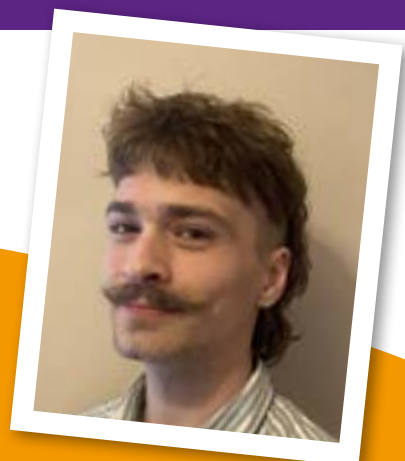
We spoke to Jonas, who is a Village Agent in rural West Lancashire, to find out more.

Why did you become a Village Agent?

“I became a Village Agent because my background in healthcare made me aware of how valuable holistic, preventative support can be, and how limited many services are in what they’re able to offer. I’ve also seen how quickly someone’s health or situation can deteriorate if they’re socially isolated, or don’t have a support network around them.

“My grandparents lived rurally in this area, and without the support of their local church they would have really struggled with things like transport and isolation. Seeing that made me realise how important it is for people to have someone they can turn to, and it’s a privilege to be able to help in that way.”

Jonas
one of our fantastic
Village Agents



What are your relationships like with the people you support?

“

From the people I have worked with so far, I have found that the best approach is to begin by truly listening to someone, to get to know them, and their situation. Building a good relationship with someone is essential to understand what group or service is most appropriate for them. Often, it is the small things, of being able to help with using the bus again, attending social groups together, or weekly check-in calls, that help the most.

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How do you help people to stay independent?

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People want to be independent and stay independent in their own homes. However, sometimes people won't reach out for help until a problem is too big to be ignored. Being able to notice signs early, such as a cold or damp home, can stop them escalating into greater issues that can affect other areas of their life such as their independence.

Having a regular social input through attending local groups or activities can help establish a stronger support network for that person, allowing them to feel more independent.

”

To find out how Village Agents could help you, please contact
VillageAgents@communityfutures.org.uk



Supporting healthy ageing, independence and community life

Isolation can seriously affect people's wellbeing, so we are focusing on earlier intervention and strengthening community-based support that helps people stay connected. Through supported living, Village Agents and Befriending services, we are helping more people live independently, maintain relationships and reduce pressure on public services by supporting healthy, connected ageing in local neighbourhoods.

Charlotte* used our Befriending services after she experienced significant emotional and social challenges following a traumatic event in childhood, which resulted in permanent injuries. Throughout her early years, she was supported by family members and professionals, and during her teenage years she found enjoyment and a sense of belonging through taking part in sport competitions. Being part of a team helped her to feel valued and connected.

As an adult, Charlotte began to spend more time independently in her local community. During this time, she experienced incidents of unkind behaviour from members of the public. These experiences had a lasting impact on her confidence and wellbeing, leading to increased anxiety, low self-esteem, social withdrawal and a loss of motivation.

Over time, this affected Charlotte's ability to feel safe and confident in her community, making it difficult for her to rebuild a sense of normality and independence. As a result, she was referred to our Community Support Befriending service by Adult Social Care.

Charlotte welcomed the support and worked with the service to identify how befriending could help her regain confidence. A six-month support plan was agreed, involving weekly visits with a volunteer. The initial sessions focused on getting to know each other and building trust, before gradually working towards shared goals. These included going for walks, visiting local places of interest and exploring opportunities to engage with community groups and meet new people.

Charlotte's journey was one of resilience and steady progress. Through consistent, compassionate support, she began to rebuild her confidence and reduce the impact of social anxiety and isolation. Each step forward, however small, supported her in reconnecting with her community and rediscovering a sense of purpose.

By the end of the six-month placement, Charlotte was confidently spending more time in her local community. She also expressed an interest in giving back and felt ready to explore volunteering opportunities herself, particularly within a garden or outdoor setting.



Bringing social care into the heart of our communities

For the first time, social workers and other members of our adult social care team are going out to communities across Lancashire with our Promoting Health in Lancashire (PHIL) van. They regularly join public health colleagues and other local professionals for the events, where everyone is welcome to pop in without having to book an appointment. They can offer advice about living independently and how to access support close to home if you, your family or anyone you know needs it.

At a recent event in Fleetwood, local resident Tracy Robinson was volunteering nearby and popped in to speak to the team.

“

They're going to give me support and it's amazing. They're heroes, they're literally heroes. I have carers, and they do an amazing job, but without any more help I wouldn't be able to live independently, I'd be stuck and it's given me the freedom to carry on with my life.

”

Tracey Robinson, local Volunteer

“

We can give people support to access services they might not ordinarily attend or go to. We also explore activities they might have done in the past and want to go back to. We link in with other agencies that provide support and tailor the support to each individual. It's a great chance to speak to people and a good opportunity to help if they have an issue that needs resolving.

”

Chris Lyons,
Senior Social Care Support Officer (SCSO) in the mental health team

“ The system has helped enormously with ruling out serious injury to residents who have been discovered on the floor, as people living with dementia can place themselves on the floor. When an incident is being communicated to loved ones, it reassures them that there was not a fall, but they placed themselves there, so are not hurt in any way. ”

Diane Kavanagh, Home Manager



How the Sensory Impairment team builds confidence

Denise Wilkinson was 47 when she started losing her sight. She was diagnosed with Macular Degeneration in both eyes which means that she can see peripherally, but she has no central vision in her eyes.

Denise receives support from Lancashire County Council's Sensory Impairment team, who offer support services for individuals with sight and hearing loss. This includes long cane training, which Denise was initially reluctant to consider, but after a nasty fall in Preston city centre she sought support to use a cane.

“

Mine is a hereditary form of Macular Degeneration, but I'm the only one in my family with it, so it was really difficult when I got the diagnosis because I didn't know anybody else with it, so I didn't accept it. When I met people from charities, Lancashire County Council and the Vision Impairment forum for Lancashire, I just thought to myself 'why haven't I known all about this service?' rather than spending 10 months crying? I started to change my mindset then.

”

“

It's the best thing I ever did, without a doubt. Lots of people are reluctant to do long cane training, but I think it's better to carry a cane than have a fall. The Rehabilitation Officer Vision Impairment (ROVI) took me out for six weeks and taught me to master the stairs and escalators. You can't put a price on the service that the ROVIs and the charities give to visually impaired people. It's priceless. We are extremely lucky in Lancashire to have the Sensory Impairment team; they are one of the best in the country and they make a real difference every day of the week.

”



Denise Wilkinson

Dave Taylor has also received support from the team. He was born with some sight but has been completely blind since a young age.

The support he's received includes route learning, long cane training and having labels with Braille on them added to appliances so that he can cook independently.

“ The team are so important for people that are losing sight, because the quicker they get seen the better. If you're left sat at home, unable to go out because you haven't got any of the skills, then everything will deteriorate; your mental health and your physical health, because you can't get the exercise. Not only are they helping people, but they're keeping people active, they're keeping people walking and independent.”



Dave Taylor

Innovative technology that makes everyday life easier

Technology Enabled Care helps people stay independent and get support quickly in an emergency by combining digital devices with trained, human response. In Lancashire, Progress Lifeline delivers the service, using personal alarms and home sensors linked to a 24-hour response centre where operators assess situations and contact family, send a mobile responder or call emergency services when needed.

TEC is more than emergency alarms. We also promote everyday technology, simple devices and apps that support routines, monitor wellbeing and offer reassurance to families. Where this isn't enough, specialist TEC can be added to help people feel safe and confident at home.

For families and care homes, TEC provides valuable reassurance. Falls are a major risk in care homes, so Lancashire County Council, the NHS and local providers have introduced 800 Nobi Smart Lamps in homes with the greatest need. Nobi looks like a standard ceiling light but uses AI to detect falls and alert staff immediately, meaning residents no longer have to press an alarm or wait to be found. Homes using Nobi report faster response times, fewer unwitnessed falls and better insight into why falls happen, helping staff make simple changes that improve safety. Families say they feel reassured knowing help will come quickly.

This shows how technology, used carefully and ethically, can improve safety, support staff and help people live with greater dignity and confidence.



“The best move I’ve made”: Life at Dovestone Gardens

Our housing with care services reflect our Living Better Lives in Lancashire vision – supporting people to live independently in a place they call home for as long as possible.

These services support people with physical disabilities, mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism to take control of their lives while maintaining their independence. We both provide and commission more than 700 places across Lancashire, working with trusted partners to deliver high-quality support. This includes services like Dovestone Gardens in Burnley, which is commissioned by the council and delivered in partnership with Calico Homes and Syncora Care. We spoke to residents there to find out more about what life is like for them.

Why do people move to Dovestone Gardens?

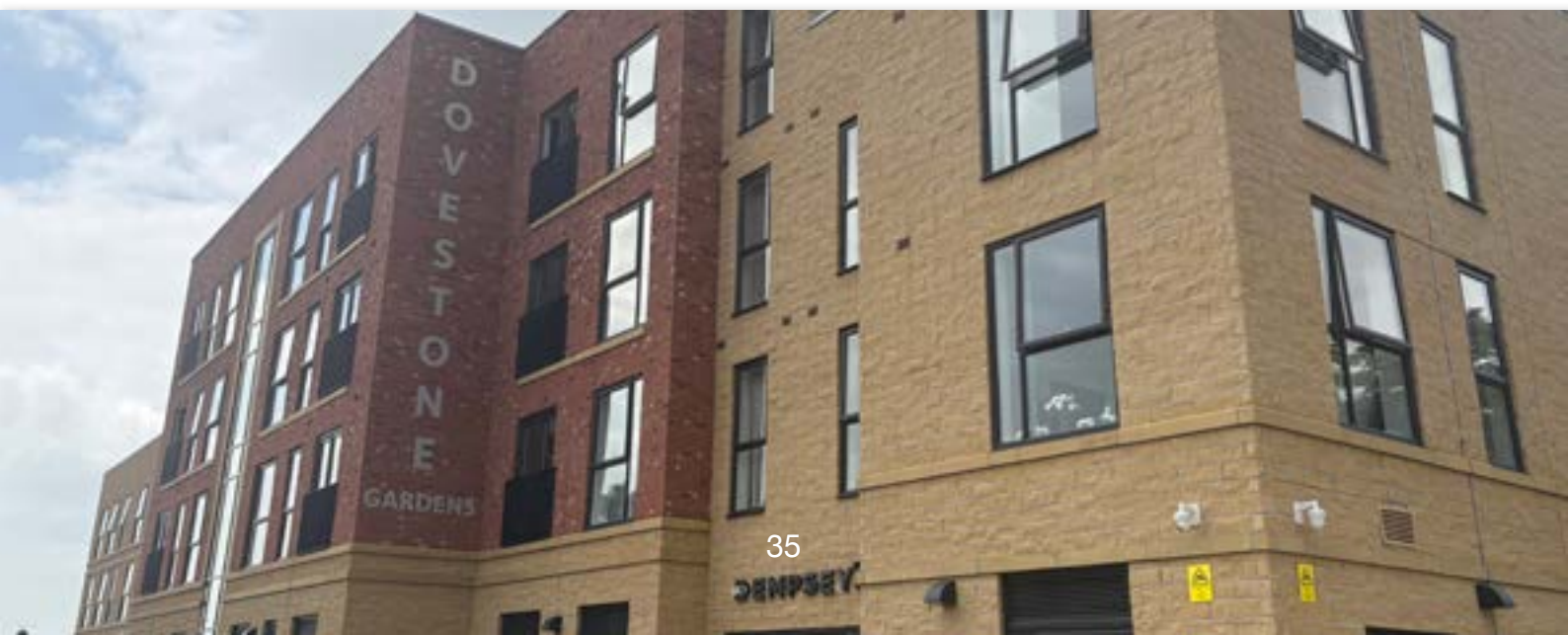
71-year-old Ken moved from the home he’d lived in for more than 40 years after struggling with his balance.

“

I was trying to get in ever since I saw the foundations going in here! I’ve met a lot of people in here. I feel comfortable and I’ve lost my fear of falling downstairs.

I think it’s the best move I’ve made. I’ve met more people since coming here than I have in the past 10 years. You’ve got everything you need here and it’s good fun.

”



What is the on-site support like?

Gillian, 67, loves living at Dovestone Gardens with her dog Peanut, who was the first dog to move into the 93-apartment building.

“

My daughter filled out an application form for me and I said I'd only give it a try if my dog could come. I absolutely adore Peanut, and he adores me, so I wouldn't have come without him.

The staff are irreplaceable, they are absolutely wonderful. Without them I'd still be stuck in my room, I wouldn't have come out and mixed, but with their encouragement and support my life is better.

Peanut is so happy here, he will go and sit on people's knees and makes a fuss of everybody he sees.

”

How does it support people's social lives?

Ethel, 91, agrees that it's a great place for meeting new friends.

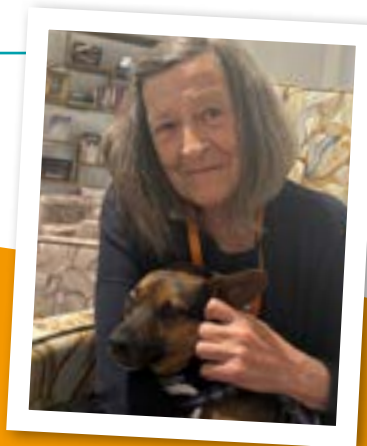
“

I come down to the residents lounge for a couple of hours in an afternoon and meet people. It's nice to get to know everybody and it's better than sitting in your apartment on your own.

We play bingo and have fish and chips on a Friday and it gets everyone together.

”

Gillian and Peanut,
resident at Dovestone
gardens



“



Providing the Right Support



Helping people take control of their care

Direct Payments give people more choice and control by letting them use their personal social care budget in the way that works best for them. We've updated our policy to make the process clearer and more flexible, co-produced with people who use Direct Payments and supported by the Lancashire Independent Living Service (LILS), whose advisers help with everything from budgeting to employing personal assistants.

Disability Positive, a Disabled People's Organisation, leads LILS and brings real experience of care and support to the service. Their team helps people design personalised support, employ their own Personal Assistants or use local agencies and manage payroll or prepaid cards so there are no barriers to accessing a Direct Payment. Working in partnership with Disability Equality (NW) Ltd, they provide consistent, strengths-based support that promotes independence, dignity and real control over day-to-day life.

“Every single individual that we've had contact with has been absolutely fantastic... their energy to serve our requests and support us has surpassed any of our expectations.”

feedback from someone supported by LILS

The everyday impact of Occupational Therapy in Lancashire

Occupational Therapists at Lancashire County Council help people of all ages live safely and independently by focusing on what matters most to them and finding practical solutions that make everyday life easier. Recently, the team supported a woman with cerebral palsy to move into her own home, helping her build confidence with public transport and learn to cook her favourite meal.

The authority's first ever Occupational Therapist (OT) apprentice, Claire Graves, has recently achieved a first-class honours degree and now works for us as an OT in the community.

The team are also keen to support people to become Occupational Therapists.

“

I really enjoy the work and meeting people, and I'm looking forward to becoming a qualified Occupational Therapist.

I've done some work with older residents who were all aged between 90 to 99, and that was really rewarding. I supported one lady who had a fall and broke her hip to become strong enough to go to her friends 100th birthday party.

It is really satisfying when you make a big difference to someone's life, and it's nice to see them get on and lead a normal life like they used to.

”



Claire Graves
Occupational Therapist (OT)
apprentice

The Short Breaks Service: Stays that feel like home

Lancashire County Council's Short Breaks Service supports around 400 people across seven fully equipped, 24-hour services, giving unpaid carers time to rest while their loved ones stay in a safe, homely environment. Meadowfold in Great Harwood, rated 'Outstanding' in its first CQC inspection in 2025, is one of these services. People who stay there have said, "I'm happy" and "It's safe, everything is perfect."

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Manager Reine Swindlehurst said: "The building is purpose built and it's a testament to Lancashire County Council's investment. The little details matter - we make sure someone's favourite meal is on the menu for their first stay. Families trust us because we provide safe care and build strong relationships. One lady was marking an important birthday, and we were able to book her relative in so she could go on her first holiday in more than 20 years."

”

The service also offers short term support for people recovering from illness or injury. The team recently helped a woman with Alzheimer's return home after a fall - something that mattered deeply to her because familiar surroundings helped her feel calm and less confused. She wanted to feel more confident moving around at night, so staff worked with her to practise safe walking, bed transfers and making drinks, while an occupational therapist arranged a hospital style bed at the right height. Daytime support was gradually reduced to build independence, with overnight help kept in place for safety. Working together with her family, the team created a plan that kept her safe, supported her memory and wellbeing, and helped her avoid moving into a care home.

Helping young people move confidently into adulthood



Ben,
a young person we support

Moving into adulthood can be a big step for any young person, especially those who receive support from children's social care. Lancashire County Council's Young Adults Team (YAT) is here to make that transition smoother, more supported and easier to navigate.

The team works with young people who have care and support needs, helping them prepare for adult life and ensuring the right support is in place by the time they turn 18. They can begin working with young people from the age of 14, giving plenty of time to plan ahead, offer advice and carry out early assessments.

This early involvement means young people and their families can start thinking about future goals, independence and the type of support that will help them thrive. The team continues to support young people until they are 19, before they move on to an adult social care worker. In some cases, support from the Young Adults Team can continue up to the age of 25.

“

“I'd never had any contact with the council before, but I wanted to plan for Ben's future. Our social worker, Hannah, has been brilliant. She took the time to get to know us and meet Ben before he turned 18. She's helped arrange four hours a week with a Personal Assistant, which means Ben can get out, build confidence and socialise without us. It was a big decision to let someone else support him, but it's been really reassuring.”- Vicky, parent from Rossendale

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“It's about being there for people and giving a voice to those who can't always speak for themselves. Every day is different, and it's a privilege to support young people as they plan for their future.” - Irene Oshodi, Social Worker, Young Adults Team

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Making it easier for Deaf people to contact Adult Social Care

We're improving how Deaf people can get in touch with Adult Social Care by introducing the Convo Now British Sign Language (BSL) app, alongside the fantastic support already provided by our Sensory Team.

Convo Now is a simple video relay app that connects Deaf people to council staff through a qualified BSL interpreter, giving quick and confidential support. The app is free to download on Android, Apple devices and desktop computers. Once installed, people can search for Lancashire County Council in the directory and contact us directly for Adult Social Care advice.

We have also added Convo Access QR codes in reception areas across our buildings, so Deaf visitors can get instant support while they're with us.

Our Sensory Team includes a social worker for Deaf people and three Hearing Impairment Social Care Support Officers. They offer specialist advice on equipment, accessibility tools and independent living and can signpost people to trusted organisations that provide additional support.

Together, these improvements are helping us make our services more accessible, responsive and inclusive for Deaf residents across Lancashire.

To find out more
convo.io/uk/convo-now
or download the Convo
app from the App Store
or Google Play



Residential Spotlight: With you through life's big changes



Moving into a care home can be a daunting and emotional experience. It often involves adjusting to new surroundings and new people, while leaving behind the familiarity of home – it is a life-changing transition.

This period of change can also be difficult for families and carers, who may need time to adjust and can experience mixed emotions, including feelings of both guilt and relief.

While the transition can be challenging, it is also a positive step - enabling people to receive the high-quality care, support and reassurance they need. For this reason, ensuring the move is handled with care, sensitivity and compassion is vitally important.

Dolphinlee House is one of Lancashire County Council's 16 care homes, offering compassionate, person-centred support for people living with dementia, as well as residential care, respite and intermediate care. The home promotes wellbeing through regular activities, social opportunities and two accessible gardens, encouraging residents to stay active, connected and engaged with hobbies, family and the local community.

Dolphinlee House has a dedicated team who supports people and their families during the transition to living in a care home, like Allison, who is the daughter of one of Dolphinlee's residents. Allison said:

“ I just wanted to express my appreciation for the wonderful care given to my father in Dolphinlee. It has been such a worrying time, seeing my father hospitalised and worried at 95 years old. However, the care you have given him has been life-changing and I have seen him thrive as an individual again. The staff are all so friendly and helpful and nothing has been too much trouble. The relaxed approach to visits enables families to work around commitments.

”

Meet the carers making a difference through Shared Lives

Shared Lives is a unique type of care where adults aged 18+ who need support are carefully matched with a carer and move into their home to become part of family life. Carers receive full guidance for their role - from helping with daily tasks to supporting people to enjoy activities they love - and receive a weekly allowance of £500–£650 with substantial tax relief. Lancashire County Council runs the largest Shared Lives service in the country, rated Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission.

Kim and Mike are Shared Lives carers who support Clare* at their home in Lancashire. When they first met her, she was extremely anxious and rarely left the house. Her life has since transformed; she now goes for daily walks, is medication free and enjoys healthy home cooked meals prepared by Kim. Clare* said:

“ I knew they were extra special. I don’t ever want to go, this is my home forever now. I love that they gave me a nice warm home and I feel safe. Everybody I tell about Shared Lives asks, ‘can we move in, is there any room?’ There’s a queue of people who want to live with them!

”

Kim and Mike discovered Shared Lives after relocating to Lancashire. They had considered fostering but felt drawn to this approach.

“ Mike said: “When we moved, we wondered what our next purpose would be. We didn’t know anybody, but she has helped us to integrate, and we know so many people now.”

”

“

Kim added: “The best bit has been changing someone’s life and giving them a safe place to live. She wanted to change as well, so that was half the battle... Her health has improved and I know she really appreciates our support.”

”



Mike, Clare* and Kim

Using AI to help us spend more time with people

We're proud to have been shortlisted for a national award recognising how we're using simple, helpful AI tools to improve support for local people. Over the past year, we've worked with staff across the council to introduce technology that makes everyday tasks quicker, freeing up more time for social workers and support staff to focus on the people who need them.

In Adult Social Care, AI now helps bring together information for reviews, summarise case notes and prepare reports in minutes rather than hours. Prompts are used to generate social circumstance reports, which social workers then check, refine and take full responsibility for. The technology doesn't replace professional judgement - it simply removes some of the time consuming admin that gets in the way.

Emma Burt, Mental Health Social Care Lead, said: "We are completing around 60 of these reports each month which was taking a lot of time that could have been better spent with people; it was the equivalent of the workload of two full time social workers every month. Copilot has also been a really useful tool for tracking our service spends and trends... this helps us highlight gaps in provision in localities and this has been really positively received."

Everything has been designed and tested with staff, with strong safeguards in place to ensure the tools are used safely, responsibly and in line with our values. We've also worked closely with Microsoft to make sure the technology is genuinely helpful and easy to use.

Microsoft Copilot is now part of daily working life for around 5,000 colleagues across Lancashire County Council, with more than 1,400 using the premium version. Early signs are encouraging - tasks are being completed more quickly, information is easier to understand and both staff and residents are having a better experience.

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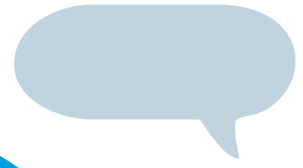
We have embraced the world of AI and Copilot, enabling our staff to have more time to spend with the people of Lancashire, doing the job that they really want to do.

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Mairéad Gill Mullarkey,
Director of Operations



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Ensuring Safe, High-Quality Care



Acting early to help adults at risk of self-neglect

Self-neglect can affect anyone. It includes situations where a person struggles to look after themselves, their health or their home. Hoarding is one form of self-neglect, where belongings build up to the point that rooms become difficult or unsafe to use. These situations often develop slowly and can be linked to personal experiences such as trauma, loss, illness or long-term stress.

People experiencing self-neglect may feel overwhelmed, anxious or unsure about accepting help. That's why early, gentle support is so important. Acting early can prevent a crisis, reduce risk and help people stay safe and well.

Understanding the person behind the situation

Our approach starts with understanding what matters to the person. We listen, build trust and work alongside them at their pace. We aim to balance their wishes with any risks to their safety, always treating people with dignity and respect.

How we work together

To make sure support is well-coordinated, our teams hold regular Self-Neglect Best Practice Meetings. These are monthly discussions where staff can share concerns, learn from each other and agree early steps to help someone who may be at risk. This protected time helps teams stay consistent and ensures no one faces these challenges alone.

When risks are more serious, we use the Vulnerable Adults Risk Management (VARM) approach. This brings together professionals from different services to create a clear, joined-up plan. VARM meetings are only used when the person can make their own decisions and their views are central to every discussion. If they can't attend, we make sure their wishes and values are still heard.

We encourage everyone to use the **SHARE** steps when they notice signs of self-neglect:

Spot early signs or changes.

Have a kind, curious conversation.

Ask what matters to the person and understand any risks.

Raise concerns with your team promptly.

Enable support through early meetings or a VARM plan.

“

The VARM process provides a platform for a multi-agency discussion of the circumstances, risks and concerns and allows for a plan to be developed and actions to be set. What our teams particularly like is that the focus is always on the person we are supporting, making sure they are at the heart of any discussions. We have developed stronger relationships with partners such as Housing, GPs and community matrons, we are seeing the people we support achieve their goals safely and significantly improve their wellbeing.

”



Andrea Lawlor
Team Manager, Mental
Health Social Care Team



Working together to keep people safe

Lancashire County Council recently took part in a Safeguarding Peer Review - an independent assessment of how well we protect adults at risk of harm. Experienced professionals from other areas spoke with staff, reviewed our processes and shared what we're doing well and where we can keep improving. Their feedback was extremely positive, highlighting the dedication, compassion and professionalism of our teams and partners, while giving us clear areas to focus on next.

Together with the Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board, we will use this feedback to strengthen safeguarding so it is personal, proportionate and effective, helping people in Lancashire feel safe, supported and heard.

Strengthening Safeguarding in Lancashire, Reflections from Steve Chapman, LSAB Chair

The Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) brings organisations together to help keep people safe from harm and abuse. It ensures everyone involved in safeguarding plays their part, works well together and focuses on people's wellbeing. The Board also uses data and insight to spot risks early, take action and check that support is making a difference.

Lancashire County Council is an active partner, helping deliver the Board's three priorities and supporting a wide range of joint initiatives. The Board has also played a key role in the CQC Assurance process and the LGA peer review, providing evidence of improved safeguarding practice and holding all partners to account through strong governance.

Innovation in safeguarding

Together, we have:

- created a shared Data Dashboard to better understand local needs, pressures and risks
- co-produced new guidance and resources on the Mental Capacity Act and Self Neglect
- delivered joint training and awareness sessions, including with a local university and newly qualified social workers
- helped establish a multi agency complex case panel to improve responses in high risk situations

Effective safeguarding

Together, we have:

- identified and tackled areas of concern such as transitions, homelessness, mental health placements and substance misuse
- delivered public campaigns including Safeguarding Adults Week
- provided and received assurance on key areas including Section 42 enquiries, Self Neglect, People in Positions of Trust and Mental Capacity Act assessments

Listening, learning and improving

Together, we have:

- commissioned Healthwatch to gather people's experiences, showing clear improvements since the last review
- produced Easy Read information and videos to help more people understand safeguarding
- committed to developing more co produced resources
- strengthened joint working on Safeguarding Adult Reviews
- shared learning through briefings, events and multi agency training



Steve Chapman
LSAB Chair

“ They went out of their way to make sure that we were happy with decisions so that things could move in the right direction. We could always go to them for advice. ”

Feedback from someone who has received support from the Safeguarding team



Mental Health support rooted in community

The Community Mental Health Service helps adults with mental health needs live well and independently, working with NHS partners, voluntary organisations and local services to provide personalised, practical support. This includes help with managing mental health, building skills, accessing housing or employment, maintaining relationships and preventing crises so people can stay safe and connected.

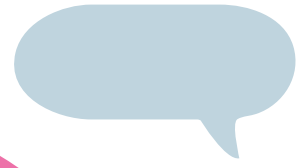
One person supported by the team is Mr X*, who was diagnosed with PTSD and stress-induced bipolar affective disorder after witnessing traumatic events during his Armed Forces service. When the team first contacted him, he didn't know how social care could help him, found it difficult to accept contact and sometimes, found it difficult to accept medication.

Through regular visits and relationship building, a strengths based Care Act assessment and a risk management plan were completed, placing Mr X at the centre of decisions. With support, he began attending a veterans' group, reviewed his medication and reconnected with psychological services. He now receives consistent and meaningful support from his worker and, working with the Community Mental Health Team, he receives regular treatment.

As a result of consistent support and continuity of care focused on his goals, Mr X now lives at home, enjoys meaningful community connections and is planning positive activities, including holidays with his wife. He continues to make progress towards greater independence and improved wellbeing.



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Strong Leadership and a Skilled Workforce

Strengthening leadership in response to CQC feedback

Lancashire is entering an important new chapter as we bring together a refreshed senior leadership team and create our new Adults, Health and Wellbeing Directorate. This brings Adult Social Care and Public Health into one team, helping us respond directly to the improvements highlighted in our recent CQC assessment and take a more joined-up approach focused on prevention, early help and supporting people to stay independent for as long as possible.

This is more than a structural change - it's a deliberate step towards stronger leadership, better ways of working and closer partnership with communities, the NHS and local organisations. With the right people and skills now in place, we are building the foundations for a healthier Lancashire, with prevention, wellbeing and person-centred support at the heart of everything we do as we continue to improve together.



Left to right:
**Matt Emerson, Helen Coombes,
Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Mairéad Gill-Mullarkey,
John Williams**

Quicker and more person-centred care reviews: A new approach

We've introduced a new approach to make care reviews quicker, more consistent and more focused on what matters to each person. Reviews are essential for checking that support is still right, but delays can affect people's wellbeing. To help prevent this, we created the Trusted Reviewer approach.

Trusted Reviewers are trained, experienced staff from care providers who can complete reviews for people with stable needs and no safeguarding concerns. This means reviews can happen sooner without waiting for a social worker, while still meeting all legal requirements. More complex cases will continue to be handled by social workers.

When providers complete some reviews, we can reduce delays, improve communication and ensure reviews are centred on people's needs and goals. It also frees up social workers to focus on those with more complex needs, while maintaining quality and oversight.

The approach began in July 2025 with two home care providers. Trusted Reviewers receive full training, and we meet regularly with provider managers to monitor progress, make improvements and ensure reviews remain safe, proportionate and strengths based. This new way of working is designed to make reviews smoother, quicker and more responsive.

“

A key benefit of the trusted reviews is the ability to implement timely increases or decreases in care packages. We are able to confidently authorise changes of up to 3.5 hours with immediate effect when a client's needs change, helping to avoid delays and reducing the need for further referrals or reassessments by Lancashire County Council. This supports improved responsiveness and more efficient use of Council resources.

”

One of our providers

A year of learning, leadership and professional growth

A new initiative introduced in Autumn 2025, Adults, Health and Wellbeing staff conferences are an opportunity to bring staff together, learn from industry experts and give colleagues an opportunity to tell us what works well and what needs to improve in their services.

While conferences have been held for staff in the past, this is the first time that every service involved in Adult Social Care has been invited to attend an annual event relevant to their profession.

We have held staff conferences for social workers, occupational therapists, support services, commissioning and support officers, giving every service representation at an event designed to bring staff together and learn from their experiences.

As a forum of professional development, staff have benefited from the experience of speakers from national organisations, including Social Work England, Social Care Institute for Excellence, Royal College of Occupational Therapists and more.

This gives our staff an opportunity to learn from leaders in their field and provide feedback via workshops on what they think is going well and how we can empower them to do their best work.

We have also invited partners, both as attendees and speakers, from other public bodies and partner organisations, such as the NHS in Lancashire and partners in the voluntary, community and faith sector.

Conferences have been hosted for World Mental Health Day and World Social Work Day, allowing dozens of our partner organisations to speak about how they support the people of Lancashire.

“

Every time we bring our teams together, I'm reminded of the talent, compassion and ambition we have across Adult Social Care. These conferences aren't just events - they're spaces where people grow, challenge themselves and each other, and shape the future of our services. When our staff learn and thrive, the people of Lancashire feel the benefit.

”

John Williams,
Director of Operations



Looking ahead together

We know there is more to do, and people will always be at the heart of our work. Over the coming year, we will keep strengthening early help so more people can stay independent for longer, with clear information and support that is easy to find. We will continue working with communities, providers and the VCFSE sector to build local solutions that prevent crisis and help people live well at home.

We will also keep improving safety and quality, supporting our workforce and making sure people's voices guide every decision we make. By listening, learning and working together, we will keep building a more responsive and person centred adult social care system for Lancashire.



Our Workforce Development & Academy Team



Angela Taylor, Workforce Development & Academy Manager, on the right is **Emma Loder,** Social Worker

How to share your views

**Do you receive support from adult social care
in Lancashire or provide care
for someone who does?**

We'd like your help to shape our services.

We want to hear from people with real experiences
of adult social care in Lancashire - your ideas,
suggestions and feedback will help us improve
what we do and what we include in
next year's Local Account.

If you'd like to share your thoughts, please get in touch:

ASCContact@lancashire.gov.uk