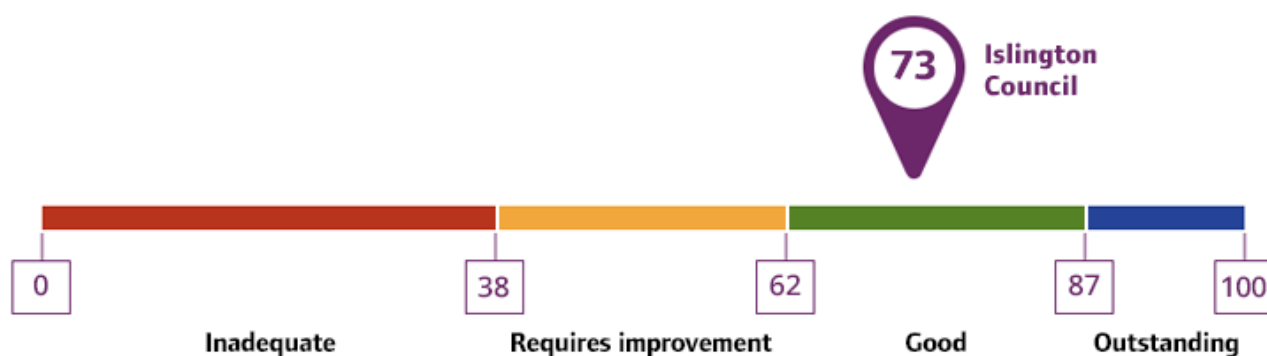


Overall summary

Local authority rating and score

Islington Council

Good



Quality statement scores

Assessing needs

Score: 2

Supporting people to lead healthier lives

Score: 3

Equity in experience and outcomes

Score: 3

Care provision, integration and continuity

Score: 3

Partnerships and communities

Score: 3

Safe pathways, systems and transitions

Score: 3

Safeguarding

Score: 3

Governance, management and sustainability

Score: 3

Learning, improvement and innovation

Score: 3

Summary of people's experiences

People's experiences of accessing adult social care in Islington were mainly positive. Staff conducted Care Act 2014 assessments which focused on people's strengths and abilities. The feedback about the approach from staff was positive. People received assessments from kind, dedicated and compassionate staff.

Most people told us they were able to access services easily, but we did hear feedback that at times information may be harder to find, particularly for older people who may face digital exclusion. The local authority had a wide range of online, written and verbal communication for people to access services and had a translator service to support people whose first language was not English. Paper copies of information in other languages was also available if needed. The local authority had a British Sign Language (BSL) team and some staff in the sensory team were trained in BSL to support deaf people to be able to clearly communicate.

There was an integrated front door team called the Access Team and the First Point of Contact Team who both had a good understanding of what was available for people in the community for both people with and without eligible needs under the Care Act 2014. We heard examples of how staff worked with people at an early stage before they had developed eligible needs, to prevent, reduce and delay the need for statutory services.

The experience of unpaid carers was mostly positive however, some unpaid carers told us they had to wait a long time before receiving a carers assessment. The local authority told us there was currently no waiting lists for carers assessments. Unpaid carers received their own assessment, and we saw examples of care planning to meet their eligible needs. Unpaid carers spoke positively about the support available to them from the voluntary sector although some carers told us they were not always able to access services due to their caring responsibilities.

Staff worked closely with partners to meet people's needs holistically. We received positive feedback about the wide range of voluntary services on offer to people. We saw examples of positive joint working both internally with teams and with other partners such as health and housing. People received support from staff who worked closely with health, for example, during hospital discharge, the integrated front door or the section 75 agreements to ensure people received the right care, at the right time, in the right place. A section 75 agreement is an agreement between local authorities and NHS bodies which can include arrangements for pooling resources and delegating certain NHS and local authority health-related functions to the other partners. The local authority had a take home and settle service to allow people to return home following hospital discharge with 7 days free care to allow them to be able to receive the most appropriate support prior to discharge.

Summary of strengths, areas for development and next steps

Islington local authority knew itself and the people of Islington well. There was positivity amongst staff, who told us they felt valued and motivated. The teams were well established, with lots of long serving staff. Staff felt supported in their roles and were positive about training and opportunities to progress their careers. There was an emphasis on staff wellbeing.

Feedback from staff was that the leadership from the Director of Adult Social Care and the wider strategic team was visible, and their approachable leadership style was a strength. There was a clear understanding of social work practices, and its challenges amongst leaders. Staff said they were listened to, and the local authority was aware of where the gaps were and what improvements needed to be made.

Leaders, managers, and staff demonstrated investment in strength-based approaches and there were examples of this throughout our assessment.

The local authority was focused on prevention of future needs and reducing reliance on services. Staff were focused on achieving positive outcomes for people. Individual examples of promoting independence and reducing dependencies were shared, such as providing people with equipment to help them continue to live safely at home. The local authority worked well with partners and the community and voluntary sector to prevent, reduce and delay needs and worked with partners to achieve shared outcomes.

People told us they felt safe and there were robust policies and procedures in place to support safe care and support. Staff had a good understanding of the challenges in Islington.

Overall, there was a good approach to transitions. There was recognition of the issues faced by children and their parent/carers as they approached the potential transition from Children's social care services to Adult Social Care services. Staff were passionate about this area of work developing for the future.

There were mixed responses about waiting lists dependent on team and staffing levels. We heard of some waiting times that could impact on people's outcomes, including those waiting for a planned review. Staff used a triage process, an escalation policy, prioritised people, and risk-assessed cases to prioritise risk appropriately. Senior leaders had listened to staff concerns and had invested in additional resources such as agency staff where needed such as in the First Point of Contact Team.

There was not always sufficient care provision in Islington for people who needed a care home, a nursing home or people with more complex needs such as complex learning disabilities or mental health needs. People were often placed out of borough; however, the majority of these people were placed within neighbouring North Central London Boroughs close to Islington.

It was not always easy for unpaid carers to access short term care in an emergency, this meant there could be a risk of carer breakdown or the cared for person not receiving appropriate care in an emergency situation.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion was embedded throughout adult social care and actions were being taken to further improve access for people from seldom heard groups. Leaders identified this as a priority in their Islington Together 2030 plan.

There was clear co-production with people who use services, and their carers and people told us they felt listened to and included in decision making, this included the creation of the updated carers strategy and the new draft dementia strategy.

The local authority worked well with partners and the voluntary and community sector to support people holistically and in the least restrictive way.