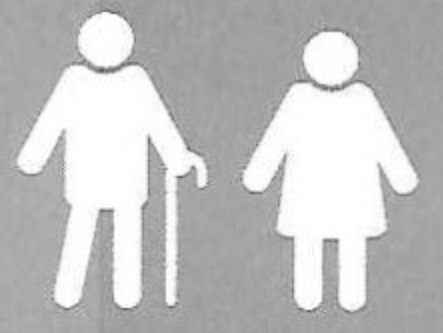


West Berkshire Council
Adult Social Care

Market Position Statement 2020-2023



West Berkshire Council direction of travel

The provision of high quality, affordable care for the elderly is and will continue to be a very high priority for the leadership of West Berkshire Council, reflecting the priorities of our residents.

Residential and nursing care will always be a core need for our residents. Our strategy is to focus on providing high quality care at the best value for money. We expect our residents to be able to live in safe, pleasant environments, able to enjoy their time with fellow residents and families, supported by staff who have their needs at heart. We will continue to deliver this experience through multi-criteria commissioning from the private sector in West Berkshire and neighbouring authorities, alongside continued provision from homes operated by the Council. West Berkshire Council is and will continue to be a significant provider in the market and we expect to invest to improve the quality of that provision over this period. Recognising the extreme strains of Covid-19 on the residential care market, our strategy will evolve in the short-term, to focus on placing residents within West Berkshire settings to ensure market stability and providing other support to ameliorate the impact of the virus on providers.

While residential provision is critical, the majority of our elderly residents prefer to live in their own home and our ambition is to commission services that better enable this, from supporting hospital discharge to long-term care in the home. We see scope for further quality and efficiency improvements in domiciliary care services through the use of technology and smart working practices.

We see the role of enablement and reablement as particularly critical in a Covid environment, enabling more efficient and potentially safer hospital discharge and maximising the potential for users to stay at home. Promoting enablement will be a major focus of our strategy and commissioning approach. We will favour services from providers who align with our strengths-based approach and focus on encouraging users to maintain their independence through active and individualised development of their skills and capabilities.

We believe that supported extra-care housing has a vital role to play for those who want to maintain a safe independent lifestyle. We have identified problems arising with care as residents' health deteriorates over time and we see this provision needing to become more sophisticated in its ability to support these more complex needs. We see the demand for extra-care and other retirement living increasing, potentially faster than pre-Covid.

Residential, nursing and extra care supply (including dementia)

There are 747 nursing and residential beds provided in 16 care homes across West Berkshire, split c45% nursing and 55% residential:

- this increased by 64 beds in 2019-20;
- 152 beds (four homes) are provided by West Berkshire Council;
- there is a good distribution across the region except in the rural north-west;
- there are currently 138 extracare apartments in three locations in West Berkshire (one each in Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford), which gives good coverage for our major population centres. However there is no provision in the eastern part of the region (eg Pangbourne, Theale and Burghfield)

Prior to the advent of Covid-19, we estimate that the region's long-term residential/nursing occupancy rates was c85%, which we believe is below the level to ensure sustainability for all homes. Supply increased by 9% in 2019/20 with the opening of a 64 bed home.

We do not see a need to increase supply of residential beds over the next four years. However, while overall there is a sufficiency of supply, nursing services face issues, with significant problems attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff. In the past five years nursing provision has not kept pace with the growth in need.

Quality

CQC overall ratings for nursing and residential homes for the elderly in West Berkshire October 2020

Rating	Outstanding	Good/Unrated	RI	Inadequate
Homes	1	11	4	0
Beds	24	508	215	0

Quality is satisfactory in the region, but safeguarding and quality issues have occurred and in 2017 West Berkshire Council had to step in to acquire a large privately-operated home due to financial and quality issues. We have issued 309 safeguarding notices since 2016. The local authority remains of the view that quality is critical within the provision of care and for this reason we will not commission placements with providers rated lower than "Good", except where there are extenuating circumstances.

The impact of Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 on West Berkshire, while tragic, has been less severe than on other regions with an excess death rate of 24% for the period March-September 2020 compared to the five-year average. Even so, this has resulted in occupancy rates down to c75%, with a particular impact on those homes that had higher infection levels. In addition, there has been severe disruption in homes, with increased staff absence, significant additional PPE and infection control procedures all increasing costs. In the short term the impact has been addressed through the additional funding from central government, but with Covid-19 likely to be present for a long period and with the particular vulnerability of the elderly, practices in care homes will need to be adapted.

The relatively high incidence of deaths in care homes has also impacted the demand from self-funders in particular, with admission and enquiries from the private sector having virtually ceased since April 2020 as users and their families seek other forms of care. In August we have begun to see a slight increase in enquiries and as public confidence improves we expect to see demand increase and would expect occupancy rates to be back at 85% by early 2022.



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West Berkshire Council care provision for qualifying residents

Pre-Covid (29 February 2020) West Berkshire Council funded 367 long-term elderly care home places, (171 nursing, 196 residential)



Pre-Covid, our demand for long-term care home beds was increasing, with a 7% rise over the six months to February 2020. Overall supply pre-Covid was sufficient, with increasing local supply supported by a stable availability of beds in neighbouring authorities.

As at June 2020 long-term care bed demand had fallen to 291 beds, a decrease of 20% and this has remained static to date. Accelerating hospital discharge through the CCG/West Berkshire Council Joint Commissioning Programme has added a net 65 beds, although a high proportion of these new placements are short-term recovery placements. We expect demand for long-term placements to begin to increase post September.

Coupled with depressed demand in the self-funding market, we expect to see a surplus of beds in the short-term and a sufficiency of supply for the next four years. We recognise this reduced demand will have a negative impact on the market and will challenge the viability of some homes. To mitigate this risk, West Berkshire Council will prioritise placements within our area, providing this meets the client needs, is high quality and is cost-effective.

West Berkshire Council as a provider of residential and nursing care

West Berkshire Council currently operates four care homes providing 152 beds in the region. We expect to maintain a role in the market as a direct provider over this period. As we consider the longer term position of the local authority as a provider and the shape of the wider market, we are open to discussions with potential partners in respect of models and opportunities that would cost effectively improve quality.

Areas of acute need

Despite an overall sufficiency (and short-term oversupply) of residential beds, we recognise that the supply of qualified nursing staff remains a critical issue locally and nationally and this pressure is likely to increase post-Covid. We would welcome proposals from market suppliers to address this need, potentially in collaboration with Health Partners and other local authorities.

There is also a limited supply of respite beds in our region and we believe that addressing this is vital to improving the opportunity for users to stay home in the long-term. West Berkshire Council is exploring ways to address this through its own homes, but would welcome proposals from providers on flexible and cost-effective approaches for respite provision.

We expect the demand for extra care housing to increase and are interested in ideas for providing this in ways that support residents as their needs become more complex with age, reducing the need for them to transition to residential or nursing care at a later stage. We would particularly welcome opportunities to develop sites that are integrated into the community within new developments in our region.

Day care and care at home services for 65+, including dementia

Estimating the total supply of home care and day care services is more problematic than for residential and nursing care. Based on the data in the Age UK research referenced above, we estimate there are c1,700-2,000 users of some form of elderly day care service in West Berkshire, with c715 users receiving funding from West Berkshire Council. Demand for council home care has been relatively unaffected by Covid-19, although anecdotally we believe there has been some reduction in self-funding demand as users choose to restrict visitors and/or additional support is being provided by families on furlough. As the excess mortality rate has been relatively low in this community, we would expect to see base demand and growth rates return to pre-Covid levels by early 2021, with c10% growth by 2023, based on demographics. If demand for self-funded residential care remains depressed post-Covid, we would expect to see additional demand for homecare services. Obviously Covid has closed many day centres and activities, but we expect to see the demand for these to return as lockdown for vulnerable groups is eased, with growth similar to homecare.

While overall provision is adequate at a regional level, the low population density and rural nature of the north, west and south east of our region present particular challenges, with long journey times and limited access to day care centres.

West Berkshire Council as a funder and provider of domiciliary care

West Berkshire Council currently fund c715 users for approximately 1,200 services, sourced from c30 providers. 475 are users of Homecare services, of which 86 are provided to users in the three extra care sites. We also provide c£1.25m p.a. of direct payments for users to purchase care provision.

The detailed breakdown (excluding transport and centre meals) is as follows:

Domiciliary and day care services for the elderly funded by West Berkshire Council June 2020

Service	Number of users
Community Supported Living	189
Day Opportunities	72
Direct payments	71
Equipment, Adaptations & Assistive Technology	86
Homecare	475
Maximising Independence	64

Areas of acute need

Supporting our focus on enablement/reablement, we are seeking solutions that, wherever possible, stress developing self-care rather than simply carrying out care tasks for service users, including those on long-term care packages. This may require a shift in approach from the provider community and we recognise this may come at a short-term cost, but will yield longer-term benefits for the service users and council tax payers. We are very interested in working with providers on models of care that can truly 'help people to help themselves'.

As c35% of our demand is in rural areas in the north, west and south east of our region, we are looking for providers who can meet these needs in a cost-effective manner through the use of smart tools and technology to minimise travel time and maximise client interaction. We see a significant opportunity to work further with voluntary and community groups in these areas and would particularly welcome proposals from this sector.

We also see opportunities to increase the proportion of our costs that reach care workers. Since 2018 we have worked with Care Match, where care workers can collaborate interactively to provide services. There are 44 service users for the service at present and evidence to date has shown that this model delivers a more user-centred approach, enables greater flexibility for users and care providers and increases care worker satisfaction and pay levels, all without raising costs to the Council. We would be interested in expanding this approach and would welcome engagement from providers of similar services.

West Berkshire Council operates three day centres, providing a safe and structured environment where a wide range of activities are delivered and we expect to maintain this position. We are interested in opportunities to work with commercial, charitable and voluntary partners to increase the utilisation of these centres and expand the range of opportunities they provide.

Role of voluntary and community organisations

The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in enhancing the range of support available to both the cared-for and their carers. The criticality of this support has been emphasised through Covid-19, especially for the many vulnerable individuals who have faced extended lockdown.

A major challenge in this area is raising awareness of what is on offer. West Berkshire Council plays an important role with both funding and signposting through its Tier 1 support contact centre, the West Berkshire Directory of support organisations and activities, its website and advice from its social workers. We also support the work of the Berkshire Carer Hub, which provides a help-line and advice.

We see this sector playing an even more essential role in the future and always welcome contact from groups who can help, especially in the more urban parts of our region, where supply can be limited.

