

Report	Summary of key findings and recommendations	Recommendations			Status
		H	M	L	
<p>Subject: Care Homes Council and Private</p> <p>Category: Assurance – Cyclical</p> <p>Date issued: 12 December 2023 Draft 18 January 2023 Final</p> <p>Level of Assurance: Substantial for governance arrangements, procurement of care home contracts and assessments for funding. Limited for service capacity, checking compliance with the National Care Home Contract, periodic care plan reviews for residential care, and assurance over business continuity arrangements within external care homes.</p>	<p>The purpose of the audit was to review of the arrangements in place to manage the process of utilising appropriate bed spaces within care homes and the monitoring and control mechanisms in place to ensure quality care and best value.</p> <p>The Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is required under statute to provide care and support services to those who are assessed as being in need. Care homes for older people are provided by the Council and external providers in Midlothian. The Council currently runs 1 care home and 1 intermediate care service. A National Care Home Contract (NCHC) is in place which is negotiated by COSLA on behalf of all Scottish local authorities. The Care Home Support Team (CHST) undertakes quality monitoring audits at each care home. The Chief Nurse provides clinical support to care homes and liaises with the CHST. A multidisciplinary Rapid Run Down group was established early in the pandemic to provide a responsive reporting structure for the CHST. Periodic care plan reviews for residential care are set on Mosaic and are undertaken by the Social Work team.</p> <p>In August 2023, it was reported to the MIJB that the Social Care overall forecast is projecting a £4.4m overspend. Areas reporting an overspend were the resource panel budget (particularly learning disabilities) and Newbyres Care Home and Highbank Intermediate care home. Following challenges in securing workforce, there has been a temporary pause to admissions (61 to 48 bed spaces) at Newbyres Care Home. The temporary decision to reduce bed space was not related to budget but about ensuring the safe care of residents. The HSCP were unable to ensure that there were sufficient care workers available to work, due to both a local and national issue around the workforce in this line of work. Safety of both residents and staff is the prime focus.</p> <p>As at end of Q2, 2023/24, the forecasted overspend for care homes (including clients with learning disabilities placed in external care homes) was £2.6m. In the Council owned care home, there has been a reliance on agency staff to support resident complexity and the increasing complexity of care needs is contributing to the significant financial pressures on the Learning Disability budget.</p>	0	2	3	Management have accepted the factual accuracy of the report and its findings, and agreed to implement the recommendations.

	<p>Internal Audit considers that the level of assurance is substantial for governance arrangements, procurement of care home contracts and assessments for funding. Assurance is limited for service capacity (based on increasing demographic demands in Midlothian), checking compliance with the National Care Home Contract, periodic care plan reviews for residential care, and assurance over business continuity arrangements within external care homes. Although budget management processes and recovery plans are in place, there are significant financial pressures over funding of internal care homes and external care home placements. There are currently insufficient care home placements within Midlothian with only 474 beds (both self-funding and standard funded beds). This number of beds is below the national average against age demographic and means vacancies within Midlothian are limited and require families to think of placements out with Midlothian. In addition, there are currently clients who have been resident in Highbank Intermediate Care Home for longer than the planned 6 weeks. Management have advised that a commissioned review of all beds across Midlothian will be undertaken, and the outcome of this review is expected to be reported in early 2024. Whilst it has been advised that there are service plans in place for care homes, Internal Audit made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching guidance should be in place for managing Newbyres and Highbank care homes. The guidance should explain the roles and responsibilities of services, legislative requirements and monitoring arrangements. (Low)</li> <li>• The Rapid Run Down group should have a formal terms of reference describing the purpose of the group; the frequency of meetings and the responsibilities of the group members. (Low)</li> <li>• Care plan reviews for residential care should be undertaken on a timely basis and the community care home review policy should be reviewed and updated. (Medium)</li> <li>• Care Home Service risks should be recorded within an Adult Social Care Risk Register in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy. (Low)</li> <li>• Monitoring of care homes should be undertaken to ensure they are complying with the National Care Home contract (eg. ensuring relevant policies and procedures are in place and reviewing the residency agreements used by the provider). Building and contents insurance for care home providers should be</li> </ul>				
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	checked annually and maintained by the Council. Management should ensure that all external care home providers have adequate business continuity plans in place. (Medium)				
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