

Adult Social Care and Health Quality Assurance Framework



Contents

Introduction	3
Making It Real	4
Quality Assurance Framework	5
Leadership	6
• Our Vision	
• Developing our organisational culture	
• Our Management Oversight	
• Making It Real forum	
• Performance Board	
• Performance management	
• Risk management	
• Finance	
Social care practice	9
• How we check social care practice and that people are living the life they want	
Safeguarding	11
• How we check we are keeping people safe	
External Providers	12
• How we check people are receiving flexible and integrated care and support	
Internal Providers	13
• How we check people have personal plans that promote wellbeing and enable them to live as independently as possible	
Workforce	14
• How we check that our workforce focusses on what matters most to people	
Learning	15
• How we learn and develop our services	
Glossary	17

Coproduced by:
The Adult Social Care Making It Real Forum



Introduction



Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) wants to learn from people who draw on care and support, our staff and partners to make social care the best it can be. This Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) sets out how ASCH will check the quality of what we are delivering.

Co-production is an essential part to delivering good quality services. It recognises that people and carers who draw on care and support have skills, knowledge and experience that can help make services better.

This document has been co-produced with the Nottinghamshire Our Voice Group, colleagues and in collaboration with other Local Authorities across our region. If you want to find out more about co-production, read our [Better Together Plan](#).

Nottinghamshire Our Voice Group comprises of people who draw on care and support.

What members of Our Voice are saying:



A piece of work I have particularly enjoyed being part of is developing the Quality Assurance Framework. I felt as an expert by experience that I helped influence the

direction this was going in and it is good to see Making It Real now at the heart of it".

Ed, Our Voice member, and co-chair of QAF development group



"It is vital that the Quality Assurance Framework is co-produced as much as possible, as this is going to shape everything that the Council does in the future.

It can be difficult at times knowing what all the strands are and how they fit together and working to very tight timelines, but the more we are involved I believe the easier it becomes to understand the parameters. This is an extremely important piece of work, that I find very rewarding".

Dean, Our Voice member

Nottinghamshire Our Voice

www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/adult-social-care/co-production/co-production-group

Melanie Williams

Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health



"Our goal is to support people to enjoy good health and wellbeing, and to do that the support we give needs to work for people.

We support hundreds of people every day through hundreds of conversations between people, in many different ways and places. It is important that we can explain what support looks like when we do it well, and that we are able to check that we are working in a way that does that.

This framework helps us do that and provide ways we can reflect, learn and change what we do to make the support we give even better. This framework also helps us understand when we have not supported someone well.

Making a difference is what Nottinghamshire County Council is here for and this framework helps us set out how."

Making It Real

We have adopted the Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) Making It Real statements below, which sit at the heart of this framework to define what good looks like. These are the same 'I' statements' that form the basis of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment framework for local authorities.



Here's an outline of the six themes:



Wellbeing and independence

Living the life I want, staying safe and well

This theme focuses on you living a fulfilling life, connected to your family, friends and community, with support that promotes your wellbeing and independence.



Information and advice

Having the information I need, when I need it

This theme is about the information you need to get on with your life, and how we should provide you with relevant, timely and accessible information.



Active and supportive communities

Keeping family, friends and connections

This theme is about you leading a full and meaningful life connected to your family, friends and community, and how we should be creating opportunities to make sure you are connected to your community and you can do the things that matter to you.



Flexible and integrated care and support

My support, my own way

This theme focuses on you having choice and control over your care and support, how we should be fully involving you in planning your support, and how we should make sure your support works for you.



When things need to change

Staying in control

This theme is about you getting the support you need to plan for important changes and to stay in control, and the way in which we should be supporting you before, during and after significant changes in your life.



Workforce

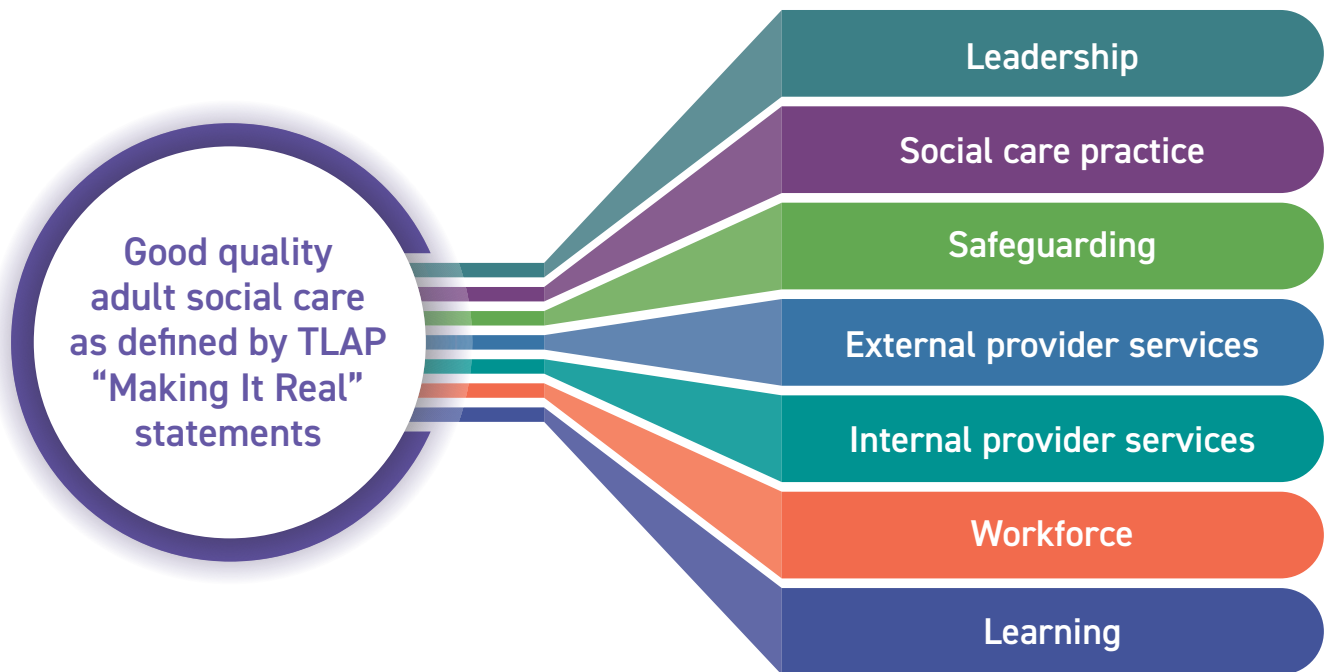
The people who support me

This theme is about you being supported by people who see you as an individual, with unique strengths, abilities, aspirations, requirements, and about how we should focus on what matters to you, and think and act creatively to make things happen.

To find out more about Making It Real and the 'I' and 'We' statements visit makingitreal.org.uk

Quality Assurance Framework

This document describes the areas we will focus on to check we are delivering good quality services and that we are learning when we don't get things right.



Leadership

Our Vision

The [Nottinghamshire Plan](#), developed following a public consultation, sets out the Council's ambitions, which includes:

“Improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities.”



The Nottinghamshire Adult Social Care vision is for every person in Nottinghamshire to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing things that matter to them. Our vision is adopted from [Social Care Future](#).

In ASCH we expect our leaders to be empathetic and willing to listen. They should be accountable and informed about the difference their service is making to people and carers.

Developing our organisational culture

We want to create a culture where wellbeing, strengths, talents, and aspirations are nurtured and have developed some priorities for our workforce. We believe that having a happy workforce that feels valued and supported means we provide a better service to people.

Engagement

How we engage with colleagues, co-produce with the public and collaborate with partners

Owning & Driving Performance

Supports our workforce wellbeing and performance through training and coaching

Nurturing Potential

Promoting the strengths, talents and aspirations of our colleagues to ensure equal opportunities for career development



Empowered Learning

Fostering a learning and development environment

Strengths-Based Approach

Focus on a person's strengths, talents and aspirations so they can live the life they choose and do what matters to them

Outcomes and Performance

Using evidence to improve our services, innovating and evaluating how we are doing



Our Management Oversight

Through developing our Making It Real forum, which includes people who draw on care and support, we put people at the heart of our decision making and shaping our services.



(People graphic with thanks to Social Care Future)



Making It Real Forum

Our Making It Real Forum will help us check how well we are doing against the [Local Account](#), by identifying where things are going well and areas that need improvement. Our forum is chaired by members of the public who draw on care and support, they currently meet bi-monthly and put a spotlight on key areas of service improvement.

Carers Implementation Board

Our Carers Implementation Board will help us check how we are doing against the Joint Carers strategy. They do this by measuring what we are doing to meet carers needs and outcomes. This forum meets bi-monthly and is attended by carers and professionals.

Performance Board

This is a monthly meeting attended by our Executive and Service Directors including service improvement managers and other Council colleagues. The board have monthly oversight of the department's quality and performance measures, risks, finances and service improvement. At Performance Board we look at quality measures and check how we are doing against our statutory responsibilities. For example, checking how many people are waiting for conversations about their needs and whether plans are working to reduce their waiting times.

Risk management

Risk is a key part of everything that we do, whether it is regarding a person's situation or a wider risk to the organisation. In Performance Board we use data to monitor and check risks are controlled to an acceptable level. For example, what is the priority of the work coming into teams and have we got enough staff available to manage the work safely.

Finance

ASCH needs to manage its finances and to provide financial assurance for people who receive care and support services from the local authority.

The department employs 1,811 people and in 2023-2024 had a budget of £260 million. Senior leaders review the departments financial position, how much we are spending on staffing and services, our revenue and whether we are making any required savings.

Adult Care Financial Services (ACFS) provide financial assurance for people who have funded care and support services. They commit to ensuring people are only charged what they can afford to pay and have access to clear information on the amount to pay for their care and support. ACFS also make sure that people who have a direct payment are using the money to meet their care and support needs.


[Financial advice and support](#)
[| Nottinghamshire County Council](#)



Social Care Practice

Our social care practice framework sets out our commitments to deliver the ambitions of the Social Care Future vision and the Think Local Act Personal – Making It Real 'I' and 'We' statements, helping us keep focused on providing good, personalised care and support for people and carers.

Our practice framework

WHY	 <p>We want every person in Nottinghamshire to live in the place they call home with the people and things that they love, in communities where they look out for one another, doing the things that matter to them</p> <p><small>Social Care Future</small></p>					
WHAT	Wellbeing and Independence	Information and advice	Active and supportive communities	Flexible and integrated care and support	When things need to change	Workforce
	Living the life I want, keeping safe and well	Having the information I need, when I need it	Keeping family, friends and connections	My support my own way	Staying in control	The people who support me
WHO	Everybody		People with urgent needs for support		People with longer term needs for support	
	We listen to people to understand what matters to them. We make connections and build relationships to improve people's wellbeing and independence		We don't make long term plans in a crisis. We work with people until we are sure there is no immediate risk to their safety, health or wellbeing and they have regained stability and control in their life.		If people need longer term care and support, we work with them to understand what a good life looks like for them. We make sure they have resources and support to live the life they choose and do the things that matter to them as independently as possible	
HOW	We care	We behave	We're trusting	We're open	We're present	We're honest
	We respect and understand people as individuals. We don't make snap judgements	We know and follow the law, ethics and best practice. We are always open to improvement	We trust people know what's right for them. We listen and we keep an open mind	We are open about our procedures, making them clear so people know what they can and cannot expect	We connect and engage well with people. We respond in a timely manner	We are honest about what we are going to do. When we say we are going to do something, we do it.
	We know the language we use matters: we use plain, respectful and kind language					
SO	Improving the health and wellbeing of Nottinghamshire people		Improved morale and satisfaction for our workforce		More sustainable use of resources	

With thanks to Envy Shanon, Social Care Future, PartnersChange and TLAP



How we check the quality of our practice and that we are supporting people to live the life they choose:

What good looks like

We see people as individuals with unique strengths, abilities, aspirations and requirements and value people's unique backgrounds and cultures.



What we'll do

Commit to the vision of the practice framework.

Start our quality assurance by asking the person and carer about their experience.

Complete regular reviews of people's care and support.

Provide our staff with supervision, support, training and development opportunities to deliver best social care practice.

Provide staff clear expectations on standards of practice.



How we'll check

Feedback from people and carers who draw on care and support, including complaints and compliments.

Auditing care and support records against practice standards.

Management oversight of staff and their workloads.

Regular supervision, employee appraisal and observing practice.

Checking staff have attended learning and development sessions.

Completing staff surveys and an annual staff health check.

Ensuring registration for regulated staff, such as social workers and occupational therapists.

Moderation and progression panels at points of career progression.



How do we know we're making a difference?

People and carers tell us that they can live the life they choose.

We have less complaints and more compliments from people and carers about their experience.

Improved ratings on our care record audits.

Staff say they feel supported and valued.

Staff progress in their careers.



Safeguarding



Adult safeguarding is a legal requirement under the [Care Act](#). Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect. All those involved should ensure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted and their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs considered before agreeing any action.

How we check we are keeping people safe:

What good looks like

We work with people to understand what being safe means to them and the best way to achieve this.



What we'll do

- Follow the six statutory safeguarding principles in the Care Act.
- Undertake safeguarding enquiries sensitively, without delay, keeping the wishes and best interests of the person concerned at the centre.
- Support people to participate in safeguarding as much as they want and help them to make choices that balance risk with choice and control.
- Train and develop our staff on how to deliver best safeguarding practice.
- Work with people and partners to improve everyone's experience and learn from our mistakes.



How we'll check

- We identify the best way to get feedback from people with lived experience of adult safeguarding and involve them in continuous improvement of safeguarding practice.
- Undertaking adult safeguarding care record audits that, wherever possible, start with a conversation with the person who experienced abuse and / or neglect.
- Coaching staff through quality supervision to reflect on their adult safeguarding practice.
- Check staff have completed mandatory adult safeguarding training.
- Being involved in statutory Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and learning lessons from experience.
- Working with the Safeguarding Adults Board to review the practice and effectiveness of our staff and partner agencies to ensure we are keeping people safe.



How do we know we're making a difference?

- People will tell us as a result of safeguarding they feel safer and in control of their lives.
- Staff tell us they can effectively undertake their adult safeguarding duties.
- Our Safeguarding Adults Board will tell us how well we are doing.
- Our quality assurance ratings will improve.
- Our statutory reporting requirements will be met.

[Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

The ASCH Appointee & Deputyship Team also safeguards people from financial abuse. It supports people who lack capacity to manage their finances by managing finances on their behalf. Where appropriate, they apply to the Court of Protection to get a court order to manage any property, savings and investments in the person's best interest, helping them to remain as independent as possible.

External Provider Services

There are 615 external providers in Nottinghamshire, with a further 156 in Nottingham City which we work with through the [Integrated Care System](#). 446 services are assessed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), of which 280 are residential care settings and 166 non-residential such as home-based care, day care and housing with support.

Our Quality & Market Management Team are responsible for ensuring that the Local Authority performs its statutory duty to make available a robust and sustainable social care market. They work with all providers and partners to monitor quality and manage risks to care and support services.

How we check people are receiving flexible and integrated care and support:

What good looks like

We work in partnership with others to make sure that all our services work seamlessly together from the perspective of the person drawing on care and support.



What we'll do

Monitor the quality of care and support services with providers with whom we have a contract.

We work closely with CQC as the regulator of health and social care to share information about adult social care providers.

Make sure all our care and support providers comply with their contractual and legal duties.

Work with our health partners to monitor providers and identify where improvements can be made to help develop services.

Manage and assess risks so we support providers in an emergency.



How we'll check

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assess providers and gives them ratings. The following 5 questions are key to their approach:

- Is the service safe?
- Is the service effective?
- Is the service caring?
- Is the service responsive?
- Is the service well-led?

The CQC inspection reports tell us about areas of strength and weakness with each provider.

We oversee contracts with providers and are the main point of contact for any issues or concerns about the quality of care received from the public or partners.

We carry out planned and unplanned visits to check on the quality of care and support services. Their compliance with terms & conditions, service specifications, best practice guidance and their legal duties.

We check the data that providers regularly complete, so we know how well they are doing against other providers in Nottinghamshire.



How do we know we're making a difference?

Feedback from people, carers and their families.

CQC ratings for providers in Nottinghamshire improve.

Data from providers demonstrate that their service has improved and that we are supporting them.

Our social care staff, health professionals and commissioners will tell us how well providers are doing.

More providers are rated as good following our monitoring visits.

Internal Provider Services



Our registered internal provider services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission. NCC offer care and support through the following services:

Day opportunities provide a range of opportunities for people to do things they enjoy during the day, whilst supporting them to maintain and develop their independence.

Employment Hub supports disabled people to develop their confidence and skills so they can work towards paid employment.

Maximising Independence Service work with people to live as independently as possible by improving their skills and confidence.

Short Breaks Care Services offer care for people, whilst their carers have a break from their caring role.

Shared Lives recruit and support approved carers who want to share their own home and family with people, so they can live independently in the community rather than residential care. Some people live with the shared lives carer and others are just regular visitors.



How we check people have personal plans that promote wellbeing and enable them to live as independently as possible:

What good looks like

We want every person who uses our internal services to experience good quality, personalised care and support which enables them to live in the place they call home doing the things that matter to them.



What we'll do

We provide opportunities for people to develop their skills and confidence so they can do more of the things that matter to them.

We provide care for people so their family carers can have some time to themselves.

Ensure our staff are competent and maintain standards so that people are safe and supported well.

Make sure our services are managed effectively.

Ensure our buildings are safe spaces for people to spend time in.



How we'll check

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assess our registered services and give ratings on whether the service is safe, effective, caring, responsible and well-led.

We gather feedback from people about their experience of our services.

We check the quality of people's plans (care and support or employment) to ensure they are completed to a good standard and we are meeting their needs.

We observe the quality of practice provided by staff on a regular basis.

We check training records for our workforce to ensure they have undertaken training and are putting it into practice.

We ensure feedback from people is developed into action plans to address any concerns. These action plans are reviewed by the CQC as part of their assessment process.



How do we know we're making a difference?

Positive feedback from the person, their carer or family. CQC ratings are good.

More people are supported towards their employment goals.

More people live independently in their own home.

Good feedback from staff on the training & support they receive.

Workforce

Social Care in Nottinghamshire is provided by 31,000 posts, staff in these posts are employed by the Council and across external provider services. We want to ensure this workforce have the right values, skills, and behaviours to work with people and carers, so they can live the life they choose and keep safe. We want our workforce to feel supported, valued and have equal opportunities for career development.

How we check that our workforce focusses on what matters to people:

What good looks like

We work in partnership with others to make sure that all our services work seamlessly together from the perspective of the person drawing on care and support.



What we'll do

- Recruit staff with the right values, skills & behaviours.
- Raise awareness of careers in social care through recruitment campaigns
- Increase the diversity of our workforce so it reflects the diversity of our community.
- Provide induction, ongoing training, apprenticeships & development opportunities.
- Support staff wellbeing & mental health.
- Provide regular supervision & observation of practice.
- Make Nottinghamshire a good place to work with clear career pathways so we retain staff across all services.



How we'll check

- Quarterly reporting to monitor staffing levels, recruitment & retention and diversity.
- Having regular supervision for staff to reflect on their work, performance, areas of development and to receive support.
- Management oversight of workloads and the quality of work.
- Our Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) data & survey.
- Ensuring completion of annual Employee Personal Development Reviews (EPDR's) to support career development.
- Oversight of access to workforce wellbeing services.
- Monitoring of mandatory training and other learning and development opportunities.
- Ask staff to complete surveys and the annual Health Check.
- Complete annual quality audits for external providers to check their workforce.



How do we know we're making a difference?

- Feedback from people and carers.
- Our compliments increase and our complaints reduce.
- Our workforce say they feel supported, valued and understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Improved recruitment & retention of staff.
- An increase in the diversity of our workforce.
- Health Check survey results improve.



Learning



We want to keep learning as a service and to make adult social care the best it can be, so we quality assure our work and services regularly which helps us to have a continuous cycle of improvement.

We want to find out whether people are better off because of our involvement, whether their needs have been met, that their quality of life has improved, and they are living the life they choose.

Our [Big Conversation](#) is an opportunity for us to listen and learn from the experience of people and carers. We use this to develop our [Local Account](#) and to improve our services.

We heard similar themes when we co-produced our [Joint All Age Carers Strategy](#). This sets out what we will do together to improve the health and wellbeing of carers.

We want to celebrate our successes and ensure that staff feel secure in learning from feedback when we don't get things right, that this is not seen as a threat but as an opportunity to learn and make a difference.



We have developed a Learning Hub to consider feedback from a wide range of places, so we understand what's working and what needs to change:

What is it

A way to ensure wider learning from feedback from people and carers, staff, complaints, compliments and reviews to support a continuous cycle of service improvement across the department.

How will it work

Key areas will feed into the Learning Hub with oversight of our Performance Board to review data, develop plans, track progress and share learning with staff and people.



How we share learning

- Good news page is an internal space where colleagues can share their stories of difference.
- Co-production Newsletter a space where stories, learning and actions can be shared with the public.
- Director's message a weekly message from our corporate and service directors to colleagues.
- Practice Newsletter led by our Principal Social Worker and Principal Occupational Therapist to share weekly practice updates and learning.
- Provider Newsletter sent to all our external providers by our Quality & Market Management Team.
- Team Meetings managers sharing compliments and learning from complaints.

Big Conversation

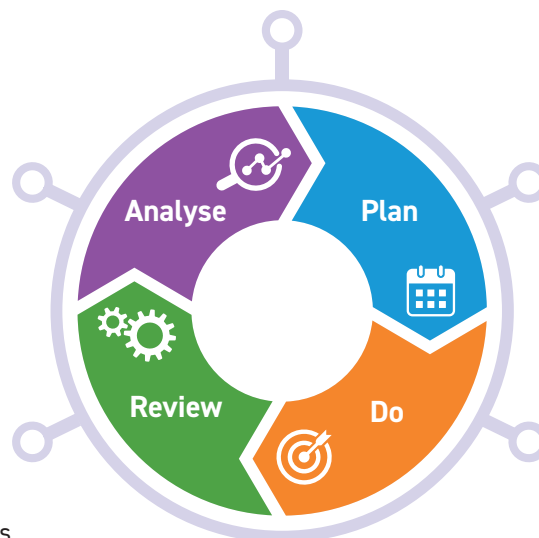
Bi-annual feedback from people, carers & staff

Complaints & Compliments

- People's experience
- Carer's experience
- Councillor feedback
- Local Government Social Care Ombudsman
- Provider's experience

Council View

- Adult Social Care & Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Learning from other departments
- Best use of resources & available budgets



Quality Assurance

What we are learning from:

- People, carers, providers, partners & staff about our practice and services
- Care record audits
- Safeguarding adult reviews

How we compare with other local authorities

- Regional & national outcome measures
- Statutory returns to government bodies
- Sector-led improvement:
 - Reviews by other local authorities and a critical friend
 - Self-Assessment

Analyse: understand where we are now to identify the opportunities/challenges.

Plan: develop objectives and plans, with clear measures of impact.

Review: assess impact and consider whether objectives have been met. If not, what next?

Do: implement plans, tracking and monitoring for difference made.

Glossary

Word	What it means?
Co-Production	People working together equally on a problem or issue to come up with the best solution.
Our Voice	Strategic co-production group in Adult Social Care in Nottinghamshire.
Making It Real	Making It Real is a set of statements that describe what good care and support looks like, they were created by Think Local Act Personal and co-produced with people and carers with experience of adult social care and support.
Care Quality Commission	An organisation set up by the Government to make sure that social care is safe, caring, effective, responsive, and well led.
Nottinghamshire Plan	The Nottinghamshire Plan is a document that sets out the Council's commitments over the next four years to support the healthy, prosperous, and greener future of Nottinghamshire. It covers topics such as social care, education, health, environment, and economy.
Social Care Future	Social Care Future is a growing people-powered movement for change.
Local Account	New Adult Social Care strategy, produced with the Our Voice co-production group and staff drawing on what local people said was important to them in the Big Conversation events. Shares real stories and insights and describes the social care priorities for 2024.
Risk Management	The process of working out what situations might be risky for your health or wellbeing or for an organisation and taking steps to help reduce or prevent the risk of harm.
Annual Care and Support Review	This is a review which should be carried out every year to make sure the support provided to a person is working for them.
Revenue Budget	Money that we get to spend on social care services.
Practice Framework	A framework which describes best practice for staff in Adult Social Care.

Word	What it means?
Safeguarding	The process of working with adults at risk of abuse and/or neglect to help them stay safe.
Short Breaks	Places where people go and stay to give their carer a break.
Big Conversation	The Big Conversation was held in February – March 2023. This allowed people who draw on care and support, and their carers, to share their experience, ideas and visions for the future of social care in Nottinghamshire.
Learning Hub	Identifying all the ways we get information about things that need to change, to improve social care.
Health Check	A survey which helps to understand the experience of staff within the Council.
Regulation and registered	The powers that Care Quality Commission have that are set out in the Health and Social Care Act.
Safeguarding adult reviews	A review of safeguarding practice to find out what needed to improve.
Safeguarding Adult Board	A group of local organisations, including health, social care and criminal justice agencies, who work together to safeguard adults with care and support needs.
Safeguarding statutory principles	A set of six key practice principles contained in the Care Act – empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability.
Integrated Care System (ICS)	Joining up of services for people in an area.





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