

# Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 3

3 - Evidence shows a good standard

## The local authority commitment

We have clear responsibilities, roles, systems of accountability and good governance to manage and deliver good quality, sustainable care, treatment and support. We act on the best information about risk, performance and outcomes, and we share this securely with others when appropriate.

## Key findings for this quality statement

### Governance, accountability and risk management

The local authority understood its risks and challenges. Governance structures were in place across multiple partners, providing a foundation for collaborative decision-making and oversight.

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The governance systems and processes used by Oxfordshire County Council were effective, with a focus on developing partnerships that facilitated a systems approach to the vision of the Oxfordshire Way. The local authority was on an improvement journey underpinned by a corporate vision that viewed prevention as a systems target across partners. The s75 agreements with health partners had supported several key areas of work within adult social care and were supported by clear governance structures and pathways. The local authority had governance boards in place to oversee objectives and targets with positive working relationships.

The authority had gone through a period of change over the last 2 years. There had been changes to both senior management and frontline operational delivery teams and a wider internal transformation. There was a stable adult social care leadership team with clear roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. Staff felt supported by managers and senior leaders within the organisation. Leaders were identified as visible and approachable. Partners told us that they had visibly seen the impact and changes over time. However, some felt there was still a gap between the vision of the senior leadership team and what happened on an operational level. Partners and providers felt the authority was aware of this and were working to resolve this issue.

The local authority had recognised it was on an improvement journey and targeted resources and expertise to areas that required urgent change, such as waiting lists. Risk management and business continuity were in place to support managers and different areas of adult services in emergency situations. There was oversight of performance and quality of services, and risks were identified with detailed mitigation plans.

Changes to the ICB were also highlighted as an area of high risk for the local authority as future changes could have an impact on the ability to work effectively as a health and social care system to meet the Care Act needs for people in Oxfordshire. Senior leaders told us it was important for Oxfordshire to have the balance of resources in the right place to achieve productivity and were relentless in the drive to keep shared working arrangements despite the challenges.

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The local authority's political leaders were informed about the risks facing adult social care including budget issues and the backlogs of safeguarding enquiries.

Performance management and reporting were used to monitor and manage areas of improvement. The local authority used its Meaningful Measures Group, and the Performance, Practice, and Pounds (PPP) extended leadership meeting to monitor and oversee performance. However, there were gaps and limitations in the data available to the organisation which the authority recognised. It aimed to continually improve the use and functionality of Power BI to ensure it could provide live data in the future. In addition, the local authority aimed to continue to work with system partners to improve data sharing systems.

The use of data in strategic decision making was raised as an area that required further improvement and was an area that was being improved with new dashboards in development. There were also plans to use frontline data to inform strategic priorities.

Oxfordshire County Council worked with the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) to provide better integration and engagement across partners.

## Strategic planning

The Health and Wellbeing strategy was in place for 2024-2030. This strategy outlined principles for tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire. The strategy identified that residents experienced inequalities in access, experience, and overall health outcomes. There was a focus on the 10 most deprived wards in Oxfordshire where people experienced the greatest inequality, and work had begun to create area profiles for each area to generate plans and strategies to address poor outcomes for people. There was still work to be done to develop and implement targeted plans based on data and feedback from the community.

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The prevention framework detailed the ambition of creating system-wide priorities over the next 5 years, which included cross organisational leadership for prevention and for optimising resources available to deliver the prevention agenda. The local authority's strategic vision placed prevention at the heart of the Oxfordshire Way, which was dependent on the collaboration and support of all sectors. Elements of the strategic direction of travel were developing and emerging based on joint partnership work with health. There were plans to develop several strategies including a mental health and autism strategy, and to implement the prevention strategy. These were categorised as being in addition to business as usual. In considering this, the local authority may need to consider whether adequate resources would be available to sustain the current changes and drive the new system changes with the current staffing issues.

Stability in leadership has provided a solid foundation for ongoing progress in implementing changes and developing new strategies. It was too early in those changes to assess the sustainability of the approach. Improvements to processes and outcomes in areas such as safeguarding were recent. Going forward it will be important for the local authority to maintain progress and adapt to evolving challenges as well as evaluating resource allocation and workforce capacity to ensure lasting benefits for the community.

## Information security

The local authority had arrangements to maintain the security of records, and data management systems. There were performance measures, with an appointed person, and risk measures considered, for example, cyber security. Staff described that there was an information sharing agreement that promoted, good information sharing between teams, with good links between all professionals across health and social care. However, there was mixed feedback about the effectiveness of systems for data sharing with providers. Some raised concerns about wrong or inaccurate information being sent to them regarding new referrals.